



**St. Michael Lutheran School**

*Education with Christ at the Heart*

**And  
Christ for Kids  
Preschool & Childcare Center**

**Parent/Student Handbook**

**2009 - 2010**

A Ministry of:

**St. Michael Lutheran Church**

7211 Oakland Drive

Portage, Michigan 49024-4151

(269) 327-7832 (Church)

(269) 327-0512 (School)

(269) 327-4889 (Childcare)

1. Be prompt and prepared.
  - Come to school on time
  - Have all necessary materials
  - Have assignments completed to the best of your ability

***“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.”***

2 Timothy 2:15

2. Respect authority.
  - Listen to authority and follow school rules
  - Follow directions promptly and without argument
  - Accept responsibility for your own behavior

***“Show proper respect to everyone.”***

1 Peter 2:17a

3. Respect the rights of others.
  - Use appropriate voice and language at all times
  - Listen and pay attention to the speaker
  - Respect the right of others to have differing opinions
  - Refrain from harassment and retaliation

***“Do to others as you would have them do to you.”***

Luke 6:31

4. Respect Property
  - Respect the property of others
  - Respect your own property
  - Use materials and equipment appropriately
  - Keep things clean

***“Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else’s property, who will give you property of your own?”***

Luke 16: 10-12

## **Our Statement of Faith**

As Lutherans, we subscribe to the Lutheran Confessions because they agree with the Bible. They include the creeds of the Christian Church, namely; the Nicene, Apostles’, and Athanasian – all of which confess God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and Jesus Christ as the only Lord and Savior. The Holy Scriptures are the basis and authority for all matters of faith and life and are the inspired and inerrant Word of God. The Bible teaches that Jesus Christ is both true God and true man, who was virgin born, and who suffered, died and rose again for our justification. We believe that we are saved by grace through faith in Jesus’ death and resurrection for us. The Holy Spirit leads us to confess Jesus Christ as our Lord and nourishes us in this faith relationship through the Word and the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper. The Christian life is a daily relationship with God of repentance, faith, and forgiveness, empowering us to serve God in our daily life by caring for one another and for the world around us.

Dear Students and Parents:

We are pleased that you are part of the St. Michael Lutheran School/ Christ for Kids family! Our sincere hope is that your time spent with us will be a blessing to you and your child (ren). Our goal is to provide a Christ-centered education that develops the God-given gifts which make each student a unique creation in Christ.

As in the past, we continue to update each year's Student/Parent handbook. This year's edition is no exception. Each one of the policies, guidelines, and rules are implemented to better fulfill our mission in a safe and efficient environment. None are intended to cause inconvenience but rather to facilitate smooth operation and good order. I would encourage you to read this handbook carefully so that you can be better informed about the school and childcare programs. Not all issues have been addressed in this handbook, so if you have any questions please contact the school office at 327-0512 or the Childcare office at 327-4889.

We look forward to another exciting and educational year here at St. Michael. We appreciate the opportunity to partner with you in the task of educating your child (ren). Please support this ministry with your prayers as we begin the 2009/2010 school year.

In Christ's Service,

Gregory Johnson  
Principal

# 2009-2010 School Calendar

## August

Mon 31 1<sup>st</sup> Day of School – Preschool  
K-8 (Full Day)

## September

Friday 4 No School/Preschool  
Monday 7 No School – Labor Day  
Wednesday 9 Back-to-School Night 6:30pm K-8  
Thursday 10 Preschool Back-to-School Night 6:30pm  
Friday 18 PTL Bingo Night

## October

Tuesday 6 Lifetouch Pictures  
Wednesday 7 Lifetouch Pictures  
Friday 30 Reformation Day/Can Building Contest

## November

Friday 6 End of 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter  
Friday 13 Living History Night 6:30 pm: (K/2/4/6/8)  
Mon 16 – Fri 20 Operation Christmas Child  
Wed 18- Fri 27 No Preschool  
Monday 23 Conferences (evening)  
Tuesday 24 Conferences (evening)  
Wed 25- Fri 27 Thanksgiving Break: No preschool or school  
Thurs 26-Fri 27 CFK closed

## December

Thursday 10 Christmas Program 6:30 pm: K-8  
Friday 11 Christmas Program 6:30 pm: Preschool  
Friday 18 ½ Day K-8  
No Preschool  
Monday 21 Winter break begins  
Wed 24 – Fri 01 CFK closed

## January

Monday 4 School Resumes  
Monday 18 MLK Holiday: No preschool or school  
Thursday 21 Open House 6:30-8:00 pm  
Friday 22 PTL Snow Ball Dance  
Friday 29 End of 2nd Quarter  
No School/Preschool

