



2023-24  
PRE-KINDERGARTEN  
PARENT HANDBOOK

Our Lady of the Elms  
1290 W. Market St.  
Akron, OH 44313  
330-864-7210

# Table of Contents

[Welcome](#)

[Philosophy](#)

[Behavior Management](#)

[Attendance](#)

[Drop Off/Pick Up](#)

[Daily Schedule](#)

[Transportation](#)

[Snack](#)

[Lunch](#)

[Rest Time](#)

[Dress Code](#)

[After School Program](#)

[Communication](#)

[Parent Participation](#)

[Potty Training](#)

[Required Documentation](#)

[Health and Safety Policy](#)

[Health check](#)

[Illness/Communicable Diseases](#)

## **Welcome**

Welcome to Our Lady of the Elms Pre-Kindergarten! We are pleased to have you as a part of the Elms' family! This program has grown from a sincere love for children and a commitment to help families raise their children to love the Lord. Our goal is to develop the whole child: spiritually, academically, emotionally and socially. We do not discriminate in providing services to children or their families on the basis of race, religion, sex or national origin.

Our Lady of the Elms Pre-Kindergarten is licensed by the Ohio Department of Education. The most recent inspection reports are posted outside of the classrooms for viewing. It is our intent to follow and act in accordance with federal, state and local law, as well as CDC recommendations.

As we prepare to return to school this fall, our priority is always the health and safety of the students, families and staff in our school community. We are implementing new safety policies and procedures and enhancing those already in place. However, in spite of our precautions, we realize that a government mandate may require school closure. Should that happen, we want our Pre-Kindergarten families to know that we are planning for ways to ease their burden in a manner that will enable us to continue to support our teachers. If the Elms is required to close by a government mandate for 15 or more school days in a month, the Elms will adjust your FACTS tuition account by 1/10 of the tuition owed for the school year. If your tuition is paid in full, you will be given a credit for the upcoming school year to use toward Summer Camp, Registration/Technology Fees and/or tuition. No refunds will be given and this forbearance is only applicable to Pre-Kindergarten students.

This handbook is designed as a guide for you and is not intended to address every facet of the pre-school experience. We suggest that you keep it in a convenient place for easy referral throughout the school year. Should questions arise, please feel free to contact your child's teacher, or our Director of the Lower School at any time.

After reading this handbook, please sign the verification form provided on the last page and return it to your child's teacher.

## **Philosophy**

- We believe all children can learn and should be taught in a safe learning environment.
- We believe that all children should be given the opportunity to be taught with a variety of instructional approaches to support their learning and to empower children to become confident, lifelong learners.
- We believe students need to apply their learning in meaningful contexts.
- We believe a student's self-esteem is enhanced by positive relationships and mutual respect among and between students and staff
- We believe parents are the first educators of their children; however, parents, teachers, administrators, and the community share the responsibility for preparing children to be productive members of the Catholic Church and society.

Our Lady of the Elms Pre-Kindergarten program uses developmentally appropriate practices to provide a safe, supportive and nurturing environment where children develop physically, socially, emotionally, spiritually and cognitively. The program also supports the relationship between children, their families and the preschool staff.

## **Behavior Management**

Our goal is to keep children engaged in such a way that discipline is rarely needed, and to use positive reinforcement to obtain desired classroom behaviors. However, it is sometime necessary to re-direct children who may have gotten off track, remove them from situations that appear to cause potential stress, or provide a “take a break” or “calm your body” time during which the student will spend a short, developmentally appropriate length of time away from the group, and then be re-directed to more appropriate choices.

*Our Lady of the Elms Pre-Kindergarten shall NEVER use methods of discipline that humiliate, shame or frighten a child.*

Parents are also assured that:

- There shall be no cruel, harsh, corporal punishment or any unusual punishments such as, but not limited to, punching, pinching, shaking, spanking or biting.
- No discipline shall be delegated to any other child.
- Discipline is only administered by a program adult.
- The only physical restraints used to confine a child are techniques in which the staff has been certified to use to ensure the safety of the child and others.
- No child shall be placed in a locked room or confined in an enclosed area such as a closet or other cubicle as a form of discipline. Separation from other children, when used as discipline, shall be brief in duration and appropriate to the child’s age and developmental ability, and the child shall be within sight and hearing of the pre-school staff member in a safe, lighted and well-ventilated space.
- No child will be subjected to profane language, threats or derogatory remarks about one’s self or family.
- Discipline is NOT imposed on a child for failure to eat, sleep or for toileting accidents, and does NOT include withholding food, rest or toilet use, and food shall NOT be used as a reward for behavior.
- The school shall not abuse or neglect children and shall protect children from abuse and neglect while in attendance in the pre-school program.

