



Dear Parents,

Welcome to the St. Mark Little Lions Preschool! You are giving your child the best start possible by choosing our quality preschool program.

We believe that play is a child's work. Young children learn by doing and through interaction with other children, with adults, and within an appropriate and stimulating environment. Play lets children build trust, friendships, and understanding about the world. These early lessons form a solid foundation for future academic success and foster a desire for life-long learning. We embrace our flexible learning environment as it offers our children plenty of time to explore, to develop their own interests, and to interact with their peers.

We believe that children learn best when:

- they feel safe and secure
- they know that they are a beloved child of God
- they develop satisfying relationships with other children and adults
- they develop self-discipline
- they experience success
- they develop intellectual, social, and physical skills

We believe that you are your child's most important teacher. Our Preschool program will support you and work with you and your child to provide educational experiences which promote the spiritual, emotional, intellectual, physical, and social development of your child within a Christian environment.

Please read our handbook and return the signed acknowledgement to my office. We believe St. Mark Little Lions Preschool will provide a joyful and nurturing learning environment for your child. Thank you for sharing your child with us and allowing us to partner with you in your child's education.

Gene Holmes  
Principal

## **Our Purpose and Mission**

**Our purpose** is to support parents by providing an outstanding early childhood education within a Catholic environment. We are committed to working closely with parents in order to provide a program that encourages the social, emotional, physical, intellectual, and spiritual growth of every child. We recognize each child as an individual and emphasize the value of process over product.

**Our mission** is to build a faithful community committed to nurturing each child and guiding them on the beginning of their journey of life-long learning. We support a curriculum based on our belief that young children learn best through play.

## **Curriculum**

Our preschool program and our professional staff will provide the children with a broad range of opportunities to expand their thinking skills, language development, fine and gross motor skills, and problem-solving skills. Children will participate in hands-on classroom centers including: art, drama, music, science, pre-reading, writing, and math. Outdoor, active play is an important part of our daily program.

St. Mark Preschool emphasizes social and emotional development. We learn to take turns, to respect others, to follow and to lead. The children learn independence through interaction and communication with adults other than their parents.

Children are rewarded by opportunities to discover God in the midst of their world. Our setting nurtures every child's spiritual relationship with God and helps each child develop a caring attitude for others.

*For purposes of this handbook, the term "parent" is defined as the legal guardian of the child. This may include a parent, guardian, grandparent, or foster parent.*

## **Administration**

The St. Mark Little Lions Preschool is under the jurisdiction of Saint Mark School and the school principal. It is our hope that as the preschool grows, the parents of the preschool will become active members of the school community. There is a position for a parent on both the Parent Leadership Team and the Advisory Board. These boards have a very active role in the life of the school.

## **Governance**

St. Mark Little Lions Preschool is part of St. Mark School, led by the St. Mark School Principal, and governed by Office for Education, Diocese of Bridgeport.

## **Director**

The St. Mark School Principal is the Director of the St. Mark Little Lions Preschool. The Director oversees and implements the program and administrative policies. In addition, the Director supervises staff on planning, implementation of the program, and evaluation.

## **Business Manager**

The Business Manager collects all tuition and maintains the Preschool's financial records and files.

## **Head Teacher**

The Head Teacher is responsible for the day to day operation of her class and informal supervision of the teachers.

## **Staff Training**

The staff members at St. Mark Little Lions Preschool are selected by the Director and Principal. Each summer a staff orientation is held. Regular monthly staff meetings are held to plan the curriculum and share ideas on the program and the children. Staff members participate in professional development seminars throughout the school year.

## **Personnel**

St. Mark School Principal	Mr. Gene Holmes	375 - 4291
Business Office Manager	Mr. Ray LaLuna	368 - 1568
Head Teacher	Mrs. Julie Larracuenta	375 - 4291
Assistant Teacher	Mrs. Amber Helms	375 - 4291

## **St. Mark Little Lions Preschool Programs**

### *Two-Day Class – Three Year Old Children*

Meets Tuesday and Thursday mornings, September to June  
9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Approximately 15 children per class, 1 teacher and 1 aide

Children must be 3 by December 31 of the academic year

Tuition is \$1,150.00

Application fee (non-refundable) is \$50.00

Registration fee (non-refundable) is \$175.00, due upon enrollment and applied to tuition

### *Three-Day Class – Four Year Old Children*

Meets Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings, September to June  
9:00 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.