## February

Sunday 14 Sing at Immanuel (3-5)  
Tuesday 16 Spring Pictures  
Wednesday 17 Spring Pictures  
Thursday 18 Open House 6:30-8:00 pm  
Mon 22-Fri 26 No Preschool  
Preschool Conferences  
Friday 26 Mid-Winter Break: No preschool or school

## March

Mon 8- Fri 12 Lutheran Schools Week  
Friday 12 Science Fair 6:30 pm: (PK/1/3/5/7)  
Thursday 18 Open House 6:30-8:00 pm  
Mon 22– Wed 24 Conferences (evening)  
Friday 26 No School/Preschool/CFK closed  
Fri 26- Fri 2 Spring Break

## April

Friday 2 Good Friday – CFK closed  
Monday 5 No School – Easter Monday  
No Preschool/ CFK Closed  
Thursday 15 Open House 6:30-8:00 pm  
Friday 16 End 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter – No School/Preschool  
Thur 29-Fri 30 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Camp  
Friday 30 Fine Arts Night 6:30 pm

## May

Thursday 13 School Play 1:30  
Friday 14 School Play 6:30  
Friday 21 Volunteer Appreciation  
Monday 31 Memorial Day – No School/Preschool  
CFK Closed

## June

Tuesday 1 Last Day for T/R Preschool Classes  
Wednesday 2 Last Day for M/W Preschool Classes  
Thursday 3 Last Day of School K-8 – Full Day  
Spelling Bee 9:30 am  
Field Day 1:00 pm

St. Michael Lutheran School  
**Parent Handbook (2009-2010)**

Principal’s Welcome .....	1
2009 – 2010 School Calendar .....	2
Table of Contents .....	3
Introduction .....	4
Philosophy .....	4
Non-Discrimination Policy .....	4
Daily Schedule & Calendar .....	5
Before & After School Care .....	5
Entrance/Enrollment Requirements .....	5
CFK Withdrawal .....	6
Drop Off and Pick Up/Busing .....	6
Tuition & Fees .....	6
Scholarship Assistance .....	7
Dress Code/Required School Shirt .....	8
Teaching Staff .....	9
Curriculum .....	9
Library .....	10
Chapel .....	10
Recess .....	10
Travel Folders (K-8 only) .....	10
Homework .....	11
Classroom Grading .....	11
Report Card Grades & Standardized Testing .....	12
Hot Lunch & Snacks .....	12
School Attendance/Absences (K-8 only) .....	13
Snow Day Closings .....	14
Emergencies .....	14
Illness .....	14
Medications .....	15
Birthdays .....	15
Parent Teacher League (PTL) .....	15
Parent Newsletters, Information Board & Conferences .....	15
Parent Volunteer Hours .....	16
Safety .....	16
Weapons Policy .....	16
Expulsions/Suspensions (K-8) .....	17
Playground Discipline (K-8) .....	17
Visitors .....	17
Field Trips .....	18
Student Photos .....	18
Pets .....	18
Discipline Policy .....	18
Sexual Harassment .....	19
Pesticides, Lockers and ECD’s .....	20
Acknowledgement Form .....	21

## **Introduction**

St. Michael Lutheran School and Christ for Kids Childcare and Preschool (hereafter referred to as: SMLS & CFK) extends a warm welcome to all parents and their children who will be attending our school. It is our hope that your experience will be a positive one.

This handbook has been prepared to assist you in the explanation of our programs. Please read it through and then refer to it whenever you have questions. It will explain policies, procedures and philosophy. It will also help in the preparation of both child and parent for participation in a program where home, church, and school work together in partnership.

SMLS & CFK is an outreach ministry of St. Michael Lutheran Church, and is governed by the Board of Early Childhood Ministries. CFK is licensed by the state of Michigan and is inspected frequently to ensure a high quality of childcare and education. SMLS is approved by the state of Michigan to operate as a private school.

Questions or concerns regarding the School's (K-8) policies or procedures should be addressed initially to the Principal. Questions or concerns regarding the Preschool or Childcare policies or procedures should be addressed initially to the Director. When necessary, the Principal or Director may then take concerns to the Board.

Parents who are not members of St. Michael Lutheran Church are invited to attend classes on the teachings of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod so that they may understand the principles of faith shared and applied in the classroom.

Periodically children are offered an opportunity to sing or participate in other activities at one of our Sunday morning services. All parents and family members are invited to these events.

## **Philosophy**

SMLS & CFK offer Christ-centered programs in a loving and caring atmosphere. Teachers and staff believe it is our responsibility to introduce and foster growth in a relationship with God, the family, the community, and the world. We desire to meet the needs of the whole child - spiritual, social, emotional, physical, cognitive and creative.

Our teaching philosophy evolves around the concept that all children can learn. Our teachers believe that as educators, it is their responsibility to determine each child's strengths and provide opportunities for continued growth. This builds self-confidence and provides individuals with positive and successful learning experiences.

