



OUR LADY OF JOY CATHOLIC PRESCHOOL
Parent/Student Handbook

2026-2027

Mrs. Veronica Hale, Director of Preschool

www.oloj.org/preschool

36811 North Pima Road

P.O Box 1359

Carefree, AZ 85331

(480) 595-6409

Diocese of Phoenix and Department of Catholic Schools Mission Statement

The Diocese of Phoenix engages in the faith formation of the young through Catholic Schools by integrating faith throughout an educational process that promotes academic excellence, moral values and lifelong service.

Our Lady of Joy Preschool Mission Statement

To provide quality Catholic education in a faith-filled environment serving the community as one family in the body of Christ. We are fostering active Christians, lifelong learners, effective communicators, responsible citizens, and self-aware individuals.

Our Lady of Joy Preschool Philosophy

Because our children are our hope and joy, the future of the Church and society, the Church joins with parents, the primary educators in placing the child at the center of the educational process, which promotes academic excellent, moral values and fosters lifelong service.

Because each child needs the values and traditions of the community, the school will impart an understanding of the Catholic faith, doctrine, and mora perspectives, afford participation in a worshipping faith community and foster the responsibility for service.

Because each child is part of the Church and society beyond the school and home, the school will support and foster participation in the parish, Diocese, and the larger world community.

Because each child needs examples, in the school and in the home, teachers and parents must model their faith.

Because each child must be able to make informed decisions and to live according to Christian principles, the school must encourage self-discipline, self- respect, and respect for others.

Because each child needs a strong and caring environment of learning, the school, like the home must be supportive yet not enabling, loving yet disciplined, encouraging yet challenging.

Because each child needs knowledge and skills for today's and tomorrow's world, the school will provide opportunity and high expectations for learning and will develop the potential of each child spiritually, academically, socially, emotionally, and physically.

General School Information

Our Lady of Joy Preschool is licensed with the Arizona Department of Health Services. Annual inspections are conducted, and reports are available for viewing upon request or through contacting the Office of Child Care Licensure, 150 North 18th Ave, Suite 400, Phoenix, AZ 85007. Phone number is (602) 364-2539.

Preschool office hours are Monday-Friday from 8:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Classes start at 9:00 a.m. Our address is 36811 North Pima Road Carefree, AZ 85331. Mailing address is PO Box 1359 Carefree, AZ 85331. Our office phone number is (480)595-6409.

We offer preschool classes with children age 2.5-5 years old. We offer a PreK class with students that are eligible for kindergarten the following school year.

Communication with office and teachers

Please call our preschool office if you have any questions throughout the school day. Although many times we are away from our desks, assisting with recess, lunch or prep duty, please leave a message and we will return the call quickly.

The very best way to get in touch with the teachers is calling the office and leaving a message with the office manager. Teachers rarely get to check email or voicemails throughout the day, calling the office is the quickest way to reach them. Please feel free to email our staff and teachers for any reason.

vhale@oloj.org Mrs. Veronica Hale

aguarino@oloj.org -Ms. Antonella Guarino

jgarrison@oloj.org Mrs. Julie Garrison

amcquillin@oloj.org Mrs. Alexis McQuillin

czamary@oloj.org Mrs. Caroline Zamary

bobrien@oloj.org Mrs. Becky O'Brien

kbutvidas@oloj.org Mrs. Karla Butvidas

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

We will be continuing staggered arrivals and dismissal times as we did in 2020. This format allows easier pick up and drop off and a safer parking lot.

Families may park in the small or large parking lots located on our church campus. **It is imperative that you practice safety when removing your child from the car and walking in the parking lots. At all times, please have hand on your child in the parking lots and thank you for driving extra slow on the church campus.** Kindly do not park in handicap parking spots.

Custodial Parents/Grandparents/Caregiver

Recognizing the educational needs of the children and the unique circumstances related to legal custody situations, the following requirements have been established to assist all parties concerned.

Please provide the preschool office with custodial guidelines as it pertains to school drop off and pick up.