## **Daily Schedule**

Pre-Kindergarten’s Daily Schedule will be given out by teachers and is subject to change.

## **Attendance**

Our Lady of the Elms Pre-Kindergarten believes that regular attendance is a vital factor in the child’s development of self-discipline and responsibility. When your child needs to be absent from school, please call the school’s main office at 330-864-7210 before or on the morning of the absence.

Our school is designed as an educational experience for preschoolers and is NOT a daycare, therefore, we must begin promptly. In order for your child to receive the full benefits of the program, it is important to arrive on time.

Should you arrive later than 8:00 a.m., or need to pick up your child earlier than 2:30, please enter Door #6 near the main office in order to sign your child in or out.

School will be in session unless you hear an announcement on a local television, radio station or via Digital Academy indicating that we are closed. If you are tuned in to the radio or television, listen for the following:

*Our Lady of the Elms School.*

If you live in a school district outside of Akron, your residential school district may close, and the Elms may remain open. If you decide that coming to school on that day is too hazardous, you should keep your child at home. This will be considered an excused absence.

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

**7:15 - 7:45 a.m.:** Students arriving to school before 7:45 a.m. must be walked by an adult to door #4 (follow the sidewalk off the circle) for Before School Care, which is monitored by teachers.

**7:45 - 8 a.m.:** Students should enter at Door #7 by the pre-school classrooms. No students will be given access to Door #7 after 8 a.m. For the safety of our students, we strictly adhere to this policy during the school year. Parents who arrive with students after 8:00 a.m. must park and bring the students into the building via Door #6 by the main office.

**12:00 noon pick-up:** Half Day students will be picked up at Pre-Kindergarten Door #7.

**2:30 p.m. Dismissal:** Students will be dismissed through the gym doors at the circle. Students not picked up by 2:45 p.m. are considered part of the After School Care Program. After Care fees begin at 3:30pm.

### **Transportation**

For the safety of all those attending our school, please carefully read and follow the directions listed below. Both the teachers and crossing guards who are on duty are there for the protection of students. Please respect their directions. **Drive slowly!** All pedestrians are to use the crosswalk.

Students should be picked up or dropped off before vehicles pass the crosswalk. Do not stop your vehicle beyond the crosswalk to wait for a student. Please be patient and wait in line.

**Families are not permitted to go around cars ahead of them in the pick-up or drop-off area.** Do not park in the Convent driveway at any time or leave your car unattended in any driveway lane near dismissal time.

### **Traffic Pattern**

A traffic pattern has been established to provide safe delivery and pick-up of students on school property. All parents should follow this pattern. Drivers who make themselves the exception to the rules create safety hazards for themselves and others.

- Crossing guards signal students when traffic is stopped and it is time to cross. They do this by lowering their flags.

- Cars will stop in one of the three marked car lanes. Preschool families are encouraged to use the lane closest to the school.
- Students are instructed to use the car door on the walkway side only.
- Cars are boarded and unloaded according to their order in line. Three cars are loaded/unloaded at a time. When one group of cars is loaded, the crossing guards lift their flags to indicate that the cars may leave, and the line of car moves forward to permit boarding/unloading of the next three cars.

### **Curriculum**

The program follows developmentally appropriate practices for three, four and five year-olds as documented through the National Association for the Education of Young Children and the Ohio Department of Education Early Learning and Development Standards. These standards are addressed through the use of the Office of Catechetical Formation and Education, Diocese of Cleveland Pre-Kindergarten Curriculum and Academic Guidelines, and Scholastics "PreK On My Way" Curriculum.

### **Snack**

Daily snacks **will not** be provided by the school, please provide your child with a daily snack. Birthdays are a special day for our students to celebrate. If families would like to send treats to school, we ask that treats be kept simple. As healthy alternatives, we recommend granola bars and fruit snacks. Please also check with your child's teacher regarding allergies before sending in a snack. Their names will be announced over the PA system during morning announcements. No gift deliveries are to be made to the school. In fairness to all students, birthday invitations will not be passed out at school unless every student in the class is receiving one. If not, parents are responsible for sending invitations via U.S. mail.