Approximately 15 children per class, 1 teacher and 1 aide

Children must be 4 by December 31 of the academic year

Tuition is \$1,567.50

Application fee (non-refundable) is \$50.00

Registration fee (non-refundable) is \$175.00, due upon enrollment and applied to tuition

## **Enrollment**

Preschool enrollment will follow the schedule below:

1. A one-week priority enrollment period will begin the first Tuesday that St. Mark School is in session in January. Priority enrollment will be offered to currently enrolled Preschool students, their siblings, and siblings of St. Mark School.
2. Beginning the following Tuesday in January, a one-week early enrollment period will be offered to St. Mark parishioners.
3. Beginning the third Tuesday in January, enrollment will be open to the general public and spots reserved on a first-come, first-served basis.
4. We welcome enrollment to all children regardless of race, religious affiliation, national origin, or sex.

## **Enrollment Requirements**

All children enrolled in our program must have a current physical examination, all State required immunizations, and a complete and current health form must be on file in the St. Mark School office. Physical exams are current for one year (from the date of the exam) and must be updated as required to remain current. A child whose physical exam is not current will be asked to remain out of class until seen by a physician. The

Town of Stratford provides a daily nurse to cover the preschool through grade at eight classes at Saint Mark School.

**All children must be potty-trained and non-diaper dependant as of the first day of preschool in September.**

## **Provisional Enrollment Period**

It is understood that all children are enrolled for an eight-week trial period. The school staff will evaluate each child's readiness and will give a 30-day written notice if it is deemed that the program is not meeting the child's needs.

## **Withdrawal Policy**

Termination of enrollment may be deemed necessary by the Principal of St. Mark School in the following instances:

- Inability of the child or parent to adjust to the school's purpose and mission
- In the event that the staff does not meet the needs of the child
- Delinquency of tuition fees

One month's written notice will be given except in cases where the child proves to be a danger to himself or herself, the staff, or other children. In such cases, immediate withdrawal will be requested.

In the event that a parent decides to withdraw their child from our program, a two-week written notice is required. If notification of withdrawal is received by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month, then the next month's tuition is not owed. If notification is received between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> of the month, then the parent is responsible for the next month's tuition.

## **Payment of Tuition**

Payment options are as follows:

1. Option 1: Full year payment due July 1 (3% discount)
2. Option 2: Ten payment plan via the FACTS payment program. (This option has an annual enrollment fee). Monthly tuition is deducted directly from your checking or savings account starting on July 1, on the 5<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> of each month
3. Option 3: four payments due July 1, October 1, January 1 and April 1

A \$30.00 fee will be imposed for all returned checks.

## **SCRIP Program**

The K – 8 school parents are involved in a program called SCRIP. Various gift cards can be purchased through the school office and on line. This program helps pay tuition. It may be expanded to the preschool in the future.

## **Late Payment**

If you are suffering a hardship and are in need of assistance, please speak with the St. Mark School principal.

## **School Hours**

The class schedule for our 3 and 4-year-olds follows:

3-year-olds:	9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
4-year-olds:	9:00 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.

Please do not drop off children before school begins. Our teachers are here prior to opening time but they are setting up the classroom and preparing the day's activities.

Please be prompt at pick-up time. Children become anxious when parents are late. Please phone us if you will be detained due to an emergency.

### **UNDER THE STATE OF CT DEPT OF HEALTH, statute 19a-79 1a through 19a-79-9 the following procedure is suggested:**

St. Mark Preschool has a "Late Pick-up Policy." If a child is not picked up within 10 minutes of closing, we will:

1. Notify parents
2. Notify child's emergency people
3. Two staff members must wait with the child on the premises for transportation
4. Police will be contacted if no one comes within one hour
5. Staff members may not transport a child

## **Late Fees**

Late fees will be assessed at \$5.00 for each fifteen minutes. In addition to the late fees, a \$10.00 fee will be charged if the parent has failed to call the school to inform the staff of the delay. All fees will be assessed by the Principal and will be paid in cash before the child's next class.

## **Entrance and Dismissal**

All children will enter and exit the building through the Parish Center doors (under the concrete awning.) This door will remain locked from the outside. Please press the buzzer and the door will be unlocked by a Preschool staff member.