We recognize that grandparents and caregivers may be a part of your family school schedule. We will only send out school information to the people listed in our school software program. If you wish to have any person added to the information list, please see office manager.

Visitors on Campus

All parents or other visitors must sign in at the preschool office and wear a visitor badge. All visitors to the classroom must have permission from the teacher and office in advance. **Parents are welcome any time of the day to visit.** For the classroom teacher and students to grow independently, parents are asked not to stay in the classroom for an extended period.

Volunteers

Our Lady of Joy Preschool welcomes parish and parent volunteers in our school. Each volunteer (not a parent) must complete the required Safe Environment Training class and obtain a Arizona Fingerprint Clearance card. Parents of enrolled students do not need a fingerprint card. Volunteers maintain the utmost level of confidentiality and professionalism while in the classroom and on parish grounds, especially if volunteer become privy to information or situations pertaining to a preschool child or family.

School Uniforms and Dress Code

All students at Our Lady of Joy Preschool are required to wear approved school uniform that bears the OLOJ logo. Uniforms may be purchased and ordered from the preschool office. **If a child comes to school and is not dressed in accordance with the policy, we will give students a loaner uniform to wear, and a notice will be in the student's daily folder.**

Girls wear polos, jumpers, pants or shorts. Bicycle shorts must be worn under jumper for modesty. Boys wear polos, pants or shorts. Students must wear tennis shoes and plain socks. No light up shoes are allowed. No boots, heels or Crocs. No temporary tattoos allowed. Girl's hair should be trimmed so that it does not hang in the eyes. Boy's hair must be trimmed around the ears, off the forehead and length short enough so that it does not touch the shirt collar. Only small cross or scapula allowed, no other jewelry. Only slim headbands allowed. If students do arrive with said items, they will be asked to take off before they enter the preschool.

Admissions

The Catholic schools in the Diocese of Phoenix, in compliance with Gospel values and the teaching mission of the Church, extend an invitation to students regardless of their race, color national and ethnic origin, gender or disability. A disability, either temporary or permanent, is not a disqualification of admission provided that with reasonable accommodation the school can meet the needs of the student. Our preschool determines its suitability for meeting the extraordinary needs of students prior to formal admission of students with extraordinary needs. Enrollment documents must be filled out prior to first day.

Admission requirements into OLOJ Preschool

- The child must be independently potty trained
- Immunization record or documents for exemption
- Completed enrollment forms
- Signed financial agreement /policy forms
- Registration fee
- State emergency card

Tuition and Fees

Tuition and fees are determined by April 1st for the following school year. A copy of the most current tuition schedule, payment methods and policies may be obtained from the preschool office and found on our website.

2026-2027 Tuition fees PreK 5 days a week & Preschool 5 days a week:

\$6,000.00 Active participating \$6,250.00 Other

2026-2027 Tuition fees Preschool 3 days a week \$4,000.00 Active participating \$4,750.00 Other

We do not provide transportation for students. We do not have field trips at OLOJ Preschool.

Financial Obligation

Registration fees are due at the time of application or renewal for the next year. **This deposit is non-refundable**, and fees do not apply to the annual tuition. Parents may choose one of the following payments plans to fulfill their tuition obligation to the preschool.

Preschool 3 days a week \$4,500.00 annual/ PreK/Preschool 5 days a week \$6000.00 annual

- **One** tuition payment in full due by September 5
- **Two** tuition payments. One due September 5 and second half January 1
- **Ten** monthly payments due the 5th of each month. September -June

If you need tuition assistance, please see Director of Preschool, Mrs. Veronica Hale. We have funds available through the Knights of Columbus and parish in a scholarship program called Guardian Angel Scholarship. Scholarship families are asked to volunteer in a parish ministry to fulfill their stewardship and assistance. Please see preschool office for more details.

Parents/legal guardians are financially responsible for all school finance: Full Tuition, fees, etc. is due in full regardless of vacations, absences, withdrawal, etc. or the number of weeks in the school year per your financial agreement form. No credit is given for scheduled school holidays or vacation breaks. **We cannot refund monies based on days missed due to absences.** Parents are required to provide a minimum of 30 days' notice when a child is being withdrawn. Tuition will be charged for the month that the student is still in attendance.