### **Lunch**

Students may purchase their lunch at school, or parents may pack the child's lunch. Please mark your child's name on his/her lunch container. The school's lunch menu will be posted in each classroom. Hot lunches must be ordered monthly. Menus will be sent home in advance.

### **Rest Time**

Pre-Kindergarten rests for 1 hour everyday between 12:30 and 2:00 p.m. Each child will have his/her own mat that will be cleaned regularly. Nap items will be sent home bi-weekly to be washed. Nap items include: small pillow and blanket, one stuffed animal and a pillow case to store all items while not in use.

**PLEASE WRITE YOUR CHILD'S NAME ON ALL REST ITEMS!**

## **Dress Code**

Comfortable play clothes are best for the pre-school classroom. Children will be engaged in movement and exploration and should be dressed to reflect that. Pre-school days can sometimes get messy! We ask that you bear that (and the weather) in mind as you choose your child's outfit. For girls, please dress in pants during the winter months and shorts in hot weather. We discourage dresses; however, if they are worn, in the interest of modesty please put shorts on underneath the dress. For boys, shorts are fine during appropriate weather. Shoes must be the type to permit students to run, climb and skip freely. Tennis shoes are recommended. Toeless or backless shoes are not acceptable. This includes, but is not limited to, sandals, jellies, clogs, water shoes, Crocs, flip-flops, etc. This is simply for safety reasons. Thanks for understanding!

## **After School Program**

The After Care Program is offered to families when supervision is needed for students for a short time after school. The time of the program is 2:45 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. each afternoon. There will be a separate program and room for Pre-K/K students and Grades 1-5 students. After Care fees are charged beginning at 3:30p.m.

**6:00 p.m.** All students must be picked up by 6 p.m. If you are unable to pick up your child by this time, you must make other arrangements for him/her to be picked up. A \$20 fee will be assessed for every 15 minutes you are late in picking up your child after 6:05 p.m. (e.g. 6:05 p.m.-6:20 p.m. – 15 minutes late, equals an additional \$20).

- Three times late results in suspension of aftercare privileges.

## **Communications**

School communications will go home in the family folder with students. The folder shall be returned to the school each week. Please read the weekly communication and any communication from the school so you are aware of important news, meetings, upcoming events, updates, etc.

An All-Campus Bulletin (Pre-K-12) that includes all events across campus is distributed electronically each week. Additional communications will come via email or paper copy as needed.

## **Parent/Teacher Communications**

It is our goal to be as clear and open in communication as possible. Please also note that the instruction and business of school and the safety and well-being of our students is our top priority. If parents have questions and/or concerns regarding their child, please follow the lines of communication as outlined below:

- Email your child's teacher in the morning before school (7:45-8 a.m.) or after dismissal at 3 p.m. Please understand that teachers cannot be called out of class to take phone calls from parents. Teachers will respond to emails after 3 p.m. and within 24 hours of your communication during the regularly scheduled school week. If your question needs an immediate response prior to dismissal, please contact the school office.

- If the matter needs more discussion and/or information, parents should request a conference with the teacher. Feel free to call, email or set up a time for a face to face visit any time you feel the need.
- If the matter is still not settled, parents should request a conference with the Lower School Dean of Students.
- If the matter is still not settled, parents may contact the Academic Dean.
- The Elms President is the final voice in a process of this nature and may not be involved until all other action is taken.

Formal parent/teacher conferences will take place twice a year- once in November and again in March.

### **Potty Training**

Children must be fully potty trained, and completely out of all forms of diapers, (including Pull-Ups) during the day in order to attend pre-school. Teachers are NOT permitted to help students with toileting as our facility is NOT A DAY CARE.

### **Required Documentation**

Parents are required to provide the following:

- Copy of the child's birth certificate
- Copy of the child's immunization record
- Copy of the child's custody papers, if applicable
- An annual signed physician's report (good for 13 mos. from date of exam)
- An Oral Assessment
- All completed registration forms as obtained from the pre-school, including emergency medication information and daily authorization for transportation

### **Health and Safety Policy**

We are dedicated to keeping your child safe. All children must be brought into the classroom by a responsible adult and may not leave school grounds until released to an adult listed on the authorized daily transportation form. Should you require that someone other than the child's usual caregiver pick him/her up, please let the school know ahead of time, preferably in written form. The adult in question **must** have proper photo identification (such as a driver's license) to pick up your child.

Emergency procedures are posted for fire, weather, accidental or medical emergencies. Fire and tornado drills are practiced throughout the school year. A written log is kept of each drill and is available for review by parents upon request.

