

Epiphany Cathedral Catholic School
2026-2027
Epiphany Early Childhood Center
HANDBOOK



Premier Education
for a Life of Purpose

316 Sarasota Street
Venice, Florida 34285
ecstigers.com
Main School Office (941) 488-2215

Take time to read &
understand this handbook.
Sign & return the sheet(s) to
the teacher by
Monday, August 17, 2026.

Thank you. 



MISSION STATEMENT

Epiphany Cathedral Catholic school provides an excellence in Catholic education which nurtures a loving relationship with God and builds a caring community that serves others.

PHILOSOPHY

The developmentally appropriate preschool meets the needs of children who are at various levels of growth and development. Children are unique individuals who must be able to work at their own level. Children may be at the same chronological age but their skills and abilities in motor, auditory, intellectual, and social/ emotional areas may be very different.

The developmental preschool provides experiences for children to develop skills in the above areas by interacting with adults, other children, and materials. Many children need additional time to mature before they are ready for abstract symbols such as the alphabet and numerals.

Correct developmental structuring of the preschool can help provide children with a positive foundation. Self-concept development is enhanced when children are provided with experiences in which they can succeed at their level. Different levels of ability, interest and varying learning styles are used to provide appropriate activities. It is vital that children begin their education with positive experiences that build their skills and their self-concepts. The developmental program can provide such a beginning.

VISION STATEMENT

Epiphany Cathedral Catholic School sends forth disciples of Christ who serve God and their community, live a virtuous life of faith, joy and purpose according to the gospel values, while being a shining light to others.

DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAM

This program is designed to provide concrete experiences through which the child actively learns. Teachers provide modified activities to coincide with different developmental levels of the children. All learning in the classroom results from active movement and participation. The activity areas are uniquely designed to assist the children in acquiring specific perceptual, motor, and readiness skills.

The activity area allows for a high degree of physical movement, verbal interaction and self-concept development. Since the fundamental goals of the developmental program are to increase the child's visual, auditory and language skills, as well as to develop a positive self-concept, each learning area is designed to encompass overlapping skill development.

General Sample Schedule for Full Day

7:30 A.M.	Indoor Play/ free choice centers ----early arrivals
8:00	Opening Activities (Prayer, calendar, weather, other focused skills)
	Learning Centers: Art, Math, Science, Religion, Family Living, Music, Language Arts, Blocks, Computer, Library, Water/ Sand play
9:15	Religion /Character Development
9:30	Rest Room/ Snack/
9:45	Group Activities/ Specific Skills (Circle Time) Indoor
10:10	Literacy/ Math, or Science skills
10:30	Outside play; restrooms
11:15	Circle time, Lunch preparation and; Prayers before lunch
11:30	Lunch, dismissal
12:15 P.M.	Prepare for rest: rest room/ wash up put out rest mats; Literacy activity/story/skills before rest.
12:30	Rest time
1:30	Wake up from rest, put rest mats away, story time/ computer/ Science/ Social Studies; PE/ Art
2:00	SPECIALS-Outdoor activity
2:30	Dismissal

In the developmental curriculum, organizing and structuring the activity areas is necessary to provide consistency in helping children develop self-control and planning abilities. A daily schedule is important so that children and teachers can actively plan and complete activities in an organized environment.



RELIGIOUS & CHARACTER FORMATION

Consistent with Catholic tradition the religion & character component of the early childhood program at Epiphany is integrated and infused throughout the curriculum. The child develops an understanding of the faith & values experientially and cognitively at their particular level through participation in prayer, para-liturgy, and religious literature and other experiences. Videos, puzzles, role-play situations, and books are all used to support active learning in connection with gospel values and traditions in this process. However, as the child's first teachers, the parent and family provide the necessary role modeling for faith & character development during family life each day as well.

ADMISSION & PLACEMENT

Children must be three years old by September 1st in order to enter PreK3, or four years old by September 1st for PK4/VPK in order to be admitted to the program. **Children must be fully toilet trained (no diapers or pull ups) and without pacifier or bottle.** If a child is registered and it subsequently becomes evident that he/she is not toilet trained, then the child will be excluded from the program. School entry health exam and immunization records are required. Children are placed and grouped according to age as well as consideration of the developmental needs of the child based on the recommendation of the professional staff and the director. Changes in the group assignments at any point in time are at the discretion of the director in conjunction with consultation of the professional staff. Online applications/forms must be completed through our website or contacting our Admissions Office. Fees and tuition are also handled through the Admissions Office.