Parents must “sign in” their child before entering the classroom by writing the time of arrival and their initials next to their child’s name, and “sign out” by repeating the procedure when the child is picked up. Sign-in sheets are located in the hallway outside of the classroom.

Parents must accompany their child into the classroom. Please allow ample arrival time to assure a smooth, comfortable, and unhurried transition for your child. Parents are responsible for removing their child’s outerwear and for putting clothing and lunchboxes in the proper place. Please label all outerwear with your child’s name.

If there will be someone other than a parent picking up your child (grandparent, caregiver, etc.) please write that in the “Comments” column next to your child’s name as well as verbally tell one of the teachers. All names of persons transporting your child MUST be on the Transportation Form. These persons should also be prepared to show proof of identity. If there is concern or question about the individual picking up your child, we reserve the right to not release the child and phone the parent for confirmation.

If you will be picking a child up early for any reason, please note early pickup time on sign in sheet and let the teacher know.

Your child will be in the classroom at dismissal time. Please wait in the hallway until the teacher opens the door. We will dismiss the children one by one to ensure all are with a parent or caregiver.

Occasionally, St. Mark School (K-8) will be on a half-day schedule with dismissal at 11:30 a.m. When this occurs, the preschool children will be dismissed a few minutes late after the buses have left and the parking lot traffic has cleared. This is for the children’s safety.

## **Parent Communication**

Parents and teachers need to communicate! Please feel free to talk with your child’s teacher after school, or drop a note in their box. Parent-teacher conferences will be scheduled in the fall and the spring. Please be certain to contact your child’s teacher before contacting the principal.

## **Parental Involvement**

We encourage parent/guardian involvement and welcome you to visit our program. However, in order to participate in the classroom and work with the children in any capacity, the Diocese of Bridgeport requires that you complete VIRTUS training and have a background check. More information on this training can be found at [www.virtus.org](http://www.virtus.org). VIRTUS training is a valuable program teaching adults ways to keep children safe in society. The background check information remains on file at The Catholic Center in Bridgeport. The principal is given a green light once your background check is completed,

## **School Calendar**

St. Mark Little Lions Preschool will follow the St. Mark School calendar for vacations and days off. Each preschool parent will receive a preschool calendar prior to the beginning of the school year.

### **No School Announcement**

“No School” announcements for the Stratford School system in the event of inclement weather or other town-wide emergencies will be made by 6:30 a.m. on radio station WICC-600AM. The preschoolers do not make up snow days. No tuition credit is given for days we are closed or delayed because of bad weather.

### **Delayed School Opening**

If there is a delayed school opening in town, St. Mark Little Lions Preschool will open at 10:30 a.m. and dismiss at 12:30 PM.

### **Emergency Closing Policy**

If it is deemed necessary for St. Mark Preschool to close due to unfortunate circumstances beyond our control (i.e., no heat in the building), every effort will be made to contact parents by phone and it will be announced on WICC-600AM Radio.

### **Emergency Procedures**

We have regular fire and disaster drills at school. The children are taught to listen to the teachers’ directions.

In the event of an actual emergency, the children will be evacuated as they have practiced. All preschool children will be assembled together and each child accounted for. We will give aid and comfort as needed. We will stay with your children until you or someone of your choice can arrive for pick up. There is also a town-provided nurse on the premises.

## **School Nurse and Medication**

The town of Stratford provides a nurse for each school day. The nurse keeps a current medical file and attendance record on each student. The nurse also will assess a student who is ill. It is expected that parents keep the nurse and/or the principal advised of any medical conditions that may affect their child during the school day. **It is very important to return the Emergency Card immediately and keep the information current.**

Connecticut State Law requires a physician's written order and parent/guardian authorization for a nurse to administer medical preparations, or, in her absence, the principal. Without the required authorization, the parent or guardian must come to school and administer the medication. The authorization form is obtained from the school office. It is effective for one year and must be renewed each September.

All medications must be brought to the nurse or principal with the proper authorization and directions for administering. The child's name and the medication's name must appear on the bottle. **NO STUDENT IS ALLOWED MEDICATION WITHOUT ADULT SUPERVISION AND PROPER AUTHORIZATION.**

## **Emergency Medical Treatment**

In the event of an emergency, all necessary medical treatment will be implemented immediately. Bee sting kits are to be kept in the nurse's office. If a student with a severe allergy leaves the school property, the teacher must come to the nurse's office and take the kit with him/her. Bee sting allergies are serious and will always be given appropriate action. Adrenaline is always kept on hand in the nurse's office for emergency use.

