

Our Lady of Mount Carmel Children's Center

10001 Bird River Road
Middle River, MD 21220
410-687-8513
Fax: 410-687-7388

Serving the Parishes of
Our Lady of Mount Carmel & Our Lady Queen of Peace
Essex ~ Middle River ~ White Marsh

Principal:	Mrs. Lisa Shipley	410-687-8513
Assistant Principal:	Ms. Casey Buckstaff	410-687-8513
Tuition Manager:	Mrs. Karen Weber	410-238-1160

Dear Parents or Guardians,

The faculty and staff are glad to welcome you to the community of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Children's Center. We know that there must be a partnership between caregivers and parents for quality education and childcare to exist, and we recognize that good communication is a necessary ingredient for such a partnership. This parent handbook is one effort to supply needed communication about the Children's Center to parents. It provides valuable information concerning our philosophy and goals as well as details about procedures and policies. Please read the handbook carefully and keep it for future reference as it will provide answers to many questions that will arise throughout the year.

If at any time other questions or concerns arise, feel free to call the school office (410-687-8513) to obtain the information or make an appointment. Thank you in advance for your cooperation and support. We look forward to working with you and your children. God bless you.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Lisa Shipley
Principal

Ms. Casey Buckstaff
Assistant Principal

Our Lady of Mount Carmel Elementary School & Children's Center Mission Statement

The mission of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Elementary School and Children's Center is to invite, teach, and nurture in the rich tradition of Catholic education.

- We believe each child is unique and special to the Creator.
- We believe that spiritual, intellectual, social, and emotional growth begins in the family and is nurtured in cooperation with the school and parish community.
- We believe in providing positive, challenging, and supportive educational experiences for every child.
- It is our responsibility to prepare students for the challenges of an ever-changing world by inspiring them to behave ethically, value the dignity of others, and work for social justice.

I. ADMISSION POLICY

- A. Parents interested in enrolling their child at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Children's Center should call the school office to set an appointment with an administrator. If, after discussing the philosophy and programs, parents decide to register, the guidelines below are followed:
 1. To enter the Pre-K-3-year-old class, a child must be 3 years of age by September 1st, as verified by birth or Baptismal certificate.
 2. To enter Pre-K-4-year-old class, a child must be 4 years of age by September 1st, as verified by birth or Baptismal certificate.
 3. To enter Kindergarten, a child must be five years of age by September 1st, as verified by birth or Baptismal certificate.
 4. To enter the Children's Center a child must be six weeks of age by his or her date of admission, as verified by birth certificate.
 5. Parents should present a birth certificate, Social Security number, emergency information, immunization records, custodial records, and general health reports for children entering the Children's Center. The Baltimore County Health Department determines required immunizations. Mt. Carmel follows these requirements.
 6. Vision and hearing screenings are given for all students in Pre-K.
 7. Since cooperation between the school and parents is vital, no registration will be considered final until a parent signature of agreement regarding the school philosophy and information compiled in the parent handbook is on file in the school office.
- B. The children of non-parishioners (those not registered at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel or Our Lady Queen of Peace parishes) complying with the above guidelines are eligible for acceptance provided there are openings.

II. BEHAVIOR

The policies of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Children's Center are intended to help each child grow as an individual in body, mind, and spirit and as member of the community. We always treat one another with Christian dignity, acceptance, and respect and create a safe environment for all. Children learn to take responsibility for their actions. It is important that all individuals involved are clear about the rules and expectations that exist. Teachers always are encouraged to inform parents of the progress of their children. Open communication fosters an attitude of mutual trust and enables parents and caregivers to work together for the good of the child. By emphasizing constructive measures each child will develop a sense of responsibility for his or her own conduct. The

administrators reserve the right, at any point in the discipline cycle, to dismiss or suspend a child from the Children's Center for serious or extreme behavior.

III. PRESCHOOL DAY AND CHILDCARE ATTENDANCE

A. Arrival

1. Preschool — Upon arrival to the Children's Center, parents and children will wait near the office until the pre-k teachers greet the children and accompany the children from that area to the classroom. Parents are asked not to accompany their children to the classroom. Children may not arrive early or remain late unless they are enrolled in the day care program. The office can provide parents with the proper registration materials for this program.
2. Childcare—Parents are asked to accompany children directly to the designated childcare room during the Children's Center hours of 7:00am to 6:00pm. They must be granted entrance through the security doors by school personnel.