ATTENDANCE/ ABSENCE- CALL 941-488-2215.

Success in any field requires continuing daily effort. Nowhere is this more evident than in education. Children are expected to arrive on a regular basis between 7:30-7:45 A.M. since this is when the formal program begins each day. When a student is absent, the parent should call the main school office at 488-2215 between 7:45 A.M. and 8:30 A.M. to explain the absence. Calling the second day of the illness is not necessary. However, if the absence extends to three days, please call again to keep us informed. Please leave a message on the recorder if necessary. ALWAYS SEND A SIGNED, DATED WRITTEN EXCUSE FOR THE ABSENCE UPON THE CHILD'S RETURN TO SCHOOL. BE SURE TO LIST THE DAYS & DATES OF ABSENCE. THE TEACHER HAS ABSENTEE FORMS IN THE CLASSROOM FOR YOU TO USE. PLEASE TAKE AS MANY AS YOU NEED.

NON-DISCRIMINATION CLAUSE: The Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Venice in Florida restates their open admission policy. No person on the grounds of race, color, sex, national or ethnic origin is excluded, or otherwise subject to discrimination in receiving services at any school operated by the Diocese, nor do they discriminate in employment on the basis of age, race, color, sex, disability, national or ethnic origin. Non-Catholic students whose parents or guardians accept the philosophy of the schools in the Diocese will be accepted on a space available basis.

SCHOOL HOURS

The Epiphany Early Childhood hours are from 7:25A.M. to 2:30P.M. from Monday through Friday. After 7:45 A.M. is considered tardy. Pick up may occur until 2:30pm at the gate. Some children may be picked up earlier according to the designated time for which you have enrolled your child (11:30 am is enrolled for VPK mornings only). The After School Program operates from 2:30-5:30 PM for a fee. **Registration is required for the After School Program.** School calendar will be given with closure dates and early release days. Calendar may be found on the website.

ARRIVAL- Will occur for preschool students in front of the PARISH CENTER. Main gates open at 7:25 am; All gates close at 7:45 am for PreK-8th. You will need to call 941-221-2144 after 7:45 am.

An adult must walk children to the check-in table. Remember to sign in with your first and last name on the clipboard and indicate the person who will pick up your child. For the program to begin promptly at 7:45 A.M., be sure to arrive a few minutes before that time with your child so that there is enough time to put the backpack, lunch box, and rest mat away. In this way, the teacher may begin in a timely fashion. Depart promptly. **Kindly continue conversations with other parents outside the designated sign-in area. Be sure to carefully and attentively supervise any younger siblings (especially toddlers) that you may bring along during pick-up and drop-off times. The classrooms are designed for 3 and 4 year old children. We love to see the infants and toddlers but ask that you watch over them so that no injury occurs. Late: After 7:45 am.**



VISITORS

Only children who have been formally registered in the program will be admitted to Epiphany Cathedral Early Childhood classes. Adults visiting must first enter and sign-in at the main school office and receive a visitor's badge. This includes volunteers during lunch time and field trip chaperones. All volunteers &/or chaperones must complete the Diocese of Venice Safe Environment training as well as fingerprint / background check.

DISMISSAL/ RELEASE OF CHILDREN- Enter through main school office if all gates are closed. Children must be picked up at the gate by 2:30 PM or earlier if so designated according to the enrollment hours for your particular child. After that time, the child will be in the After School room. All preschoolers must be signed out by parent/ guardian/ or designee (18 years or older) first and last name. Mark the time of pick up as well. Any children waiting for dismissal of older siblings in K-8th grades will be supervised in the After School room until 3:00. Please arrive before car line for the elementary school. After that time, After School fees will be charged.

SPECIAL NOTE:

If a parent is unauthorized to pick up the child due to legal issues, then a court order or legal custody document must be in the child's file at the school. Please advise us whenever the marital, custody, or legal arrangement changes.

AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

This requires registration and prepayment. At 2:30 P.M., any children who have not been picked up will go to our After School Program room and will be charged for After School fees for that day

HEALTH RECORD

Each preschool child must have a Florida Certificate of Immunization and an updated Student Health Examination form on file before starting class. All immunizations and documentation, including Hep B, Hib, DTP, Polio, MMR, and Varicella, must be up to date and show an expiration date. Annual updated health exam records are necessary. Religious exemptions are no longer accepted.

DISCIPLINE

The discipline policy of the preschool is one of loving guidance. It corrects, strengthens, and ultimately helps your child learn to control his/her own behavior. Support and encouragement with consistent limits will be used while maintaining the child's dignity. A "time-in" in another supervised area may be used in situations that warrant it. No physical punishment, demeaning scolding, isolation, or denial of food, snacks, or drinks will be used as disciplinary measures.

BEHAVIOR

After an adjustment period, most behaviors of young children begin to even out and adapt to the daily routine as well as interactions with peers and professional staff. If behavior becomes a concern, then a conference with the parents may be necessary. Some strategies, alternatives, or a referral to another professional may be required in order to address the behavior issues. Ultimately, exclusion may be necessary if all efforts fail to assist the child, parent, and staff. In that event other resources or placement in another appropriate setting may become necessary.

INSURANCE

School insurance (secondary) is included in the registration fees. Coverage includes school hours and activities. Primary coverage remains the responsibility of each family for their child (ren).

FIRE DRILLS/ SAFETY DRILLS

Fire drills are held once a month in accordance with regulations. Other safety drills, such as code red, code yellow and tornado drills are held as needed.

EMERGENCIES In the event of severe weather (tornado, hurricane, etc.) school personnel will follow official directives issued by Sarasota County and Diocese of Venice. Tune into your local TV or radio stations for more information.

**CHANGES OF ADDRESS/ PHONE NUMBER**

Please promptly notify us of any change of address or phone number as soon as it occurs.

*Call the main school office directly at (941) 488-2215 or send the information to the teacher. **Make changes in FACTS.***

VOLUNTEERS

There is a special screening form, fingerprinting cost and background check which volunteers must complete before they will be scheduled. There is also a short workshop to attend known as "Safe Environment" which is required by the Diocese of Venice. Once cleared all volunteers must check in at the main school office each time and sign in to receive a visitor's pass. In the event that a parent is called to chaperone a field trip they must likewise first sign in at the main school office. The classroom teacher will provide guidelines for appropriate supervision of the children.

ILLNESS

A child must not be brought to school with any form of communicable illness or condition. This includes, but is not limited to, fever, severe coughing, excessive runny nose, respiratory distress, head lice, scabies, strep, conjunctivitis, undiagnosed/ unidentified rash, or any other conditions or combination of symptoms which are determined to be problematic. He/ she must be free of fever, vomiting, diarrhea, and any other potentially infectious secretions for a period of 24-48 hours before returning to school. If your child becomes ill during school hours, you will be notified to come take your child home or to a doctor. If you cannot be reached, the emergency person listed on the emergency contact list will be contacted. PLEASE SEND A SIGNED, DATED, WRITTEN EXCUSE EXPLAINING YOUR CHILD'S ABSENCE WITH THE DAYS & DATES OF ABSENCE UPON THEIR RETURN TO SCHOOL.

MEDICATION

If an antibiotic is prescribed, then he/she may return to school only after 24 hours on such medication with the approval of the child's doctor. Epiphany Cathedral Early Childhood may require a doctor's note in certain circumstances in order to be sure that the child is free of communicable illness. Medication can only be administered to the child at school out of necessity and when it is accompanied by a signed doctor's note/ prescription. This applies to over-the-counter medications as well. The medication must be in the original prescription container. The prescription label must show the child's name, doctor, doctor's phone number, type of medication and dosage. Specific instructions as to dosage and time of day in which it may be administered must be included. An affidavit signed by the parent/ guardian authorizing Epiphany staff to administer the medication to the child must be on file at the school as well. These forms are available from the teacher or director. All medications will be stored in a locked cabinet in the school office.