Our Lady of the Elms Pre-School will always have at least one staff member who is trained in first aid, trained in CPR, can recognize and manage communicable disease and is trained in child abuse recognition and prevention available while your child is in attendance at school.

By state law, parents are to be informed that all pre-school staff members are mandated reporters of suspected child abuse/neglect. Not reporting suspected cases to the proper authorities could result in criminal charges brought against the employee and/or loss of their education license.

All injury incidents will be recorded and parents will be notified immediately of the occurrence.

Healthchek is Ohio's Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT) Program. It is a service package for babies, kids and young adults younger than age 21 who are enrolled on Ohio Medicaid.

If your children are enrolled in Ohio Medicaid, Healthchek services are available to them. If you are younger than 21 and are also enrolled, you can receive Healthchek services, too.

The purpose of Healthchek is to discover and treat health problems early. If a potential health problem is found, further diagnosis and treatment are covered by Medicaid.

Healthchek covers ten check-ups in the first two years of life and annual check-ups thereafter and offers a comprehensive physical examination that includes:

- Medical history
- Completed unclothed exam (with parent approval)
- Developmental screening (to assess if child's physical and mental abilities are age appropriate)
- Vision screening
- Dental screening
- Hearing assessment
- Immunization assessment (making sure child receives them on time)
- Lead screening
- Other services or screenings as needed.

## **Health Services**

Please do not send your child to school sick. We realize, of course, it is sometimes difficult to tell early in the morning how one will be feeling. However, a child with a cold, fever or the flu should not be sent to school. Temperatures will be taken at school every morning for the foreseeable future, and a child with a temperature of 100° or higher will not be admitted to school.

A child who feels ill in the classroom is escorted to the school health aide. Depending on the duration and severity of the symptoms, parents are contacted to take the child home. Parents are required to stop in the office and sign out their sick child.

Parents will receive written notification each time their child is seen in the clinic, indicating date, time and nature of the visit. In the case of minor bruises or scratches, first aid may be administered and an injury report completed and sent home with the child.

Emergency medical service (9-1-1) will be contacted for any situation that is considered by the office staff to be severe. Parents will be contacted as soon as possible following any extreme situation. If parents cannot be reached, we will attempt to reach other individuals in the order they are listed on the Emergency Medical Authorization form. It is, therefore, very important that a current Emergency Medical Authorization form is on file in the office. Without this form, your child may not receive medical attention as quickly as needed. Paramedics will not transport a child without authorization from the parent.

It is required by Ohio Law that we have on file at the time of enrollment, written evidence that your child has received appropriate immunization. Students who do not have this information on file in the office will be excluded from school.

State law prevents us from dispensing any medicine, including non-prescription medication, without written permission from the parent and the physician. This holds true also when a dosage is changed. No medication may be taken by a child in the classroom. The medication is to be brought into the school office by the parent. All non-prescription medications (pain relievers, cough drops, etc.) are to be kept with the school health aide and dispensed in the clinic or school office. A "Request for Administration of Medication" form is available from the school office.

Parent permission is needed for the application of topical products and lotions and is to be applied according to the manufacturer's instructions.

### **Illness and Communicable Diseases**

Our Lady of the Elms Pre-Kindergarten follows the Department of Health "Communicable Disease Chart" for appropriate management of suspected illnesses. The following rules are observed in the pre-school program to limit the spread of illness. Please do not send your child to school if he/she has any of the following:

- Diarrhea (more than one abnormally loose stool in a 24 hour period)
- Severe coughing, causing the child to become red or blue in the face or make a whooping sound
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
- Oral temperature of 100 degrees or higher
- Untreated skin patch or patches
- Unusually dark urine and/or gray or white stool
- Stiff neck
- Evidence of lice, scabies or other parasites
- Unusual spots or rashes
- Sore throat or difficulty swallowing with elevated temperature
- Nasal discharge having a greenish tint
- Vomiting
- Yellowish skin or eyes

*A parent or guardian shall be immediately notified if their child has been observed with signs or symptoms of illness, and will be discharged to his/her parent or guardian as promptly as possible. While waiting for discharge, the child will be isolated from other students, watched carefully and kept comfortable.*



## Educational and Conduct Contract

Please go to <https://www.theelms.org/forms> to access the handbook.

We have read, understand and agree to abide by the contents of the 2023-24 Our Lady of the Elms Pre-Kindergarten Family Handbook.

Family Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

After reading this handbook please complete this contract and return this page to your child's teacher. Thank you.