B. Safety

1. All members of the Children's Center community share a concern for child safety. Please note all doors to the building are locked from outside entry. All parents and guardians must be granted access to the Children's Center by school staff. All visitors are expected to enter via the front door near the main office, sign in, and wear a visitor's pass.
2. All visitors to the building at any time are expected to report to the office prior to going to any other part of the Children's Center. Parents may not go to the classrooms without reporting to the office first.
3. All volunteers in any capacity must abide by the Archdiocese of Baltimore Policy for the Protection of Children and Youth. These policies require that every volunteer submit an application, participate in training, abide by the Code of Conduct for Church Personnel, and undergo a criminal history screening prior to any volunteer service, including service as a chaperone.
4. All present on campus must follow the traffic patterns and driving policies on campus.

C. Inclement Weather Closing

1. Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Children's Center will follow the Baltimore County Public School System concerning weather related problems. Listen to WBAL radio or WLIF FM radio and do not call the school, the Archdiocese of Baltimore, or the radio stations.
2. If Baltimore County public schools open one hour late, preschool morning classes will begin one hour late. Preschool afternoon classes will take place as usual. The Children's Center childcare will open one hour late.
3. If Baltimore County public schools open two hours late, preschool morning classes will be cancelled. Preschool afternoon classes will take place as usual. The Children's Center childcare will open one hour late. If Baltimore County Schools are closed, the pre-k and daycare are closed.
4. If Baltimore County public schools close early, all preschool children must be picked up at the announced closing time. The Children's Center will remain open one hour after the announced closing time for registered children only.
5. Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Children's Center reserves the right to make a separate announcement regarding inclement weather or emergency closures. Parents should listen to WBAL or WLIF FM for announcements pertaining to Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Children's Center.

D. Absences

1. Attendance for Pre-K classes should be regular and punctual.

2. Absences for both the Pre-K and childcare should be reported to the Children's Center office by 8:00am.
 - a. The Baltimore County Health Department guidelines states that should a child have a fever of 100 degrees or higher or have experienced diarrhea or vomiting within the last twenty-four hours that child should not attend school or childcare.
 - b. Parents are asked not to take children out of school for appointments, etc. In cases where this is a necessity, the parent must send a note into the office indicating pick-up time etc. The parent must come to the school office to sign-out and pick-up the child. Under no circumstance will a child be permitted to leave otherwise.
 - c. If a child becomes ill at school, parents will be notified. Be sure that all information on emergency forms is current and accurate so that parents or designated persons can be reached.
3. Many families have unique arrangements for the custody and guardianship of their children. Unless there has been legal notification given to the school office, it is assumed that both parents are permitted to pick children up and to have access to school related information. Parents must keep updated documentation of custodial agreements on file with the school.
4. Absentee Procedures
 - a. Parent Responsibility
 - (1) Notify the school of the child's absence and reason by 8:00 am.
 - b. School Responsibility
 - (1) Provide the student with missed activities if they are requested.
 - (2) Communicate progress/difficulties with parents.

IV. ADMINISTRATION

A. Role of the Pastor & Principal

The pastor is responsible for providing for the spiritual needs of the entire parish community. The Children's Center, as a part of that parish community, is certainly in his care. In order to fulfill such a wide-reaching charge, the pastor delegates to the principal of the school the immediate direction of the school, its administration, and the instructional programs. The principal and pastor work together to insure continued quality and growth of the school. Care is taken to implement programs that result in the religious, moral, and academic development of the children and to hire sufficient, qualified staff to insure quality and excellence. Attention is also paid to the physical plant so that it is safe and adequate, as well as to finances thus insuring sound fiscal management.

V. COMMUNICATION

A. Parent-Teacher Conference

1. Progress Reports for Pre-K will be issued to students two times a year.
2. A teacher or parent may request a conference at any time during the school year. An appointment can be set by writing a note directly to the teacher or contacting the school office. Parent conference times must be confirmed by the teacher or administrator.
3. Parents may not come to the classroom for a conference with the teacher unless it has been scheduled.

B. Administrator-Parent Conference

1. Parents wishing to discuss a problem occurring within the classroom should first contact the teacher. If further discussion is warranted, then they may discuss the problem with the administrator.

2. If you would like to meet with the administrator, please call the school office to schedule an appointment. This insures that your needs are heard with the utmost attention and avoids conflicts with prior commitments on the part of the administrators.

D. School Records

1. Schools, upon proper notification, allow parents or legal guardians to review the child's complete record in the presence of the principal or his/her delegate.
2. If the custodial parent can show the school a court order denying access to the non-custodial parent, then the school may deny access. Otherwise, the records must be made available to both parents.
3. Records will be reviewed in the presence of an administrator.