SCREENING

Vision, hearing, and speech screenings may be offered during the school year. You will receive email communications about the specific dates. The teacher or assistant will verify with you as to permission for your child's screening as they are scheduled and offered. Also, your signature on the acknowledgement at the back of this handbook will suffice as permission for such screenings unless we have a signed note from the parent/ guardian which declines the screenings. Other screenings such as those mandated by VPK funded children will be administered.

SUPPLIES & REST MAT

Each child should have a large backpack, rest mat, snack, lunch box. No violent images on lunch boxes, backpacks. Teachers may ask for other items/supplies that are needed on a "classroom wish list" throughout the year.

No pillows or sleeping bags are permitted. Rest mats will be sent home at the end of each week to be cleaned and returned for use on the next school week. Children may also need an additional small, lightweight blanket. A small "stuffy" (stuffed animal) is permitted.

SCHOOL UNIFORM

The preschool uniform - consists of a red Epiphany logo polo and navy blue logo shorts or pants for both boys and girls. Any color socks- full anklets over the ankle may be worn as well. No low-cut sport socks are permitted. Also, navy blue sweaters, sweatshirts, with buttons/ zippers, may be worn in the classroom and/or outdoors. Heavier outer coats of any color/ type may be needed for colder days. Please cut off drawstrings on jackets and pants as a safety measure. **BLUE JEANS** or any type of jeans **ARE NOT PERMITTED**. All clothing must be marked with the child's name. An extra set of clothing for all children, to include shorts, top, socks, underclothes, (and an extra pair of shoes, if available,) in a plastic



bag clearly marked with the child's name will be kept in the backpack to have on hand for emergencies. The extra set of clothes does not necessarily need to be the uniform but should still include easy to pull on elastic waistband shorts.

Sneakers with elastic or preferably self- closures are required at all times. Zipper closures are acceptable as well, as long as the child can easily zip them. Velcro and zipper closure combination works well and reduces the chance of children having shoes slip off while walking, playing or running. Sandals, crocs, clogs, flip-flops, boots and shoes without treads are not permitted at any time, which includes special out-of-uniform days. **Avoid tie shoes unless your child can tie them alone.** Check with the teacher or the director.

SPECIAL OUT-OF-UNIFORM DAYS

Appropriate attire on these announced special days consists of shirts, shorts, pants, skirts, or dresses. An elastic waistband is preferred for ease of dressing. Avoid difficult clothing with straps, zippers, buttons, or belts. Jumpsuits, bike or spandex shorts are not permitted. If dresses/ skirts are worn, then shorts must be worn under them as well. Shoes/ sneakers with elastic, Velcro, or zipper closures are necessary. Once again, sandals, Crocs, clogs, flip-flops, boots, and shoes without treads are not permitted. **Avoid tie shoes unless your child can tie them on their own.**

PICTURE DAYS

On days when school class or individual pictures are scheduled, information will be sent home as to the specific dress code for picture days. If for some reason this falls on a day which is not one of your child's regularly enrolled times or days of attendance, then you will be invited to bring the child specifically for the photo sitting only and take them home immediately afterward.

JEWELRY/ TATTOOS

No bracelets, chains, necklaces, rings, jewelry, etc. may be worn. Girls with pierced ears may wear small studs. Looped or dangling earrings are a safety hazard in this setting and should not be worn. Boys may not wear earrings of any kind. Tattoos are not permitted at any time. Belts are not to be worn as well.

TOYS/ CANDY/ FOOD/ GUM/ MONEY

Please do not allow your child to bring any of the items listed above. With the exception of food in the lunch box and a toy related to Show & Tell, these items are inappropriate. No violent images of any kind, including toy weapons, are permitted. No toys may be brought to school unless it is at the request of the teacher for a specific purpose.

SHOW AND TELL

Show and Tell days will be indicated for each classroom by the teacher. Your child's teacher will keep you informed. Only send toys or items that will fit into the backpack. **NO OVERSIZED ITEMS ARE PERMITTED.**

ADVANCEMENT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

Advancement to the next level/ class is dependent upon the judgment of the professional staff and in consultation with the child's parent(s) or guardian.