Instructional Program

Curriculum is the plan for learning which identifies the student's interactions with content, materials, resources, and social interaction with their classmates. Our Lady of Joy Preschool is unique in that we are not a daycare or a childcare, but a school. Our teachers teach an academic program that includes handwriting, math, science, literacy, faith instruction and social and emotional development activities. A combination of teacher directed and child- selected activities are offered within a daily schedule.

Parent Teacher Conferences

The teachers hold parents' teacher conferences twice during the school year. One in November/December and the other in April/May. An assessment will be done on the student covering topics such as letters, sounds, positions, small motor skills, social and emotional gains to name a few. This is a great time to see how far your child has come in the preschool classroom and brainstorm on ways to further their education at home.

Communication with Families

We believe it is essential to have good communication between parents, teachers, and administration. This communication is accomplished through:

- Daily folders. Special events flyers, class newsletters, students work will be in this folder. Please check each day for information.
- Emails from the office and parish.
- Face to face conversations after dropping off and before picking up.

Religious Program

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is a faith formation experience for children ages 3-12 years of age. We are blessed to have a Level 1 CGS program inside our preschool that the students attend each week for approximately 1.5 hours. It is based on the belief that young children can and do experience God. The classroom is held in the preschool in the Atrium, next to the Junior Library. Children use hands on materials to explore and reflect on scripture, prayer, and liturgical events. Our Lady of Joy Preschool intertwines the experience in the Atrium with basic Catholic values in each classroom. Each class begin and end in prayer.

Family Events

- Weekly courtyard prayer
- Trunk or Treat
- All Saints Day & Grandparents Day
- Breakfast with St. Nick
- Donuts with Dad/ Muffins with Mom
- Crowning of Mary
- Water Day
- Preschool graduation prayer service.

Student Discipline

Discipline of Our Lady of Joy Preschool is to be considered as a n aspect of moral guidance. Evidence of discipline is a legitimate interest of the preschool that extends beyond the preschool day and beyond the preschool hours. The purposes of discipline are: to provide a classroom situation conducive to learning, to promote good character, create a safe environment for classmates and teacher and to develop positive self-discipline.

To teach self-discipline skills ones must have time, patience and offer consistent guidance. Our policy concerning unacceptable behavior, defined as a behavior that physically, emotionally, or verbally hurts another child or teacher, is to treat the child with respect and dignity while confronting the behavior. We have implemented a preschool wide discipline program that is designed to instill appropriate student conduct and respect in our students. With support from all staff and parents, this program will help students become accountable for their actions and choices and positively affect the learning environment.

Talk it out Program

The Talk it Out program is a problem-solving method that helps children learn to talk out their conflicts as an alternative to arguing or fighting. When children are taught verbal options for working out their problems at a young age, their language and thinking skills are enhanced, and they are more prepared to deal with conflicts as they grow older. Our Lady of Joy Preschool students use this dialogue and problem-solving strategies. Students are rewarded with positive reinforcement for successfully talking out their problems with peers.

Student Conduct

Our Lady of Joy Preschool seeks to maintain an environment in the preschool, which is conducive to learning, protecting the safety and welfare of all students and staff.

- Students are expected to behave in such a way that their presence is positive and do not detract from their own education or the education of others.
- Students shall treat teachers and administration, parents and fellow students with dignity and respect and shall behave in such a manner that their presence will contribute to a productive educational environment.
- Student conduct shall always reflect consideration for the rights and privileges of others.
- Students shall maintain high personal standards of courtesy, morality and honesty in the relationship of others.
- Students are expected to be in regular and punctual in attendance.
- No student shall engage in or encourage behavior which disrupts or poses a clear and convincing threat of disruption of the preschool operations or interference with the rights of others or with the ability of the school to provide educational opportunities to other students.
- No student shall engage in bullying behavior in the preschool or church campus. Bullying is defined as any repeated written or verbal expression, physical act or gesture that is intended to cause distress upon one or more students in the preschool environment. The

severity and pattern of the bullying behavior shall be taken into consideration when disciplinary decision is made.