Another important role our teachers play is to provide students with the support they need for successful learning. This is accomplished through activities such as one-on-one and small group work, working with parents to provide additional support at home, making themselves available to students when they are feeling confused or overwhelmed, and having a classroom library for students at many different stages in the reading process.

## **Non-Discrimination Policy**

SMLS & CFK is open to any family regardless of church affiliation, and we admit students of any race, color, or national and ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to all students at the school. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national, or ethnic origin in the administration of our educational or admission policies.

## **Daily Schedule & Calendar**

**Childcare** - The Center will be closed the following days: New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Good Friday, July 4<sup>th</sup>, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, the day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve day through New Year's Day, and the last full week prior to the start of school. Hours of operation are from 6:45 AM to 6:00 PM Monday through Friday.

**Preschool** – Preschool generally follows the SMLS calendar with some additional time off to allow for conferencing. Please refer to the school calendar for specifics.

**K-8<sup>th</sup>**: The school day begins at 8:30 AM and runs until 3:30 PM. Grades K-8 meet Monday through Friday. Kindergarten meets every day for a half day or all day with the Kindergarten Connections program.

SMLS generally follows the Portage Public School calendar with some exceptions. There will be a Thanksgiving break, Christmas break, and Spring break. Beginning and ending school dates can be found on the school calendar. Occasionally the staff will be involved in a teacher conference or workshop and there will be no school on those days.

## **Before & After School Care**

SMLS offers both before and after school programs for our families (an additional fee). Students can be dropped off as early as 6:45 AM, Monday through Friday, and can remain until 6:00 PM. A \$10.00 late fee will be charged if a child is picked up after 6:10 PM.

Students who are not enrolled in the after-school program, and who are not picked up by 3:45 PM on any given day, will be placed in the after-school program and charged the full after-school fee for that day.

## **Entrance/Enrollment Requirements**

**Required Childcare Age:** Children must be 2 ½ years old and completely potty-trained (per state licensing requirements).

**Recommended Preschool Ages:** Children must be at least 3 years old and potty-trained to participate in our preschool programs. The kindergarten entry dates of the State of Michigan are used to determine the ages of students in our classrooms.

Preschool students should be 3 years old by December 1<sup>st</sup>

Pre-kindergarten students should be 4 years old by December 1<sup>st</sup>

Developmental Kindergarten students should be 5 years old by March 1.

**SMLS & CFK** – To enroll, you will need:

1. A completed enrollment form.
2. The non-refundable registration fee.
3. An up-to-date immunization record (**this MUST be on file on your child's first day of attendance**). Immunizations received during the year must be reported to the Center in written form. All immunizations will follow the county Health Department requirements.
4. A completed physical health form **SIGNED** by your physician (**Must be on file your child's first day of attendance**).
5. A completed child information/emergency contact card.
6. Students in grades K-8 must have a birth certificate on file.

## **CFK Withdrawal**

To assure proper staffing, we must enforce a 2 week notice for schedule changes affecting days and times. We are unable to provide refunds or tuition credits for cancellations without proper notice. We must also enforce a 2-week notice for withdrawal from the program. Your child is welcome to attend during that 2-week period. In instances of sick children, or quick schedule changes, you will be charged for your regularly scheduled attendance times. Children enrolled in child care may take up to 5 days each year as “vacation days.” During such days, no fees will be assessed and the child’s position in the program will be guaranteed. Vacation forms are located near the Parent Information Board and must be filled out two weeks in advance for fees to be waived.

## **Drop Off and Pick Up/Busing**

CFK – When dropping off or picking up a child from CFK, you must escort your child all the way to and from your vehicle to the child care classrooms. Staff will escort students as necessary to and from the school wing.

SMLS - The school day begins at 8:30 AM. Students may begin arriving at 8:15 AM at which time teachers will be in their classroom. **School doors are not unlocked until 8:15 AM.**

For parents dropping off their children, please use the school entrance (the far north door by the flag pole). There is no parking allowed immediately in front of the school from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM to allow for bus drop-off/pick-up. If parents plan to come into the school, they should park in the regular parking lot. The same is true for picking up students at 3:30 PM. Cars should not be left running and children should never be left unattended in the parking lot. Make sure you enter and exit the parking lot using the correct drives. Enter in the south entry and exit to the north. For security reasons, the doors into the Sanctuary will be locked during school hours.

Busing is available for students who live within the Portage Public School District. In the morning, these students will first be transported to their neighborhood public school, and then to St. Michael. In the afternoon, students riding the buses will be dismissed earlier than 3:30 PM (Portage buses will stop at St. Michael prior to going to the neighborhood public school). Once again, teachers will take this into account as they plan their end-of-day activities. However, it is the responsibility of the parent to make sure the child covers any missed materials the teacher sends home.