## **Illness**

You are the best judge of your child's health and we trust you will not bring a sick child to school. However, if the teaching staff or school nurse feels that your child is sick, they will call you to come and pick up your child.

The following criteria will be considered in determining if your child must go home:

- Fever of 100 degrees or more
- Vomiting
- More than one incidence of diarrhea
- Communicable disease
- Unknown rash
- Persistent pain or discomfort
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If a child has been sent home due to illness, they may not return to preschool until they have been symptom free for 24 hours. This is to allow ample time to recover and to stop the spread of illness to the other children.

It is your responsibility to notify us if your child has a communicable disease, such as: measles, mumps, chicken pox, head lice, strep throat, pink eye, etc.

## **Administration of Medication in School**

According to Connecticut State Law, Section 10-212A, administration of medication by the school nurse, or, in the absence of such registered nurse, the principal may administer medicines, as long as it is a written order from a licensed physician or dentist. If a student has to receive medication prescribed by a physician during the school day, the parent must submit the medication order slip to the physician for his written order and signature. This policy applies to all medications, i.e. antibiotics, ointments, cough medicine, cough drops, etc. The medication must be in a proper container, labeled with the student's name, name of medicine, dosage and time of administration. Send only one (1) week's supply of medication. Medication for allergies, asthma inhalers which are to be used daily or as needed, may be sent in to the nurse's office at the beginning of the school year and will be returned to the parent at the end of the school year. Each year medication permission forms must be filled out and signed by the attending physician. If your child is prone to headaches, you will need a medication form signed by the doctor. This should be done at the beginning of the school year and kept on file for the year.

**NO MEDICATION OF ANY KIND WILL BE ADMINISTERED WITHOUT WRITTEN PERMISSION FROM A PHYSICIAN.**

**NO MEDICATION WILL BE ACCEPTED IF IT IS NOT IN A PROPER CONTAINER.**

This applies to a one-day dosage as well. This is a state law and an administrative policy. No exceptions are allowed.

## **Discipline and Guidance**

Parents strive to raise a child who is spiritual, creative, independent, responsible, self-disciplined, and socially mature. These, however, are learned skills which require much guidance to master. Often the younger the child, the more guidance is needed. Guidance is a positive term that implies that we will work with our preschool children to develop internal control for their behavior. Guidance, therefore, takes several forms in our preschool:

1. Environment – a place designed for children. The furniture is child-sized and all toys are age-appropriate for lots of hands-on experiences.
2. Logical Rules – such as keeping our hands to ourselves and taking care of our learning environment are discussed as well as why such rules are needed.

3. Curriculum – is developmentally appropriate, based on the children’s interests and level of readiness, yet it also challenges a child to grow.
4. Redirection – encouraging a child in another activity can often eliminate conflict
5. Positive Reinforcement – telling the child what we would like them to do or how we would like them to behave instead of using “no” or “don’t”.

However, all children will make mistakes and will misbehave from time to time. When this arises we will:

- Redirect the child to a different activity – we will redirect a child three different times for the same misbehavior
- Role play a situation so that the child can practice the language of social behavior and learn to express their needs, wants, and feelings.
- If they continue to misbehave, we will have the child take a time-out. Time-outs will always be in a supervised area of our preschool classroom. Time-outs will be limited to one minute per year of the child’s age. For example, a four-year-old child’s time-out will last no longer than four minutes.

If more drastic behavior occurs, such as, but not limited to: biting, hitting, kicking, swearing, or hurting others, an instant time-out may be administered. If a child has repeated drastic behaviors, a conference will be scheduled with the parents/guardians to work out a plan that benefits the child as well as the preschool class. If a child proves to be a danger to himself, the staff, or other children, that child will be asked to withdraw immediately from the program.

**Note: No corporal punishment will be allowed. This is defined as the use of negative touching (spanking, slapping, pinching, etc.) No unusual punishment will be allowed, such as humiliation, ridicule, threat, or coercion.**

## **Official State Policy**

Section 19a-79-3(c) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies:

1. Staff shall not use abusive, neglectful, corporal, humiliating, or frightening punishment under any circumstances. No child shall be physically restrained unless it is necessary to protect the safety and health of the child or others.
2. Removal of the child from the group of disciplinary or health reasons shall be to a location where visual supervision by the staff shall be maintained.
3. There shall be a written policy of accepted and prohibited disciplinary measures which shall be shared with parents, followed by staff persons and reviewed annually.