ASSESSMENT

Each school year the teachers will begin to complete developmental skills assessments on each child enrolled in Epiphany Early Childhood Center. Once completed, the results will be available to parents in order to keep them informed of the child's progress. You may make or request a copy of the results for your records. Then sign, date, and return the results to the teacher. At the beginning of the school year parents/ legal guardians may be asked to complete a social-emotional profile for their child. As needed, the teacher will meet with you to further discuss your child's progress. Teachers will make themselves available throughout the school year for conferences as needed. Feel free to make an appointment. Assessments may include: DECA, ASQ-3, VPK assessments, or other needed assessments. Hearing, vision, and speech screenings may also be offered. Referrals for further evaluations may be necessary.

FIELD TRIPS

If or when field trips are planned, advance notice is given. Signed permission slips are required for each trip, whether walking field trip or otherwise, are necessary. Parents/ Guardians will be notified of any fees related to the activity & you will have the option to have your child attend the trip or not. Your child is eligible for the field trips scheduled on their days/ times of enrollment only.



HEAD LICE

Regularly & thoroughly check for head lice. During breaks from school, there may be more opportunities for transmission from child to child as they go about recreational activities at other facilities and vacation spots. Most often it is contracted by direct contact but also by contact with clothing, furniture, combs, hairbrushes etc., that may carry lice. **If treatment is needed, then ALL steps must be followed.** Alert other places that the children go, such as dance, sports, and other homes of relatives or friends. This takes cooperation and vigilance.

NUTRITION/ SNACK/ LUNCHES

It is the parent's/ guardian's responsibility to provide a nutritional snack & lunch for the child. Please include a beverage. An ice pack must be included in the lunch box if food is to be kept cold. All necessary utensils and napkins must be included in the lunch box. **Epiphany Early Childhood will provide additional water as needed. Families are asked to provide a nutritious snack every day for their child.** Families are asked to provide a snack for their child in the After School Program each afternoon if they are staying beyond 2:30 pm. We ask that snacks be healthy and nutritious. Some suggested snacks may include: fruit, vegetables, cheese, and crackers. For the lunch from home, consider including a dairy product each day along with other major food group items.

LUNCH - Those staying for full days must bring their lunch from home or may order from our hot lunch program. Children who are leaving at 11:30 am will NOT NEED to bring a lunch due to their dismissal time. Lunches should contain an ice pack as well as a napkin and plastic silverware if needed.

PE- Specific physical education class for those enrolled full days may be offered as the master school schedule allows. Otherwise, all preschool children receive time on the playground in the mornings each day unless inclement weather prevents it.

BIRTHDAYS/ PARTIES

Children may celebrate their birthday in school at one of these specific times as long as pre-arrangement with the teacher has been made. You may send a birthday treat with your child and the staff will distribute it at the appropriate time. It must be **sealed in store bought packaging with ingredients listed.** This may take place outdoors as weather permits. Please consult the classroom teacher for suggestions of birthday treats.

INVITATIONS

Invitations to parties outside of school can be sent to school for distribution only under one of these conditions:

1. The entire class is invited. 2. All boys only are invited. 3. All girls only are invited.

Otherwise, you have the option of **mailing** invitations to whomever you would like to invite.

PARENT SUPPORT

Parental support of school programs, especially in the case of very young children, is essential. Parents need to play an active role in helping their children develop personal responsibilities by working to establish routines, goals and by monitoring their progress. It is important to develop and maintain a relationship with the teacher and assistant as well in order to be consistent in nurturing the children at home and at school.

Please feel free to get in touch with the teacher or the director should any concerns arise. We are here to support your role as parents and are willing to work with you and your child's needs.

We are so pleased & blessed to have your child here at Epiphany. Please let us know how we may be of further service to you throughout the school year. CALL us at 941-488-2215.



HANDBOOK- PARENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This page is to be completed, signed, and returned by all parents/guardians of children enrolled at Epiphany Cathedral School -Early Childhood Center.

I/ We as parent/guardian of _____
Print child's first & last name

acknowledge that this information has been read and understood. I/ we agree with the policies in this Epiphany Early Childhood Center handbook and will comply with the policies. **I/we agree to have my/ our child comply with these policies.**

I/ we give consent to conduct screenings that are offered for my child as well.