Any of the following actions may be taken depending on the severity and frequency of the behaviors:

- Teachers will treat each unacceptable behavior individually. A student may lose a classroom privilege or be asked to take some quiet time until they are ready to return to the classroom activity and make appropriate and respectful choices. The teacher is not required to notify the parents at this level.
- If the behavior is not modified after incorporating the above methods, the teacher will send written notice home (daily folder) describing the behavior.
- The teacher will be contact the parents to describe the behavior and a conference may be scheduled.
- The student will be sent to the Director's office. The student may be asked to return to school when the behavior has changed.
- Unacceptable behavior will result in a conference with parents, teacher, and Director to resolve the problem and create a plan of action or the student may be asked to withdraw from the preschool.

Parental Expectations

Parental support of the authority of teachers and school staff members is expected to implement the program successfully. All students are expected to follow the behaviors outlined in this handbook while on preschool grounds or while attending any preschool sponsored functions. When clarification of a disciplinary action is necessary, the administration asks that the parents **first** contact the teacher and if further clarification is needed, please contact the Director. We want the absolute best for your child and family, an open line of communication is paramount in continuing a happy and healthy teaching and learning environment. Parents will conduct themselves in a respectful and faith filled manner while on the preschool and church campus.

Party invitations are not to be distributed on school campus unless the entire class is invited. Please be sensitive to this issue and our student's feelings.

Conflict Resolution Procedures

The staff at Our Lady of Joy Preschool is dedicated to the well-being and development of each of our students and wants to work hand in hand with parents to provide a positive preschool

experience. To keep lines of communication open and relationships moving in a positive and productive manner, we ask that parents adhere to the following procedures:

- When there is a concern pertaining to the classroom, please contact the teacher to set up a meeting.
- If a solution cannot be found, the Director needs to be contacted and made aware of the situation.
- If situations are not rectified to the satisfaction of those involved, then please make an appointment with the Pastor through his assistant.

Safety

Preschool hours are from 8:50 a.m. to 2:15 p.m. Classes start at 9:00 a.m. Monday through Friday. Students are under the direct adult supervision when they are on the preschool grounds. Students may leave the preschool only with persons that are on the signed emergency card list. If for any reason the child is to be picked up by someone other than a parent (including siblings) notification must be given to the school by the parent before the child will be released. No child will be released from the school to anyone who does not have proper identification or if the parent has not properly notified the school.

We perform quarterly fire drills, lockdowns, reverse evacuation drills to keep our students ready in case of a situation. No field trips and no transportation provided at Our Lady of Joy Preschool.

If there is an emergency on the church or school campus, you will be notified immediately via email from the school administration.

Periodically there have been natural causes that have required us to close school for the safety of our families. Such cases have been flooding and a snowstorm.

There are **no dogs allowed on the preschool campus, classrooms, playground or courtyard.** You are more than welcome to call us the preschool office and request us to bring out your child so your pet can stay in the car with you.

Arizona law requires the reporting by preschool personnel of suspected cases of child abuse and neglect to the Child Protective Services and local law enforcement.

Written permission from parents is required before a child's name or likeness can be used for any promotional purposes involving the Diocese, parish or preschool. This includes photos and videos.

Volunteers

We are fortunate to have a small group of parishioners who are retired teachers that spend a few hours with the classrooms per week. We welcome parent volunteers in the area of cutting/ gluing/ copy etc., and volunteer work will be performed outside of the classroom. All volunteers are required by law to have a fingerprint clearance card and complete SET training.

Please check with our volunteer calendar in the preschool office to schedule a time to volunteer.

Pest Control

The pest control company sprays in and outside the preschool each month. Please see hallway bulletin board for exact schedule of visits.

Student Health and Wellness

Preschool snacks and lunches will be provided by the parents and will be eaten in the classrooms. Weather permitting; we will enjoy an outside picnic in the playground. Please send prepared food that does not require cutting or peeling. **A nutritious lunch is particularly important to your child's classroom learning. They eat more food than you think while in school, please pack accordingly.** Please limit the sugar in lunches. Candy and soda are not permitted and will be asked to be eaten after school. Good nutrition enhances learning.