4. Smoking is prohibited in all facilities except in designated smoking areas, provided such areas are separate, apart and enclosed away from any children present at the facility. Signs shall be posted at all entrances to the facility indicating that smoking is prohibited except in designated areas.
5. Current and new Staff and parents shall be informed of Section 19a-87a of the General Statutes which governs employment of persons convicted of child abuse or a felony as defined in Section 53a-25, or with a criminal record that the commissioner reasonably believes renders the person unsuitable to own, conduct, operate, maintain or be employed by a center or home.
6. Parents shall be permitted to visit the facility at all times during which the center is in operation.

## Snack Policy

On a daily basis, parents are asked to provide a non-sugar, PEANUT AND TREE NUT-FREE, snack and juice or water. Please read all ingredient labels to ensure your child's snack is nut-free. The following list offers some suggestions for healthy snacks.

Crackers (any kind)	Rice Cakes	Cut-up Veggies
Small Muffin	Plain Cheerios	Plain Popcorn
½ Bagel	Raisins	Pretzels
Yogurt	Cheese sticks or cubes	
Cut-up Fruit (grapes must be cut in half lengthwise)		

Please write your child's name on the OUTSIDE of their lunchbox. You may provide an ice pack in your child's lunchbox to provide food spoilage.

## St. Mark School is a Nut-Aware School

Our classrooms and school are free of peanuts and tree nuts to the best of our ability. If a student comes to school with a peanut or tree nut product, the student will be sent to the nurse and asked not to consume that food product and be given another nut free food. The nurse will inform the principal and the principal may contact the parent.

## Food Allergy Policies

Saint Mark School works with the parents/guardians and students who have allergies in order to minimize or avoid, as much as possible, the chances of an allergic reaction with a threat to the students' well being. This is not to say that the school accepts responsibility for insuring that a student will not come in contact with a product he/she may be allergic to. That is ultimately the responsibility of the individual student and his/her parents/guardians.

The student body is asked not to bring in any snacks with nut product so that we can attempt to keep the classrooms peanut/nut free. Additionally, signage is posted around the school indicating that we try to maintain a peanut/nut free environment. While the school is taking what it considers to be to be reasonable measures to guard against an allergic reaction, the school cannot and will not be responsible for assuring that no contact with an allergy related product will occur.

## **Crisis Intervention Steps**

1. Administer the Epi-Pen injection.
2. Have the child lie down to keep the blood flowing to the brain until the ambulance arrives.
3. Have someone call 911 immediately.
4. Transport the child to the hospital as expeditiously as possible.
5. Repeat the injection in 15 to 20 minutes if the symptoms do not improve before medical assistance arrives.
6. Administer CPR if cardiac arrest occurs.
7. Notify parents or legal guardian only after the above life-saving techniques have been instituted. Deaths have occurred during these delays.

## **BIRTHDAYS**

Students may bring a birthday treat (cupcakes, cookies, etc.) to share with classmates when it is their birthday. Please tell the teacher one week before your child's birthday which day you would like to celebrate and what you will be bringing in to share. If possible, treats should be individually wrapped and healthy treats and non-food treats are encouraged. Candy and gum are not allowed. Students may also pass out party invitations in school as long as every student in the class is invited to the event.

The birthday child will also make a birthday crown and the class will sing "Happy Birthday."

## **PARENTS ARE NOT PERMITTED TO SEND IN TREATS CONTAINING NUTS.**

Please see the "Food Allergy Policy". Parents are also reminded to be conscious of other food allergies that some children may have. Please check with the school nurse if you have any questions.

## **School Attire**

Please dress your child in comfortable, washable, **PLAY CLOTHES!** We get messy at school and even though we provide smocks, clothes can get dirty and stained. Please label all clothing, outerwear, and boots.

We will play outside daily, weather permitting. Please dress your child in layers so that additional clothing can be added or removed as necessary. Sandals and dress shoes with slippery soles are not suitable for running or climbing. Rubber-soled shoes or sneakers are best for outdoor play. Snowsuits, hats, mittens, and boots will be necessary for the winter months.

