



**IHM Preschool and Young Fives  
Parent Handbook  
2025-2026**

**Mission Statement**

**Guided by Mother Mary, our patroness, Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic School learns, leads, and serves as disciples of Christ.**

**Our Philosophy**

**God created children with a natural curiosity for learning new things. They learn through play, movement, experience, language, imitation, and motivation through positive reinforcement. We are committed to providing your child a safe, secure, and loving environment to discover and explore the world God created for us. Our goal is for your child to have a very positive preschool experience. We want your child to be enthusiastic about school and to learn more about getting along with and caring for others.**

## **Contact Information**

### **Address**

**Immaculate Heart of Mary Preschool  
1951 Plymouth Ave SE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49506**

### **School Office Telephone Number**

**(616) 241-4633**

**\* call to be connected to the preschool building**

### **Website**

**[Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic School](#)**

**IHM Preschool and Child Care Programs are licensed by the State of Michigan.  
License Number: DC410021918**

### **Licensing Notebook**

**The licensing notebook contains all the licensing inspection/special investigation reports and related corrective plans for the last 5 years. This notebook is available during business hours for parent viewing. Licensing inspections, special investigations, and corrective action plans from the past 3 years are available for viewing at [www.michigan.gov/michildcare](http://www.michigan.gov/michildcare).**

## **Welcome to Immaculate Heart of Mary Preschool and Young Fives!**

**Immaculate Heart of Mary seeks to provide a Catholic environment in which the traditions and values of our faith are integrated into daily activities. Our policies are as follows:**

### **Admission**

**Children enrolled in our 3-year-old program must be 3 by September 1<sup>st</sup>. The 3-year-old class meets on Tuesday and Thursday mornings and afternoons\*.**

**Children enrolled in our 4-year-old program must be 4 by September 1<sup>st</sup>. The 4-year-old program meets on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings and afternoons\*.**

**\*Afternoon classes are based on enrollment.**

**Our Young Fives program meets on Monday – Friday afternoons. If you feel this is an option for your student, please discuss with your child’s teacher.**

**A copy of your child’s birth certificate is required at registration. Your child must also have a record of a physical examination signed by a physician and an up-to-date immunization record on file. They are not allowed to start school without these forms on file.**

**Children should be toilet trained before admission. If you don’t feel confident that your child has reached this milestone, he or she may be enrolled later in the year, providing space is available. Please be aware that pull ups are not allowed at preschool. However, we do understand that accidents happen. Please include a change of clothes, underwear, and socks in your child’s backpack.**

### **Backpacks/Bags**

**Please send your child to school with a backpack or bag. The backpack should be large enough to fit their extra clothes and folders/work going back and forth to school.**

## **Birthdays**

**Birthdays are a reason to celebrate! We want this day to be special for your child. Treats are welcome. Please send in a store bought, individually wrapped treat if you choose. Summer birthdays can be celebrated at the end of the school year or at a half birthday. Please coordinate with your child's teacher.**

## **Communication**

**A weekly newsletter will be sent home. Important dates and upcoming events will be communicated well in advance.**

**The school office will also provide weekly communication for important school-wide events.**

## **Conferences**

**Preschool 4s and Young Fives Conferences are held in November. (Optional parent or teacher requested in February as well).**

**Preschool 3s Conferences are held in February.**

**This time is set aside to discuss your child's development and progression throughout the year and address any parent or teacher concerns, if needed. Progress reports and assessments are shared with parents at this time.**

**Assessments are completed for each student three times a year – fall, winter, and spring. Progress Reports are completed for each student two times a year – winter and spring. These include information regarding gross motor and fine motor skills, social/emotional development, and cognitive skills such as colors, shapes, number identification, and letter recognition.**

## **Discipline**

**Our goal is to guide your child's behavior in a loving and positive manner. We reinforce good behavior, use gentle correction when needed, and look for assurance that the child knows why he or she is being corrected.**

**We redirect inappropriate, aggressive, or disruptive behavior, while discussing more appropriate behavior choices.**

## **Dress**

**Children should wear comfortable and casual clothing to preschool. An extra set of clothes kept in the child's backpack is a great idea.**