VI. PARENT FOCUS GROUP/HOME SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

- A. Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parent Focus Group works to promote clearer understanding of the mutual responsibility of parents and teachers, as well as helping its members acquire a fuller appreciation of the ideals of Catholic education. All parents and legal guardians of students in the school and Children's Center are automatically members of the parent community. A new representative from each grade level is appointed from a pool of volunteers on an annual basis.
- B. The Fundraising Committee of the Parent Focus Group plans and executes the school's fundraising efforts. The school encourages all parents to participate and invites volunteers through use of the volunteer sheet and the monthly newsletter.
- C. Time, place and frequency of parent meetings are established and published in the yearly calendar and the monthly newsletter.

VII. NUTRITION INFORMATION

- A. Parents must provide daily lunch for any child attending the Children's Center.
- B. Children will eat lunch with their group. Each childcare space will be furnished with the necessary tables, chairs, or seating for eating.
- C. Snack will be provided for all pre-k children.
- D. The Children's Center will provide a morning and afternoon snack for all children in the toddler, two-year-old and pre-k daycare. Milk will be provided with lunch.
- E. Parents must provide all food for children under the age of 18 months.

VIII. HEALTH INFORMATION

- A. When a child becomes ill during the day, the necessary arrangements are made with the parents for the child's transportation home. Please have the emergency form updated if any phone numbers change or if your address changes. If we are unable to reach anyone at the emergency numbers, we will be required to call 911 if there is a serious medical problem. Any child with a temperature of 100.0 degrees or higher will be sent home. Any child who has vomited or has diarrhea will also be sent home. If any child was sent home due to illness, he or she will not be permitted back to school until the child is free of a fever (below 100.0 degrees), has not vomited or had diarrhea for 24 hours prior to the start of the next school day. This includes Sundays and holidays. There will be no exceptions to this rule. This is a Baltimore County regulation from the Health Department and we must adhere to the law. If you send your child to the Children's Center sick, or if he or she has been sent home for illness and is brought back to school the next day, you will be called to come get your child or to make arrangements to have him or her picked up. If you cannot be reached, we will call the next person on your emergency list until we reach

someone. Limited first aid for injury or illness is administered in accordance with the Baltimore County Health Department Policy.

- B. All medications must be accompanied by a consent form filled out by the doctor and signed by the parent/ guardian. These forms can be obtained from the office. If you need one, please request a form. This must also be done for any and all over the counter medicines except cough drops. When a child is required to have medication during a day, the medication is to be kept at school. For over the counter medications, the administrator will label them with your child's name and he/she will be the only one to use it. For medications prescribed by the doctor—when having it filled, tell the pharmacist that you will need a separate bottle that can be kept at school. The pharmacists are glad to cooperate. This is very important, especially for asthma patients who need an inhaler. One inhaler should be kept at school and one at home. Children are not to carry medication on their person or with their personal belongings. This is a Maryland State Law.
- C. Maryland State Law requires children in Grades Pre-K-8 to provide proof of immunizations.
- D. Hearing and vision screening of various grades will be done during the school year.
- E. Parents must inform the administrator about any health problems their child may have.
- F. Upon return after injury or illness, a doctor's note is required for special accommodations.

IX. MISCELLANEOUS

- A. Pre-K class trips are permitted and encouraged when they correlate with the curriculum. Teachers will supply information regarding date, dress, time, etc. after cross-checking details with the principal. In order to attend any off-campus activity during the school day, students must have an Archdiocesan permission slip with parent signature on file. Parents/guardians are only eligible to serve as chaperones if they have successfully completed all phases of the STAND volunteer process.
- B. Emergency Forms
 - 1. Each student is required to return a completed emergency form by the first day of school. It is necessary to have on file information such as home, work, and cell numbers that give us immediate access to you or someone you designate in case of illness or accident.
 - 2. It is the responsibility of the parent to keep phone numbers and addresses up to date.
 - 3. In cases of varied custody arrangements, legal designation of guardianship must be on file and clearly indicated on emergency forms.
- C. Fire Drills
 - 1. Fire drills and Quiet Corridors drills take place on a monthly basis to familiarize the students and staff with emergency procedures.
 - 2. The Baltimore County Fire Department's instructions state that there be no forewarning of such drills and that students are not allowed to go for their coats.
- D. Pre-K Transfers
 - 1. If you are moving, notify the office of the new address and the expected last day of attendance. The child will be issued a transfer card on the last day he/she attends school.
 - 2. A Release of Records Form must be signed by the parents before school records are forwarded to the new school. Official school records will be mailed directly to the new school as soon as we receive their request.
 - 3. No records will be transferred if financial obligations have not been met.
- E. Lost and Found
 - 1. Parents must label all of their child's articles.
 - 2. Any articles found are to be turned in to the Lost and Found located in the office. We will hold such items for several weeks before donating them to charity.
- F. Monies

1. Any money sent to school must be in an envelope with the child's name, classroom, and purpose written clearly on it.
2. No payments may be made in cash. Personal checks or money orders must be used to make payments.