Signature of parent/ guardian

Date

Signature of parent/ guardian

Date



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ATTENDANCE POLICY- This additional page is only for parents of 4-year-old children in the Voluntary Pre Kindergarten (VPK) program (PK4) at Epiphany.

Please read, sign, and date this document and return it to school, which includes VPK guidelines and attendance policy at Epiphany.



I agree to:

1. Meet with my child's teacher if requested to do so.
2. Have my child to school on time.
3. Pick up my child by 2:30 PM if enrolled and attending full days, or no later than the designated time on early release days. If my child is enrolled in the VPK only morning session, then I will pick them up no later than the designated time, 11:30 am (unless he/she is enrolled in the extended day or After School Program). I understand that there is an extra fee for any hours beyond the VPK hours (Full day includes 11:30 am- 2:30/2:45 pm) and additional fees for the After School Program (2:30-5:30 pm). Additional fees will be assessed and paid for late pick up beyond my child's enrolled hours of attendance.
4. Be attentive to the allotted number of absences as outlined in the VPK guidelines (20% absences of the total 540 VPK hours) and avoid unnecessary absences.
5. Send a written excuse to my child's teacher for each and every absence. (Forms are provided in each classroom.)
6. **Verify my child's attendance each month through daily sign-in / out and other necessary documentation, with a full name signature each time to include the monthly Parental Choice Certificate.**
7. Work cooperatively with my child's teacher by following all handbook policies.
8. Assume responsibility for my child's conduct, including any consequences that may result or are expected by Epiphany Cathedral School- Early Childhood.
9. Submit all appropriate forms and documentation by the given deadlines.

I understand that I will not be charged any type of fee for Epiphany Early Childhood Voluntary Pre Kindergarten Program for the specific VPK hours of the program.

However, I understand that there is an annual registration fee for the hours beyond VPK time and additional monthly fees for children who attend the remainder of the day. Method of payment will be on a chosen option as per registration & financial commitment forms during the school year through monthly automatic bank drafts, semi-annual payments, or annual payments, unless special alternate arrangements are in place, which have been made with the main school office.

I understand that should my child remain at school beyond regular dismissal time, unless waiting for an older sibling's dismissal from Epiphany Cathedral Catholic School, K-8th grades, I agree to pay the additional fee for the After School Program as outlined above. In that case, I will complete a separate After School registration form and pay the fees per family for the for my child (ren)'s After School Program.

I understand that failure to comply with any of these guidelines may result in my child's release from Epiphany Early Childhood and/ or the Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Program.

PRINT Child's Name

Parent/ Guardian signature(s)

Parent/ Guardian signature(s)

Date

**WRITTEN EXCUSE IS REQUIRED FOR EACH ABSENCE.****EPIPHANY EARLY CHILDHOOD****2026-2027**

Today's Date _____

This written EXCUSE is for _____ who was absent
Print Child's First & Last Name

on the following DAYS/ DATES: _____

The REASON(s) for ABSENCE: _____

Signed _____
Parent/ Guardian Full SignaturePremier Education
for a Life of Purpose

Make copies for your use as needed.

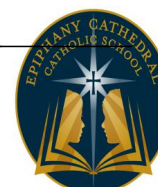
WRITTEN EXCUSE IS REQUIRED FOR EACH ABSENCE.**EPIPHANY EARLY CHILDHOOD****2026-2027**

Today's Date _____

This written EXCUSE is for _____ who was absent
Print Child's First & Last Name

on the following DAYS/ DATES: _____

The REASON(s) for ABSENCE: _____

Signed _____
Parent/ Guardian Full SignaturePremier Education
for a Life of Purpose

Make copies for your use as needed.

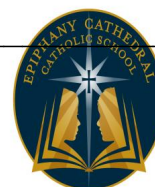
WRITTEN EXCUSE IS REQUIRED FOR EACH ABSENCE.**EPIPHANY EARLY CHILDHOOD****2026-2027**

Today's Date _____

This written EXCUSE is for _____ who was absent
Print Child's First & Last Name

on the following DAYS/ DATES: _____

The REASON(s) for ABSENCE: _____

Signed _____
Parent/ Guardian Full SignaturePremier Education
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Make copies for your use as needed.