**Gym shoes are best suited for preschool (please no flip flops for safety reasons). Boots (rain or winter, depending on the season) are needed for play in our outdoor classroom. Your child will wear boots outside and gym shoes inside to help keep our classroom clean, dry, and safe.**

**We will plan to go outside during the winter months. Please send appropriate winter apparel each day - snow pants, boots, hat, gloves, and a warm coat.**

## **Drop Off and Pick Up Times**

**Immaculate Heart of Mary Preschool follows the IHM school year calendar.**

**Morning Class (3s & 4s): Drop-Off 8:00  
Pick-Up 10:55 - 11:00**

**Afternoon Class (4s & Young Fives): Drop-Off 12:00  
Pick-Up 3:00**

**Please refer to pg. 16 for the Drop Off and Pick Up Procedures.**

**Please make an effort to pick up your child on time. If you are running late (please notify us at 241-4633) your child will be taken to the school office to wait. Your consideration is very appreciated. Thank you!**

## **Emergency Procedures**

**Emergency procedures (Fire, Tornado, and Lockdown) are posted in each classroom. In the event of an emergency, parents will be notified via the IHM App with further information and instructions. Please be sure you have downloaded the IHM App prior to school starting.**

## Health Policies

**We are not able to provide for sick children. If your child has a fever above 100° F, please keep them home. Your child must be fever free without medication for 24 hours before returning to school. Please also keep them home if they are complaining of an upset stomach, have been vomiting or have had diarrhea, or have an unexplained rash. Your child must be symptom free for 24 hours before returning to school. If your child becomes ill at school with any of these symptoms, we will call you to come and take them home.**

**If a child has an infectious illness, such as COVID, pink eye, strep throat or something contagious, they should be kept home from school.**

**If your child has lice, please adhere to the following guidelines prior to your child returning to school.**

- 1. Parents must accompany their child to the school office with confirmation of treatment and provide that confirmation of treatment to the child's teacher.**
- 2. Designated school personnel will re-examine the student's hair:**
  - Students will be readmitted to school if no live lice are found.**
  - If live lice are found and not removed, the student may not be readmitted to school.**
  - If nits are found within one quarter inch of the scalp, parents will be educated about the need for removal of potentially viable eggs. The school office personnel will need to recheck for lice and nits the next school day to verify removal of potentially viable nits.**
- 3. Periodic checks of the student's hair by school office personnel will be done over the next few weeks.**
- 4. Parents will be required to continue daily lice checks and nit removal for the next two to three weeks.**

**Medications will not be administered to your preschooler, unless an authorized medication form has been filled out prior. We treat minor cuts and scrapes. In the event an accident or injury occurs at school, a teacher will notify the parent via phone call or at pick up time. Additionally, an accident/injury report may be filled out with further information. If an emergency situation arises, we will contact parents. If parents are unavailable, we will contact the person designated on the Child Information Card. If that person is unavailable, we will contact the doctor listed and follow their instructions.**

**Our Medication Policy is listed at the back of this handbook.**

## **Outdoor Classroom**

**We are very excited to have an Outdoor Learning Environment! This space is an extension of our preschool program designed to enhance your child's learning environment. It will offer your child a safe place to get outside, play, explore and learn in a beautiful natural area. We look forward to infusing nature into learning so that all children can get firsthand experience of God's creation. The area boasts three outdoor classroom areas, plants and trees native to Michigan and plenty of room for your child to grow physically, socially and emotionally! Our staff is trained in the Growing Up Wild curriculum and looks forward to infusing some of these lessons and extensions into your child's educational experience.**

**Please see the "Dress" section above for additional information regarding clothing for the Outdoor Classroom.**

## **Personal Property**

**It is important to limit items brought in from home. Please leave anything unnecessary to our school day at home. If an item is needed for nap time in preschool enrichment, please check with Mrs. Davis about the procedures for storing these at school and bringing them home to be cleaned.**

## **Prayers**

**We ask God to bless us as our school day begins:**

**Thank you for the world so sweet,  
thank you for the food we eat,  
thank you for the birds that sing,  
thank you, God, for everything. Amen.**

**We thank God for our food at snack time:**

**The Lord is good to me,  
and so I thank the Lord,  
for giving me the things I need  
the rain and the sun and the apple seed.  
The Lord is good to me! Amen.**

## **The Hail Mary:**

Hail Mary, full of grace,  
The Lord is with thee.  
Blessed art thou among women,  
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb – Jesus.  
Holy Mary, Mother of God,  
pray for us sinners  
now and at the hour of our death.      Amen.