Accidents and spills will happen, and can cause embarrassment for the children. We recommend that you send in a change of clothing for your child. Please include a full change (socks and underwear) in a plastic zip-lock bag with your child's name on it. These extra clothes will be kept in the closet in the preschool room.

## **Child Safety Issues**

Staff members are required by law to report any suspected child abuse or neglect. All staff members fulfill all the requirements of the Diocese of Bridgeport regarding the safety and protection of children. This includes, but is not limited to, remaining in compliance with VIRTUS (Protecting God's Children), a background check, and fingerprinting.

St. Mark Preschool maintains that children have the right to be free from abuse and neglect. The State of Connecticut names employees of schools mandated reporters of suspected cases of child abuse, neglect, and if they believe a child is in "imminent risk of serious harm." It is our policy to instruct all employees that any and all suspected cases **MUST** be reported to the department of Children and Families (DCF). Approaching certainty is the job of the DCF.

### Definitions of Abuse, Neglect, and Imminent Risk of Serious Harm

Child abuse is defined as: a child or youth (A) has been inflicted with physical injury or injuries other than by accidental means, or (B) has injuries that are at variance with the history given of them, or (C) is in a condition that is the result of maltreatment such as, but not limited to, malnutrition, sexual molestation or exploitation, deprivation of necessities, emotional maltreatment or cruel punishment. (CGS 46b-120)

Child neglect is defined as: a child or youth who (A) has been abandoned, or (B) is being denied proper care and attention, physically, educationally, emotionally or morally, or (C) is being permitted to live under conditions, circumstances or associations injurious to the well-being of the child or youth, or (D) has been abused. (CGS 46b-120)

Imminent risk of serious harm is defined as “placing a child at risk of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse.”

## **Reporting Requirements**

We are mandated reporters by Connecticut State law and as mandated reporters, we are required to report any and all suspected cases of child abuse to DCF or the police. If child abuse, neglect, or imminent risk of serious harm is suspected, the following procedures are to be followed:

- Report the alleged abuse to the St. Mark School Principal
- Notify DCF by phone 1-800-842-2288
- File written report within 72 hours, form DCF-136
- Documentation of the initial phone contact, the written report initialized with the name of the staff person and the contact person at DCF is kept in a secure file in the St. Mark School principal’s office.

## **Sexual Harassment: Diocese of Bridgeport Policy Relating to Sexual Misconduct (Executive Summary)**

### **Introduction**

As required by our insurance carrier, the Diocese of Bridgeport has adopted a policy relating to sexual misconduct. The policy, summarized here, provides guidelines to help prevent sexual misconduct and to help diocesan personnel in responding to allegations of sexual misconduct if any do occur.

Sexual misconduct is contrary to Christian principles and is in violation of the conditions of employment of all paid and unpaid personnel of the Diocese. Therefore, all diocesan personnel must comply with applicable civil and canon law regarding incidents of actual or suspected sexual misconduct and with the requirements of this policy.

It is understood that sexual misconduct encompasses sexual harassment which is prohibited by the Connecticut Human Rights and Opportunities Act; and that sexual misconduct by any personnel of the diocese, whether in the course of work or not, will be considered grounds for suspension or termination of employment or involvement with the work of the Diocese.

### **How is Sexual Misconduct Defined?**

Sexual misconduct means any actions or words of a sexual nature which are contrary to the moral doctrine, teachings and canon law of the Catholic Church and are proscribed by Federal, state or local law or cause harm to another. Sexual harassment, included in the category of sexual misconduct, refers to unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature which explicitly becomes a term or condition of an individual's employment or whose purpose or effect is to interfere substantially with an individual's work performance or to create an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

### **Who is Required to Report Sexual Misconduct and to Whom?**

Any personnel of the diocese who have actual knowledge of, or who have reasonable cause to suspect sexual misconduct by any other personnel of the diocese shall comply with the requirements of Connecticut civil law (confer full policy, section 6.3). He or she will make an immediate verbal report of the incident to the superior or supervisor who will relay it to the diocesan Director of Finance and Administration or the Episcopal Vicar for Clergy and Religious; or it can be made directly to the aforementioned diocesan officers. This will be followed by a written report to be prepared on forms obtained from either office.