## **Tuition & Fees**

***Tuition:*** Tuition payments are due every other Monday, with parents paying for the program services two weeks in advance. A statement is developed for each family and provided at the beginning of the year and updated monthly. A service called “Simply Giving” available through Thrivent Financial for Lutherans is now mandatory for tuition payment for *all* parents. Tuition payments are automatically transferred from their bank to the school. There is no cost to the parent and all it takes is the completion of a simple form.

It is essential that parents pay their tuition in a timely manner so that we may meet our financial obligations for payroll, supplies, food, and general operating costs. ***A late fee of \$30 will be assessed to all tuition accounts exceeding 30 days in delinquency. An additional fee of \$25 will be assessed for insufficient funds.*** If special circumstances occur that require a delay in payment, arrangements must be made with the Principal. No outstanding balance can be carried from one school year to another without special arrangements.

### ***Childcare Charges:***

- *Schedule Adjustments:* We strive to be flexible with our scheduling policy, however to ensure proper staffing we request that families call ahead when additional care is needed. Should space not be available, we reserve the right to refuse care to students who have not prescheduled their attendance.
- *Vacation:* Up to 5 days may be taken as “vacation days” during a school year, to receive a tuition credit these days, written notice must be given 2 weeks in advance. (See summer registration form for summer vacation policy.)
- *School Holidays:* We recognize that many families enjoy time off during school holidays such as spring break and Christmas. We do not assume you will attend during these weeks, and time off you take during these weeks will not count against your vacation time.
- *Sick Days:* We are unable to provide a tuition credit for days your child is unable to attend due to illness.
- *Snow Days:* CFK rarely closes for inclement weather. Tuition credit will not be available unless CFK closes. School-age students who need care on a school snow day may call the center for availability.
- *Center Closed:* Families will not be charged for days on which CFK is closed.

***Damaged or Lost Books and School Property:*** Parents of students will be held responsible for the replacement of property and materials damaged or lost through the negligence of their children. Fines will be imposed for lost library books or books damaged beyond what is expected in the normal use for any given school year.

### **Field Trips & Fees**

***Preschool:*** Field trips maybe on Saturdays and involve the whole family. For these events each family will be responsible for their own transportation to and from the field trip. We also do “in-school” field trips which may require a small fee. You will receive ample notice of any preschool trips or special events.

***K-8:*** Students will be participating in a number of field trips. However, there are a few places for which there is a charge, and parents will be asked to cover those costs. The safety of our students is a primary concern at St. Michael. With that in mind, we use Portage Public School buses for field trips that include 15 or more students. This greatly increases safety but also adds additional costs to some field trips. Parents who volunteer to drive on field trips of 14 or fewer students are asked to fill out a “Volunteer Driver Checklist” for each field trip prior to the day of the trip to ensure your vehicle is in safe and proper working condition.

### **Scholarship Assistance**

Thanks to many fundraising efforts and the kindness of individuals, some scholarship funds are available for eligible families. St. Michael uses the services of an outside company, *Private School Aide Service (PSAS)*, to evaluate such scholarship applications to ensure consistency and privacy.

Assistance is based upon two main criteria (1). what PSAS determines the family should be able to pay, and (2). what the family themselves indicate they are able to pay. Any family who fails to complete a scholarship assistance form is expected to pay full tuition. While we request the completion of the scholarship application prior to the school year, families experiencing a change in circumstance may apply as needed.

## **Dress Code/ Required School Shirt**

**Preschool:** Preschool children are not required to purchase a school polo shirt. Dress your child so that he/she can play outdoors each day. Please clearly label all clothing. Staff may mark unlabeled clothing. Clothing should be durable and able to withstand spills. A complete change of clothing (including underwear and socks) should be brought to the Center and placed in a shoebox provided by the Center. Clothing should be updated with the change of seasons. Tennis shoes are the daily shoe of choice. Children may also be using the gym on a regular basis (especially in bad weather), so please make sure your child wears “non-marking” soled shoes.

**K-8<sup>th</sup>:** SMLS is an institution of Christian learning. We believe that students should maintain a quality of dress that complements our general school and academic standards. The basic consideration for student appearance is that it should be decent, in good taste, neat and clean, and will not be distracting to the learning environment. Parents/guardians have the responsibility of sending their children to school properly attired. Final decisions regarding “appropriate appearance” will be made by the staff. As the student population matures with the addition of a new grade each year, it is important to begin to define what types of dress are not appropriate for students to wear to school. We ask that all students of St. Michael Lutheran School adhere to the following guidelines:

- All students must wear a closed-toe shoe (No flip-flops)
- No visible undergarments
- Skirts and shorts should be mid-thigh length
- No bare mid-riffs
- No halter tops
- No spaghetti strap tops (Grade 3 and up)

**Required School Shirt (for field trips and concerts):** Although no formal school uniform is required, all K-8<sup>th</sup> students are asked to obtain a navy SMLS polo shirt, and wear this shirt for field trips and for select school concerts. Students should also wear the SMLS polo shirt every Friday for Chapel. Families who are financially unable to purchase the polo shirt should contact their child’s teacher so other arrangements can be made.