**We will celebrate the liturgical year with stories, songs, and art projects about our faith. Our faith will be incorporated into each day!**

## **Schedule**

**The following is a sample of our daily schedule.**

Greet children at the car line  
Table Time – puzzles, manipulatives, etc. will be placed at the tables  
Circle Time – prayer, calendar, weather, books, thematic lessons and songs  
Center Time - arts and crafts projects, other planned activities  
Outdoor Classroom/Free Play  
Snack  
Quiet Book Time  
Outdoor Play/Movement Activity  
Dismissal

## **School Closings**

**IHM Preschool will be closed anytime IHM School is closed. School closings should be announced on television and via our IHM School App, usually early in the morning or even late the night before. School already in session may be closed early as conditions develop. If there is a 2-hour delay, morning preschool is canceled. Young Fives and afternoon preschool will have a normal start time.**

**Students are not sent home during a tornado watch or warning. When a warning occurs, the children will be taken to the safest part of the building. Parents are welcome to pick up their child if they are more comfortable doing so.**

## **Scrip**

The Scrip program provides an opportunity for you to purchase gift cards for a variety of stores, restaurants, and vendors, while you earn tuition credit. If you would like more information on this school-wide program, please see the school office or email the Scrip coordinator, Karli Simon at [ihmscrip1935@gmail.com](mailto:ihmscrip1935@gmail.com).

## **Services Available**

The following services are available through Immaculate Heart of Mary School on an as needed basis:

**Counseling**

**Speech evaluations (through the child's home school district)**

**Student Support Services (observations and teacher support)**

**Hearing and Vision Screening (yearly for all students)**

## **Sickness/Absences**

Please email your child's teacher and call the school office at 241-4633 if your child will be absent. You can also use our school app to notify both the office and your child's teacher at the same time. It is easy and convenient to use. Please also advise us if your child was diagnosed with an infectious illness, such as COVID, pink eye, strep throat, etc. We can then notify other parents to watch for symptoms.

## **Snacks**

Students will need to bring their own snack (labeled with their first and last name along with the date) each day. They should also bring a water bottle (labeled with their first and last name along with the date). Some suggested snacks are granola bars, goldfish crackers, applesauce pouch, etc. Please keep portion size in mind as we allocate 15 minutes a day to our snack time. Your child's teacher will let you know if there are any allergies within the classroom of which you need to be aware.

**Tuition for Preschool  
(2025-2026)**

3-year-old program: \$ 1,700.00 / year  
 4-year-old program: \$ 2,053.00 / year  
 Young Fives program: \$ 3,765.00 / year  
 Half day enrichment program: \$775 /half day  
 Full day enrichment program: \$1550 /full day

You may direct further questions to the school office.

**Withdrawals and Dismissals**

At any time, a parent may choose to withdraw their child. In this case, we appreciate written notice of the child’s last day of school.

If there is a time when Immaculate Heart of Mary Preschool cannot meet the needs of your child, we reserve the right to dismiss the child. Recommendation of the preschool director as well as the principal would be necessary for dismissal.

**Questions and Concerns**

If you have any questions or concerns, please let us know. You can call through the school office, 241-4633, or send us an email

Karen Gawronski: kgawronski@ihmschoolgr.org  
 Alyse Claunch: aclaunch@ihmschoolgr.org  
 Jennifer Ansell: jansell@ihmschoolgr.org

**IHM Preschool Classes:**

\*Afternoon classes are based on enrollment.