G. Admission to Children's Center

1. In order to meet State Department of Education, and parish requirements, the following are necessary before any student will be admitted:
 - a. All medical records must be up to date as required by the Baltimore County Health Department.
 - b. All financial obligations must be up to date.
 - c. All registration forms and emergency data must be on file in the office.

H. Personal Possessions

Children may not bring personal items (e.g. personal stereos, trading cards, electronic games, etc.) from home. The school and its agents are not responsible for students' personal possessions.

I. Book bags

Parents are asked to provide a book bag or backpack for each child.

J. Parent Handbook

Though minor details involving school procedures change from year to year, most procedures do not, except for minor revisions. Therefore, we ask you to keep this booklet, and refer to it often. Parents will be notified of any changes. The parent handbook is based on and in compliance with the procedures and policies of the Archdiocese Elementary School Policy Manual.

X. TUITION INFORMATION

- A. The tuition policies of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Children's Center are forwarded to parents twice a year—once at registration and then again in September. It is important that you read and understand these policies and the cooperative spirit on which they depend.
- B. Support

The success of fund raisers such as the Fall and Spring Festivals, Candy Drive and other sales, and the various raffle events have an enormous impact on the operating budget of the Children's Center as tuition by itself does not cover costs. These fundraisers are key elements in keeping the tuition rates as just as possible. All families with children in the school are expected to participate in and support, as much as possible, these parish events and fundraising efforts.
- C. In addition to the tuition payments, all families are required to pay the following fees at the appropriate times. Please note that if a student transfers from Mt. Carmel, records will not be forwarded to the new school if there are outstanding financial obligations. Registration and tuition fees are not refundable.
 1. Registration Fee: This fee is a per child fee due at the time of registration. A space will not be held for an incoming student until this fee is paid.
 2. Archdiocesan Fee: This fee is a per child fee paid at the time of registration.
 3. Account Processing Fee: This fee is a per child included in the September billing. Families choosing to pay the full annual tuition by September 1st will be exempt from the \$42 Account Processing Fee.
 4. Monthly tuition payments: Payments for pre-k classes are due on the 10th of every month. A \$20 late fee will be incurred in the case of any pre-k tuition payments received after a 10-day grace period.
- D. No registration will be complete until parents have read and accepted policy of the Children's Center as stated in the Parent Handbook. Acceptance of such will be indicated by parent's signatures of the Statement of acceptance which will accompany the handbook. Also, note at the

time of registration, a commitment is made to follow through on the tuition agreement, Archdiocese fee, and parish obligations. None of the above is optional. No child's registration can be processed for the new year if there are unfulfilled commitments for the existing year.

- E. Families of pre-K students will pay monthly on a 10-month plan. At the end of every month, each family will receive the proper paperwork to accompany the tuition payment for the following month. This payment will be mailed to the Parish Center to:
Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish Center
Attention: Karen Weber
1704 Old Eastern Ave.
Baltimore, MD 21221-2203
- F. Families with children in the Children's Center daycare will be responsible for making payments weekly. Each child will have an envelope labeled with the payment and parent signature. When the payment is received in the Children's Center office, the payment will be marked off and the envelope returned to the family for the following week.
- G. The financial plan must be fulfilled according to the notification each parent receives prior to the opening of school. Any information or details relating to tuition are directed to the Parish Office, 410-686-4972.
- H. If a check is returned by the bank, the parent will be notified and will be obligated to pay the fee normally charged to the school. Parents should be aware that failure to fulfill their financial obligations can have serious effects on the child. Parents who are experiencing problems regarding tuition are expected to take the initiative in contacting the school to explain their difficulties prior to the crisis.
- I. The payment for the Children's Center daycare must be received by Thursday of the week prior in order for the child to attend daycare the following week. The payment must be received by the end of business of Thursday.

XI. SUPPLY NEEDS FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES

- A. The following are lists of the necessary materials that each family will supply their children with each day at the Children's Center.

We ask that all Children's Center families provide the following in August and January of each year:

- 2 boxes of Kleenex
- 2 rolls of paper towels
- 1 package of napkins
- 2 packages of disinfecting wipes

Infants & Toddlers:

- Daily supply of bottles, labeled with child's name
- Solid food, bowl, sipper cup, utensil as needed
- Bib
- Diapers
- Wipes
- Ointment as needed
- One set of extra clothes including undergarments
- Blanket

Two Year Olds:

- Daily lunch
- Pull-up diapers and wipes as needed
- One set of extra clothes
- Two sets of extra undergarments
- Blanket and pillow

Pre-K (3 & 4)

- Daily lunch
- One set of extra clothes including undergarments
- Blanket & Pillow