Items with the St. Michael logo can be purchased from a local vendor through the school office generally three times per year or individually you may purchase directly through *Land’s End*. When ordering specifically through *Land’s End*, our school’s logo # is 0556616K.

**Required Gym Clothes & Non-Marking Soled Shoes:** Students will be using the school gym on a regular basis, including a formal gym class. Students should wear non-marking soled shoes on a daily basis. In addition, students must wear a pair of gym shoes during their formal gym times each week. Such gym shoes can be left at school in the student’s locker, or brought the day of gym class. Students will *not* be allowed to participate in gym class without appropriate shoes. **Students in Grade 3 and above should bring appropriate gym clothes (shorts/sweats, T-shirt, & socks) and deodorant. Clothes must be taken home each week to be washed and returned the following week.**

**Additional Change of Clothes:** All students are encouraged to have a complete change of clothing. These can be kept in your student’s locker and should be changed with the seasons.

## **Teaching Staff**

All Preschool – 8<sup>th</sup> classroom teachers are State-certified, and have strong Christian backgrounds and teaching philosophies. Other subject-matter specialists are involved in teaching music, art, and gym as well.

## **Curriculum**

**Preschool:** Our preschool curriculum follows the standards recommended by the *National Association for the Education of Young Children* and the Michigan Benchmarks for early-childhood education.

**K-8<sup>th</sup>:** The school prides itself in offering a strong academic program, including:

- *Religion Instruction.* We utilize the *Voyages* religion curriculum which involves both daily instruction and memory work. In addition, weekly Chapel is offered.
  
- *Comprehensive Reading and Language Arts.* Our goal is to have all students initially reading by the end of kindergarten. To build on this reading foundation, we are using a new reading series from Scott Foresman in grades K-1. This program has a strong phonics component, leveled readers, and spelling. Beginning with the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, we also use a curriculum that utilizes trade and chapter books as its base. Our collection of children's favorites is literature rich and encourages a love of reading. Additionally, these grades include literature and grammar components both of which incorporate the 6 + 1 writing traits and the John Collins writing format.
  
- *Mathematics.* The *Scott Foresman* math program is used in grades K-8 and meets all the recent changes in state Grade Level Content Expectations (GLCE).
  
- *Science.* Beginning in 1<sup>st</sup> grade, a science series is used as developed by Concordia Publishing House in conjunction with Houghton Mifflin, called *ScienceWorks*. Not only does each student receive a visually stimulating textbook (which is quite unusual for many early elementary students), but also a set of hands-on materials is available for the teacher and students.
  
- *History & Geography.* One concern with education today is that many elementary social studies programs provide only a superficial look at the subjects of history and geography. Our students use the *Pearson Learning and Core Knowledge History and Geography Books*, which provide a very rich foundation for grades K-2. Grade 3 includes Michigan History and in grades 4-7 *Glencoe's* social studies series is used. Students in grade 8 are taught American History using the internet, software, and other electronic sources through the middle school laptop program. This is a unique way to incorporate technology into the history curriculum.
  
- *Foreign Language.* As a wonderful enrichment to our program, students grades K-5 receive weekly Spanish instruction and grades 6-8 have weekly instruction in French. Research clearly shows that it is important for students to start foreign language instruction in the primary grades, yet most schools still wait until high school. At SMLS foreign language instruction begins in kindergarten and continues through each grade.

- *Art, Music, Physical Education and Computers:* These subjects are taught by Specialists and other assistants, and are strongly linked to the other academic subjects being covered. Students in grades 1-8 may use the Internet. Parents must sign an “Internet Acceptable Use Policy” and return to the classroom teacher prior to internet use.

We ensure that all standards adopted by the state of Michigan are covered by these curricular offerings.

## **Library**

*Preschool:* Each classroom has a library center where age appropriate books will be placed for their use. Special theme books will also be available to the children.

*K-8<sup>th</sup>:* Library times will depend upon individual classroom teachers. Because SMLS is a Christ-centered school, we are very concerned with the type and content of the books in our library. We make it a priority to offer wholesome and interesting books for all school ages. However, it is very important that parents take an active role in helping their child make book selections. If you feel a book your child has chosen is inappropriate, please help redirect your child or ask a teacher for other suggestions.