All students need to have a copy of their immunization records in their student file. No student will be admitted without this information. Staff cannot administer medications to a child. The exception would be treatment for an asthma attack or an EPI-PEN. If a child suffers a medical emergency, the preschool will call 911 and the child will be transported to the nearest medical facility as determined by the emergency personnel. Parents will be contacted immediately.

Illness

If your child becomes ill during the day, he/she will be removed from the other children and you will be contacted to pick them up from school. For our students to be most comfortable and with their parents, we ask that you pick them up immediately. No medication is allowed to be dispensed by the preschool staff.

- No child will be permitted to attend school who shows any of the following symptoms: acute cold, sore throat, green colored runny nose, sneezing and coughing, red or discharging eyes- **temperature of 100.00 or above**, diarrhea, skin eruptions or rashes or chills.
- If your child has had a fever during the night, they will not be permitted at school until a full **24 hours after the temperature has returned to normal** with no medication. If you child is send home with any symptoms from the first bullet point, they will not be permitted to return to school the next day.
- The Director and teachers have the authority to refuse admittance of your child if they see ANY signs of illness
- A written doctor's clearance or call from the office will be required before a child will be allowed to return to school if they have been suspected of having and communicable/infectious condition.
- Please see additional documents of the COVID 19 procedures and protocol in attached documentation.
- **Parents are required to notify the school if their child is exposed to a communicable/infectious disease so that the health needs of the other children and families at the school are protected.**
- Each family will get information on protocol for COVID 19 cases, our reopening plan and safety measures. **We do not dispense any medication including sunscreen.**

Who should I talk to?

During the year, questions or concerns about classroom procedures, activities or incidents may occur. Parents are requested to use kindness, grace, and holiness whenever program may arise.

1. If you have a complaint or concern, first and foremost pray about it. Ask God to help you make your complaint in such a way that it will result in the betterment of our school.
2. Complaints or concerns should be expressed first to the individual in question. Please set up an appointment to talk to them privately. Never discuss the teacher, students, families, or the school negatively in the presence of a child or a group of children.
3. Make sure the person to whom you are expressing your concerns to know all the details of the situation, and exactly what you are concerned about and why. Misunderstandings of concerns could lead to further problems and needless heartache.
4. Express your concern only to the person who should hear it. Unnecessary worry, harm and hard feelings result when problems and dissatisfactions are expressed to persons other than those directly involved with the problem.

5. If you cannot work out the situation out between yourself and the person involved, please take the situation to the Director.

Director's Right to Amend

This handbook is developed with the Diocese of Phoenix, Catholic Schools and OLOJ preschool policies and procedures. It is the intent of Our Lady of Joy Preschool staff to abide by all Federal and State laws. The Director has the right to amend, at any time, this living document. Revisions that are made during the school year will be communicated as they are made to the parents, guardians, and staff members. The handbook is a guide, but not necessarily an all-inclusive one. Situations may arise which are not specifically named or covered in the handbook.

At the discretion of the Director, a child may be removed from the school if it is deemed appropriate and necessary. Situations may include, but are not limited to, failure of payment without a special arrangement, inability to meet the needs of the child, in consideration of the best interests of the child, other children in the classroom, or as a result of a student's serious and repeated behaviors. If a registered family wishes to withdraw from the preschool, please communicate with the Director. You are financially obligated to pay for the month in which your child attended.

Insurance Regulations

In accordance with the Arizona Department of Health Services, Our Lady of Joy Preschool carries liability insurance. The Diocese of Phoenix provides accident insurance while a student is one preschool ground, when preschool is in session, or while taking part in a preschool activity.

Inspections reports are available onsite at the preschool office. Our Lady of Joy Preschool is regulated by the Department of Health Services at 150 N 18th Ave, Phoenix, AZ 85007. Hours are 8:00 a.m. -5:00 p.m. Phone number 602-542-1025