<b>Classes</b>	<b>Days</b>	<b>Times</b>	<b>Teacher</b>	<b>Aides</b>
3’s	Tues & Thurs	8:00 - 11:00 12:00 - 3:00*	Ms. Gawronski Mrs. Claunch	Mrs. Weber Mrs. Ansell
4’s	Mon, Wed, Fri	8:00 - 11:00 12:00 - 3:00*	Ms. Gawronski Mrs. Ansell	Mrs. Weber Mrs. Bayes
Young 5’s	Mon - Fri	12:00 - 3:00	Mrs. Ansell	

## **Cultural Competence and Inclusion in the Classroom**

### **Cultural Competence**

**At Immaculate Heart of Mary Preschool, we provide a safe and nurturing environment and celebrate the individuality of each child. As our school becomes more diverse, we strive to learn about each student and their culture, families, and home life. We provide a parent questionnaire at the start of the year which aides in this endeavor. We strongly believe that all parents are active participants in their child's education, so we aim to communicate effectively and interact positively with all cultures, regardless of differences in language. Therefore, communication is done in a variety of ways – verbally at pick up, drop off, and conference times or phone calls; over email via weekly newsletters; or with detailed letters sent home with students. Translators are used when applicable, to either relay messages or aid in conferences. In our classroom, all students are encouraged to participate in class activities and share their thoughts and ideas. Materials are used to reflect cultural diversity and all students are taught to respect and explore the culture and diversity of their classmates. Staff receive training when possible to further their cultural competence and further enhance the learning environment for all students.**

### **Inclusion in the Classroom**

**The Immaculate Heart of Mary Preschool program provides for all children, including those with identified disabilities and special learning and development. Modifications are made in the environment and staffing patterns in order to include children with special needs. Staff are aware of the identified/diagnosed special needs of individual children and trained to follow through on specific intervention plans. Therapy is developed appropriately and incorporated within classroom activities as much as possible rather than removing the child from the classroom. The supervising lead teacher makes appropriate professional referrals when necessary. Family members are involved in development and use of individualized education plans. Staff address the priorities and concerns of families of children with special needs.**

## **Health Care Policies and Resources**

### **A. Hand Washing:**

**Children will wash their hands at the following times:**

**before and after eating or handling food**

**after handling bodily fluids or wiping noses, mouths, or sores**

**Staff and volunteers will wash their hands:**

**before and after eating or handling food**

**after handling bodily fluids or wiping noses, mouths, or sores**

**before and after giving medication**

**after cleaning**

**Proper procedure for hand washing will be posted at sinks.**

### **B. Handling Children's Bodily Fluids:**

**Universal precautions will be followed in handling bodily fluids. All fluids that may contain blood should be considered potentially infectious. During the handling of bodily fluids, nonporous (vinyl or latex) gloves will be utilized and discarded. Effective hand washing will then be done. All surfaces soiled by bodily fluids or other potentially infectious material will be disinfected with a solution of ¼ cup of bleach to one gallon of tap water. Any disposable material that is contaminated with blood should be disposed of in a receptacle marked for "biohazardous waste".**

### **C. Cleaning and Sanitizing of Equipment, Toys, and Surfaces**

**All toys will be cleaned and disinfected prior to the beginning of the school year.**

**Afterwards, they will be cleaned and disinfected as needed.**

**Tables will be sanitized by washing with soapy water, rinsed with clear water, and sanitized with a bleach solution before food is served and at the end of the session.**

### **Resources**

**Kent Regional 4C – Referrals/Resources 451-8281**

**Catholic Social Services 456-1443**

**Health Department 632-6902**

### **Mandated Abuse and Neglect Reporting Policy:**

**If abuse and neglect is suspected, we are by law, required to report it orally to Child Protective Services. Within 72 hours, we are then required to submit a written report to them of the suspected abuse and neglect.**

### **Staff Screening Policy:**

It is our intent to hire high-quality experienced staff. All staff hired to work in the Preschool program have been interviewed by the director and principal of Immaculate Heart of Mary. We also require a TB test, completion of 16 hours of in-service training annually, and fingerprints/background checks on all staff. This screening conducts both criminal and child abuse checks on all staff members.

### **Staff Training Policy:**

All staff will:

-Meet with the program director prior to the first day of care and be informed on their responsibilities during Preschool.

-Be familiar with the book – Licensing Rules for Childcare Centers.

- Read section R44.5104. Offenses evidencing lack of good moral character; applicability. All staff shall sign a document acknowledging that the activities listed are illegal.

- Stay current and provide documentation of TB, CPR and Child First Aid classes and other classes and/or seminars as outlined in the licensing rules book. Caregivers are also required to:

1. Complete blood-borne pathogen training within 6 months of hire.
2. Complete 16 clock hours of annual training on topics referenced in R400.5102 (3) (b). See page 4 in the licensing book also.