## **Chapel**

Following the belief that God is an integral part of our lives, all students will participate in a weekly Chapel session on Friday mornings. This provides students with increased understanding of why we practice worship, and provides opportunities to practice good church behavior.

## **Recess**

*Preschool – 5:* Research shows that physical activity improves children’s attentiveness and decreases restlessness. Unstructured outdoor play provides students the opportunity to expand their imaginations beyond the constraints of the classroom.

Children who are well enough to attend are well enough to play outside. To ensure your child’s comfort, please send weather appropriate clothing to school. Discretion will be used when daily weather changes occur. Children will remain indoors if the temperature is 10° wind chill or below.

## **Travel Folders (K-8 only)**

As part of the K-8 school fee, students are given one school folder at the beginning of the year (additional ones are available for \$1.00 each). Children will be bringing this home on a regular basis and parents are expected to review any materials within those folders. These “travel folders” help the students to be organized, especially at the end of the school day, and provide an on-going means to communicate with parents. Please encourage your child to empty his/her folder with you each time it comes home. This allows you a chance to look over corrected school work, newsletters, and information from the teachers. In addition to student work, there may be notes from the teachers. Teachers will try their best to separate your child’s work from notes so that they can be easily found.

## **Homework**

**Preschool:** All work is completed in class. To encourage student/parent discussion, information regarding classroom topics, songs, and memory verses will be included in the class newsletter. We encourage families to review this information with their child (ren).

**K-8<sup>th</sup>:** Homework in grades K-8 is an expected activity and should receive top priority. Homework provides an opportunity for students to practice skills and concepts taught in the classroom and to develop independent work habits. In addition, it allows parents to see the types of learning activities that students are engaged in within the classroom.

Homework may include memory work, reading or writing activities, math, special projects, and studying for tests. The amount of homework will depend on the grade level, and the student's efficient use of work periods. In addition to the general information provided for each grade level below, each teacher can provide additional information on his/her expectations to parents.

Your child is to do his or her own homework, with your assistance as needed. If you have any questions about the homework, or your child is unable to finish it, please send a note in with your child or talk to the teacher when you drop them off.

Homework that is late or not completed will have a negative effect not only on the student understanding the material, but could negatively affect their grade as well.

**Kindergarten:** Until students begin reading circles, Kindergarteners will have homework only if they do not finish their work in class.

**1<sup>st</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Grade:** Homework will be assigned at the discretion of the teachers. All grades will have spelling words.

## **Classroom Grading**

There is a developmental approach used as teachers review and "grade" student work.

**Kindergarten:** When grading papers, the teacher will give smiley faces and stars for good work and check marks for satisfactory work. On some papers, teachers will write "please finish" or "re-write" when work is left unfinished or handwriting is messy.

**1<sup>st</sup> Grade:** Grading for daily work will consist of a smiley face, star or sticker and/or written comments. There will also be papers that are completed as group work in class, and often these will not have any "grading" marks at all. Spelling words will not always be corrected, especially if students are working on a creative writing project. Too much correction often is discouraging for early writers. Early in the year, students can tell the teacher what they have written. Getting the ideas down is more important at this stage, than the spelling. However, words that have been spelling list words are expected to be spelled correctly and will be corrected if there are errors.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Grade:** At the beginning of the year, you will see a symbol (smiley face, star, stamp) and/or written comments on the work your child completes at school. This is the teacher's way of communicating to you and your child. Some papers we do in class together, and because of this they are not marked. However, for the second half of the school year, the teacher will begin giving letter grades.

**3<sup>rd</sup>- 8<sup>th</sup> Grade:** There will either be a check mark or a letter grade on work. Work completed as a whole group is usually not graded.

## **Report Card Grades & Standardized Testing**

All K-8 students will receive a formal “report card” four times each year (with the last one being sent home shortly after the completion of the school year). For grades K- 3, report card “grading” for each subject and/or set of skills covered that quarter will be reported as follows:

**S = Secure:** Child can apply the skill or concept correctly and independently.

**D = Developing:** Child shows some understanding, but errors or misunderstandings still occur. Reminders, hints, or suggestions are necessary to develop understanding.

**B = Beginning:** Child is just beginning to understand the skill or concept.

**I = Improvement Needed:** Child is experiencing difficulty with this concept. Further support of assistance is needed, both at home and in school.

Beginning in grade 3, additional letter grades are assigned to reflect cumulative growth. In addition, students (grades 1-2) will take the Iowa Test of Basic Skills near the end of each school year (usually early May). These national tests provide parents with information on how their children are progressing in comparison to other students in the nation. The composite test scores are also used to help our teachers make refinements to our programs as needed. Grades 3-8 will take the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) in the fall. All students K-6 will be taking the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA).

