

**EARLY CHILDHOOD
EDUCATION PROGRAM**

2026 – 2027



ST. JOHN LUTHERAN SCHOOL

(Wheatfield)

North Tonawanda, NY

St. John Evangelical Lutheran School

St. John's Purpose Statement:

To nurture children academically and spiritually toward a life of witness and service in Christ.



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January 2026

Dear Parents,

This handbook is prepared to acquaint you with the St. John Lutheran Early Childhood Education Program. Early Childhood Education has become a precursor to elementary education programs. Many of the current instructional strategies introduced at elementary and secondary schools have their origins in early childhood instruction. Cooperative learning, problem-based learning, thematic studies, and hands-on approaches find their roots in early childhood education.

Our School and Early Childhood Program integrate faith in Jesus Christ into education so the child may base the truth of what he/she learns on the truth of Holy Scripture. Therefore, the child is not only prepared to meet the challenges of life in this world but also prepared for a life of service to our Lord in His Church, the community, and the world to come.

The Early Childhood Program is taught by a professional educator and an assistant. The classes are purposefully kept small to ensure quality learning takes place. Our dedicated Christian teachers establish a caring atmosphere while developing your child's spiritual, social, emotional, mental, and physical development.

Our entire teaching staff encourages good communication with the families of our students, realizing that part of the total education involves home and school, working together.

Yours in Christ,
Mrs. Katie Gundell
Principal

CLASSES

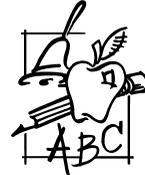
The classes are taught in well equipped rooms. Each day both 3- & 4-year-old classes have access to the gym or outdoor playground for physical activity.

The preschool options are as stated below.

CLASS HOURS: 8:30 AM-2:30 PM

- MONDAY-FRIDAY
- MONDAY, WEDNESDAY, FRIDAY
- TUESDAY, THURSDAY

Our latchkey program offers extended hours for childcare starting at 7 am and after school until 5:30 pm.



CLASS SIZE

The Early Childhood Program is a totally self-supporting, non-profit educational organization. We strive to maintain a class size that is ideal within NYS standards to provide an excellent beginning for children. A maximum of 16 three-year-olds and 18 four-year-olds can be enrolled per session. Any deviation from class size is up to the discretion of the school and in the best interest of the children.

ADMISSION POLICIES

- ✓ St. John Lutheran School does not discriminate based on race, nationality, disability, or ethnic origin in any school related activity.
- ✓ Children enrolling in the three- and four-year-old programs must be 3 and 4 years old respectively by December 1.
- ✓ Each child must be toilet trained and independently use the bathroom prior to the beginning of school. Please see the "Potty Training Procedures and Policy"
- ✓ Each child who is newly enrolled is done so on a one-month trial basis. No deductions or rebates are made for absences, illness, school closings, or cancellations due to conferences.
- ✓ Proof of Physical Exam
- ✓ Verification of required immunization and/or screening must be provided before classes start in September as follows:

- 1) 4 doses of Dtap
- 2) 3 doses of Polio vaccine (IPV/OPV)
- 3) 1 dose of Measles, Mumps, Rubella Vaccine
(min. age-12 mos.)
- 4) 1 to 4 doses of HIB (Haemophilus Influenza, Type B)
- 5) 3 doses HEP B
- 6) 1 dose of Varicella (Chicken Pox) (minimum age-12 mos.)
- 7) 1 to 4 doses of PCV
- 9) Proof of lead screening from physician

REGISTRATION TUITION AND FEES

All fees and payment schedules are determined by the Board of Christian Education. There is a non-refundable and non-transferable registration fee that is paid by all enrolled students. This fee covers school insurance, some consumable workbooks and textbooks, art supplies, weekly news publications, and other consumables. The fee is published prior to the school year and is subject to yearly review.

Tuition payments are to be made as listed on the schedule or may be paid in full at the beginning of the school year.

Unpaid balances after the tuition due date shall be considered in a state of default. Please see tuition payment preference and policy for all tuition policies.

If a parent chooses to withdraw their child(ren) prior to December 1st, the parent is responsible for half the cost of tuition for each child enrolled. If the withdrawal happens any time on or after December 1st, the parent is responsible to pay the full tuition of their child(ren) at St. John.

SCHOOL CALENDAR

The preschool classes follow the K-8 calendar which will be posted on our website and is also available on Fast Direct under links. Please post this in a convenient place.

When Niagara Wheatfield schools are closed because of weather conditions, we will not be in session. School closings can be found on WGZR Channel 2, WIVB Channel 4 or WKBW Channel 7 and parents will be notified by Fast Direct and the Remind app. Snow days and other cancellations due to school closings will not be rescheduled.

LATCHKEY

Morning and afternoon Latchkey is organized to provide St. John students enrolled in Preschool through grade 8 before and after school supervision. Morning sessions begin at 7 am and afternoon sessions are offered from 2:30-5:30 pm. A Latchkey Handbook is available from the office or Fast Direct. Please refer to that for regulations and fees.



ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Children should enter and exit through the front door of the building. Parents will drop off their child(ren) at the front door. At dismissal, adults should line up on outside sidewalk for preschool pickup. Teachers will dismiss children to adults at 2:30 pm.

A child will not be dismissed to anyone except a parent, or someone designated by the parent. If it is necessary for someone other than the parents to pick up the child, a written note to the teacher is necessary. Please inform the child of this arrangement.

HEALTH & SAFETY

Please keep your child home if he/she has a cold or symptoms of illness. The close contact of children at this age causes germs to be transmitted easily. Please notify the school of your child's absence and illness.

It is necessary to inform the school as soon as your child has been diagnosed as having a contagious illness. For certain contagious diseases such as impetigo or lice, a doctor's permission slip or permission from the school health office is needed to be readmitted to the classroom. Medications will NOT be administered by school personnel without the proper paperwork.

A school nurse administers the health records. If records are found to be deficient, the school nurse will call or send a Fast Direct message, and the deficiency must be corrected immediately. Thank you for your cooperation.

WHEN TO KEEP YOUR CHILD HOME

ILLNESS

Any fever

Vomiting or diarrhea

Strep throat/scarlet fever

Pinkeye

Any undiagnosed rash

Head lice

WHEN TO RETURN TO SCHOOL

When fever is gone for **24 hours** without medication (i.e., Tylenol)

When symptoms are gone for **24 hours** 24 hours after start of treatment, with a medical note

When eyes are clear or have been treated with antibiotics for **24 hours**, with medical note

When symptoms are gone for **24 hours**, with medical note

When head is treated and free of lice and nits as determined by the school health office (students must be cleared before riding the bus)



A message will be sent, and/or a phone call will be made if a child is ill or involved in an accident. Please make sure the information on Fast Direct, completed at the beginning of the year, is kept up to date.

LUNCH & SNACK

Our school participates in the federally funded lunch program everyday except half days. We are proud to offer these nutritionally balanced lunches to our students each day. Free & Reduced lunch is also available for qualified families. Information will be available in August at the parent meeting. Lunches can be prepaid weekly or monthly by placing payment in an envelope with your child’s name and grade and placing in your child’s folder. The funds will be added to your child’s lunch account and can be seen on your Fast Direct.

Part of our routine is a daily snack. A schedule will be sent home to let parents know when it is their turn to bring snack. We encourage healthy foods. Please send a snack at the beginning of the week.

CLOTHING

All clothing should be clearly marked with the child’s name. School themed shirts are worn

every Friday by all students. A large school bag or backpack (approximately 13x15) is required for both the 3- & 4-year-old programs. Sneakers are required in the gym and while using the playground. Dress children in outfits they can quickly manage.

NAP/REST TIME

Rest time in our preschool provides children with a calm opportunity to relax and recharge their bodies. Each family is asked to provide a nap mat which will be sent home occasionally for washing. Rest time begins with a short yoga video to help children settle, followed by dim lights and calming music. In the PK4 class, rest time is shortened to about 30 minutes and after Easter, transitions to no nap to prepare for kindergarten.

PARTICIPATION



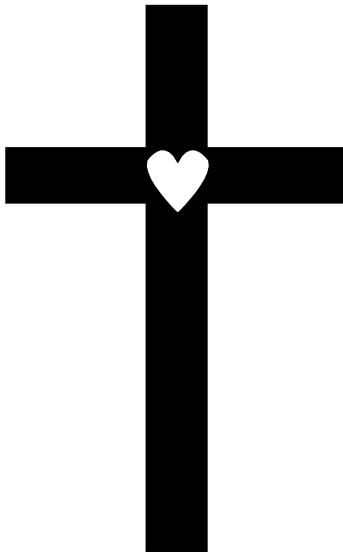
We have one or two parents from each class fill the position as room parent. They help to coordinate class activities and parties.

The 3- and 4-year-old classes attend chapel each week with grades K-8. St. John has a Parent-Teacher League. The fellowship and programs are designed to help you as parents become more aware of the emotional, physical, spiritual, and academic needs of your child. Programs are also designed for “whole family involvement”. Attendance and participation affect your child’s education in many positive ways. The PTL also sponsors fundraising activities for equipment and material which are used to improve our educational programs.

During the year, there are school functions in which all students are expected to participate. This includes two Sunday worship services (Christian Education and Lutheran Schools Week), a Christmas Program in December and a musical or concert in the spring. Please watch for the dates to be announced and plan to attend.

STARTING THE SCHOOL YEAR

In addition to the information given at this time, there will also be emails sent to your personal email, that was given on your child’s registration form, regarding our Fast Direct website which is used for communication between home and school. During August, more information will be given during Meet the Teacher and the Student Orientation.



**OUR
MISSION
STATEMENT**

**The mission of
St. John Lutheran School
is to nurture children
academically and
spiritually toward a life of
witness and service in
Christ.**