- Make sure that they have had criminal background checks and have signed forms necessary for their files and in accordance with the Bureau of Regulatory Services for the State of Michigan.

- Be familiar with procedures in dealing with any serious injuries or illnesses of the children in their care.

- Be familiar with and in accordance with R400.5102 (2) (a) (b) and .104 and .104a.

- Be familiar with the Immaculate Heart of Mary School Policy and Handbook. The policies and rules apply to all students and staff and are under the guidance and authority of the School Administrator and the Immaculate Heart of Mary Board of Education.

### **Volunteer Supervision Policy:**

All volunteers must follow licensing requirements and diocesan regulations. Otherwise, no volunteer is left alone with children unsupervised.

**Pest Management Policy:**

**Immaculate Heart of Mary's integrated pest management plan, in accordance with R400.5940, includes the following:**

- An annual notification will be provided to parents or guardians informing them that they will receive advance notice of pesticide applications.**
- This annual notification will specify 2 methods by which the advance notice will be given.**
- The advance notification will include information about the pesticide, including target pest or purpose, approximate location, date of the application contact information at the school, and a toll free number for a national pesticide information center recognized by the Michigan Department of Agriculture.**
- Liquid spray or aerosol insecticide applications may not be performed in a room of a child care center unless the room will be unoccupied by children.**

## Medication Policy

Medication is preferably administered at home. However, if medication must be administered to a child in the preschool then it must only be given by the lead teacher and only if the state-required authorized medication form has been completed and signed by the child's physician or parent/guardian.

All medication must:

- must be sent to school/preschool/child care in its original container with the child's name on it.
- must have the pharmacy label indicating the child's name, date, doctor's name, medication name and strength, and complete instructions for administration.
- must be given to the lead teacher in the preschool immediately upon the child's arrival.
- must be stored out of reach of children and according to the original container's instructions.
- shall be returned to the parent or destroyed when the parent determines it is no longer needed or it has expired.
- shall only be given according to the instructions on the original container unless the child's physician gives a written order to do otherwise.

A medication record shall be kept for the child on the authorized medication form indicating the date, time, amount given, and signature of the lead teacher administering the medication (This form will be permanently kept in the child's files.).

Topical non-prescription medication requires written parental authorization to be updated annually. Please ask for the authorization form.

Topical non-prescription medication includes but is not limited to:

- Sunscreen
- Insect repellent
- Diaper rash cream
- Antibiotic ointment
- Rubbing alcohol
- Hydrogen peroxide

Topical non-prescription medication does not include:

- Hand sanitizer
- Hand or body lotion, including petroleum jelly based products such as Vaseline®
- Lip balm

## **IHM Preschool and Young Fives Drop Off and Pick Up Procedures**

### **Drop Off Procedures**

A map explaining the following locations was sent via email. Please do not hesitate to contact your child's teacher with any questions.

**Ms. Gawronski 3's (T/Th) and 4's Morning (M/W/F)** - Please have the carline start by the North side of the parking lot under the basketball hoops until 8:00am. Then pull up to the preschool outdoor classroom gate and Ms. Gawronski will come to each car. Please stay in your vehicle.

**Mrs. Claunch 3's (T/TH) Mrs. Ansell's 4's Morning (M/W/F)** - Please line up in the preschool parking lot outside the front door using two lines. Your teacher will come to each car starting at 8:00am. Please stay in your vehicle and your child will be escorted inside. Please pull forward as the carline moves.

**Mrs. Ansell Young 5's Afternoon (M-F)** - Please park in the church parking lot and walk your child to the front door of the preschool building. Mrs. Ansell will come to the door at 12:00pm.

### **Pick Up Procedures**

**Ms. Gawronski 3's (T/Th) and 4's Morning (M/W/F)** - Please pull up to the preschool outdoor classroom gate. Ms. Gawronski will dismiss your child to you.

**Mrs. Claunch 3's (T/TH) Mrs. Ansell's 4's Morning (M/W/F)** - Please line up in the preschool parking lot outside the front door using two lines. Meet your child at the front door as their teacher dismisses them to you at 11.

**Mrs. Ansell Young 5's Afternoon (M-F)** - Please park in the church parking lot and pick up your child at the front door of the preschool building. Mrs. Ansell will dismiss your child at 3:00.