## **Hot Lunch & Snacks**

**Childcare:** CFK provides childcare children with 2 snacks a day. Juice or milk is available for breakfast, snacks, and lunch. Parents must provide their children with a healthy breakfast and lunch if needed. Breakfast is given to children from 7:00 AM to 8:30AM, whenever they desire to eat it. Lunch is served around 11:45 PM for all children. Hot lunches are also available to children in childcare. Please see the information below.\* Hot lunches are only available to the childcare students on days that school is in session. During school breaks, parents must provide a lunch for their child (ren).

**CFK Preschool Snack Guidelines:** Early experiences with food have a strong impact on the future eating habits and health of young children and the best time to teach them good dietary habits is during their early years. Students of SMLS are taught that their bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit and they are to take good care of them. God also tells us to develop our talents to their potential. Healthy eating patterns are essential for students to achieve their full potential. It is for these reasons that CFK Preschool asks that you provide a healthy snack when it is your turn to share with the class. Some suggestions for healthy snacks are as follows:

Fresh fruit (washed and pre-cut)

Pretzels

Cheese (any shape/variety)

Vegetables (“Ants on a Log,” frozen peas...)

Crackers (graham, Club, Goldfish...)

Milk and 100% juice

Please use your imagination and have fun with your child when choosing the special snack they will share. It is very exciting for them and a great learning opportunity.

Some examples of snacks that will not be allowed except for special occasions are: cookies, brownies, cake, fruit snacks, fruit roll-ups, fruit punch drinks and candy. Please understand that if these types of snacks are brought in on your regular snack day, they will not be served. However, CFK believes that God wants us to celebrate and enjoy life and for that reason

sweet treats (cookies, cupcakes...) are welcome on your child's birthday. Please arrange this with your teacher prior to bringing snacks on that special day.

**K-8<sup>th</sup>: Breakfast:** Parents should provide their children with a healthy breakfast in the morning prior to coming to school.

**Lunches:** The lunch period runs from 11:30 AM to 12:30 PM. Students are required to stay seated until lunch period is over, at which time they are dismissed by table for recess or to go back to class. Because of liability and time issues, SMLS will not microwave lunches for students. Students will go outside unless inclement weather forces indoor recess. PLEASE PROVIDE APPROPRIATE CLOTHING FOR YOUR CHILD. Children will not be allowed to play in the snow unless they have snow pants, hats, gloves and boots. Extra socks should be kept in your child's locker.

\*Hot lunches are available to children through Portage Public Schools. All hot lunches meet Michigan nutritional standards for school lunch programs. We also participate in the Federal Free/Reduced Lunch Program, so families who qualify for "reduced" meals pay a reduced fee and would be free for those who qualify. These families will need to complete a simple application for that program. Federal Free/Reduced Lunch Program applications are available in the school office (and must be completed annually). Hot Lunch menus will be sent home each month for the following month's lunches. Lunch money must be returned by the date stated on the form. Failure to do so will require you to pack a lunch for your child that month. Late orders will not be accepted.

**Snacks:** Kindergarten students will have a formal time for snack each morning. Parents of these students will be provided with a snack schedule and requested to provide healthy snacks approximately once each month for the entire class (see page 12 for Healthy Snack guidelines).

1<sup>st</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade students will NOT take a formal snack break, but are permitted to bring in a small nutritious snack to eat during seatwork time. Such snacks are to be provided by parents for their children, and kept in the students' lockers.

### **School Attendance/Absences (K-8 only)**

Students of Saint Michael Lutheran School in Kindergarten through eighth grade are expected to attend school regularly and on time. Regular attendance provides continuity in the learning environment and enhances the probability of success in school. When an absence cannot be avoided, parents are requested to contact the school office by 9:00am to inform us about the reason for the absence. If your child will be absent or will arrive late, please call **327-0512**. When a student is absent due to illness or a family crisis, make-up assignments will be given when the student returns.

Students arriving late or leaving early should be signed in/out in the school office. Students who arrive late to class will be considered tardy and must obtain a tardy slip from the office in order to enter the classroom. Parents should notify the office and classroom teacher prior to any planned absence. It is often not feasible to give homework in advance as assignments are usually determined by daily class progress. Missed assignments will be given when students return to class. Parents should be prepared to insure that students make up missed assignments and understand missed concepts.

**Tardies:** Timeliness is a valuable life-lesson for students to learn for their future years in education as well as when they enter the workforce. Therefore, five tardies will result in one unexcused absence recorded in the student's attendance record. Students who arrive at school after the school day begins are required to check in at the school office before entering the

classroom. Children may be expected to make up any lost instructional time after the school day or at recess time as the principal or teacher see fit.

**Absences:** Absences for reasons other than illness or emergency situations are to be avoided. The student is responsible for missed assignments. If chronic attendance problems persist (defined by 20 or more absences a school year), the building administrator may contact the county truancy officer and/or juvenile authorities for further assistance. Children may be expected to make up any lost instructional time after the school day or at recess time as the principal or teacher see fit.