### **How Will the Report be Handled?**

Each report will be investigated with a high level of Christian care, concern and confidentiality for the alleged victim, the family of the alleged victim, the person reporting the incident and the accused person. When accusations are made of sexual misconduct involving personnel of the Diocese, contact by a representative of the Bishop of Bridgeport, with the alleged victim and family, if applicable, will be promptly initiated. Medical, psychological and spiritual assistance, and, in appropriate circumstances, economic assistance may be offered in the spirit of Christian justice and charity.

### **What About the Accused Person?**

The accused person will be assisted in obtaining legal advice. If the alleged claim appears substantiated, the accused person may be relieved from the exercise of any function or responsibility or ministry and/or employment in the Diocese and placed on administrative leave pending the outcome of the internal and any outside investigation, such leave to be with or without pay and/or benefits, as competent diocesan authorities may decide.

Any personnel of the diocese who admit to, do not contest, or are found guilty of an incident of sexual misconduct shall be relieved immediately from the exercise of any function or responsibility of ministry and/or employment in the diocese of Bridgeport. Subject to the conditions of any applicable contracts or terms of

employment and at the discretion of diocesan authorities, such personnel may be assisted with any required rehabilitative or convalescent care.

### **Do We Need More Education on this Topic?**

Yes, we certainly do. To help support each adult's responsibility for his or her own sexual growth and maturity, the diocese, from time to time, may be able to arrange programs providing additional information and training concerning this sensitive topic. The Diocese of Bridgeport now requires each volunteer who works on the school grounds to receive training from VIRTUS. More information can be found by viewing their WEBSITE at [www.VIRTUS.ORG](http://www.VIRTUS.ORG).

### **What About False Accusations and Unsubstantiated Claims?**

There is always the possibility of false accusations or unsubstantiated claims made for whatever reason. Civil law provides penalties for the crime of falsehood in which individuals become victims of false denunciations and calumny, and the courts often impose financial reparations in such cases. Canon law also makes provision for canonical sanctions in various cases of falsehood and calumny.

**N.B.** This document is a summary of the policy relating to sexual misconduct for the Diocese of Bridgeport. It is designed to make you aware of the existence of the policy but does not purport to give you all of the important details. Therefore, all employees and volunteers of the Diocese of Bridgeport are encouraged to read, and to become familiar with, the policy as a whole.

## **Toilet Training**

All St. Mark Preschool children must be toilet trained and non-diaper dependant as of the first day of school in September. You may provide the preschool with a change of clothes for your child to be kept available in the preschool closet. Preschool teachers will not change diapers or "pull-ups". In the event of a messy accident, the parent/guardian will be called.

## **Parents' Meeting**

A meeting for all of our preschool parents will be scheduled prior to opening day each September.

## **Field Trips**

On-site field trips may be held during the year. These "field trips" may include visits from local museums or zoos, dance or music programs, or cultural artists. An Activities Fee will be collected from each student to cover any costs associated with these field trips.

Off-premises field trips may be scheduled at the discretion of the preschool teachers with the approval of the school principal. Transportation to and participation at any off-premises field trips will be the responsibility of the parent.

Dear Parents,

Now that you have read our handbook, would you take a moment to fill out both sections of the following form and return it to the attention of the office? Of course, if you have any questions about anything in our handbook, please contact me. Thank you.

Sincerely yours,  
Gene Holmes  
Principal

**TO: SAINT MARK SCHOOL OFFICE**

FROM: \_\_\_\_\_ FAMILY

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**I/WE, THE PARENT (S)/GUARDIAN OF \_\_\_\_\_**

**Student's Name(s)**

**IN GRADE (S) \_\_\_\_\_ HAVE READ THE PRESCHOOL HANDBOOK INCLUDING THE SUMMARY OF THE DIOCESE OF BRIDGEPORT'S POLICY ON SEXUAL MISCONDUCT. I/WE HAVE KNOWLEDGE OF SCHOOL REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES AND WILL HELP OUR CHILD(REN) ABIDE BY THEM.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**PARENTS' PERMISSION FOR THE PUBLICATION OF STUDENT WORK/PICTURES**

I understand that from time-to-time the school may wish to publish examples of student projects, photographs of students, and other work on an Internet accessible World Wide Web server, printed publications such as magazines, newspapers, brochures, etc. For publication on the school's website, no child will be identified by name.

\_\_\_\_My child (ren)'s work can be published on the Internet and photographs of my child can be published.

\_\_\_\_I would prefer that my child (ren)'s work and picture not be published on the Internet.

Parent Name (print) \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_