### **Snow Day Closings**

If the educational programs must be closed due to bad weather or other adverse circumstances, notice will be given over radio and television stations.

***Childcare:*** CFK will close whenever Curious Kids, the Portage Public School child care center, closes. When the Center closes due to adverse conditions, parents will not be charged for that day.

***SMLS and Preschool:*** SMLS will close whenever Portage Public Schools close. When these programs close due to adverse conditions the normal tuition fee continues to be the same.

### **Emergencies**

In an emergency (illness or accident), we will contact the parent at the location given on the Child Information Card. If we cannot reach the parent, the contact person listed on the card will be asked to come for the child. If we cannot reach the parents or the contact person, the child will be removed from other children (illness) or taken to a medical facility (in a situation needing emergency medical treatment). ***Please keep your emergency contact information up-to-date.***

### **Illness**

The Kalamazoo County Health Department recommends that *children with a 100° or above temperature, signs of a bad cold or excessive coughing, diarrhea, vomiting, skin rash, or head lice, should not come to school.* If your child has contracted a contagious disease, please notify the school so that parents and teachers can be alerted of the symptoms. Children who have been sick should be free from abnormal temperatures, vomiting and diarrhea for at least 12 hours before returning to school. A note *may* be needed from your child's doctor indicating when the contagious disease is cured, and a doctor's note *is* required to clear them of head lice.

*When a child becomes ill at school, parents will be notified immediately to come and pick up their child.* If the parent cannot come, arrangements must be in place for an alternate responsible adult to come and pick up the child. Children will be removed from the classroom and placed away from others until taken home. Children will not be released to another adult without verbal or written consent from the custodial parent.

When illness keeps your child home, you must notify the school by phone or with a written note. The County Health Department requires a weekly health report. Your cooperation in this matter is appreciated.

*Your signature on the St. Michael Lutheran School Receipt & Acknowledgment of Handbook Content indicates that you will not hold St. Michael Lutheran School, Christ for Kids Childcare or St. Michael Lutheran Church liable for any event relating to any preexisting medical conditions, disclosed or undisclosed.*

## **Medications**

Before any medication, prescription or over the counter, can be administered, a 'Medication Form' must be completed and signed by the parent. Medication Forms are available from the school and childcare offices. All medication must be in its original container. Prescription medicine must have the pharmacy label and will be administered according to that prescription label. All medications must not exceed the expiration date. School staff will not provide tools for measuring out medication dosages. Parents must provide this along with the medication. Parents should bring the form, medication in its original container, and measuring tool to the school office themselves. ***Medication must not be sent in with the student. All medications will be kept in the school or childcare office.***

Because some children may experience a reaction to medications, we ask that the parent administer ALL FIRST DOSES at least 12 hours before the child attends school.

## **Birthdays**

Birthdays are a special time in a child's life, and therefore, we celebrate them within the classroom. If desired, appropriate treats can be sent with your child on his/her birthday. Celebration of birthdays not falling on school days may be scheduled in advance with your child's teacher.

When planning a private birthday celebration, we ask that you please send invitations via mail rather than through classroom distribution. This will avoid hurt feelings if everyone is not invited.

## **Parent Teacher League (PTL)**

*The Mission Statement of the St. Michael PTL is to coordinate Parents, Teachers, Staff and others to work together to build and support home/school relationships, foster fellowship, and encourage parent participation in school events and projects.* The PTL will raise funds for materials and projects that support SMLS/CFK and provide support for teachers and school leadership. All parents are considered members of the PTL and encouraged to attend meetings and provide input. Meetings will be announced in school newsletters. A bulletin board with PTL information is located across from the school office.

## **Parent Newsletters, Information Boards & Conferences**

Newsletters are sent home on Fridays. These contain important information and should be read promptly. The school website is increasingly becoming another source of parent information as well. Please visit [www.mightymessengers.org](http://www.mightymessengers.org) and click on the school link or go directly to [stmikeschool.org](http://stmikeschool.org).

A school-focused parent information board is located on the wall across from the school office. This board will carry current letters that have gone home to all parents as well as other important information. An additional parent information board is located near the entrance of CFK with information specific to childcare.

Parents are welcome to schedule a time to come and observe in the classrooms. You may also come to the school and eat lunch with your child (although fast food lunches are discouraged for both the parent and the child). From time to time parents will also be given the opportunity to sign up for special projects, i.e., an art project, holiday celebration or program, field trip, etc.

To insure accurate communication between the parents and staff, all vital communication should be in written form and dated (i.e., schedule changes, updated contact information such as address and phone numbers, parent concerns, etc). Requests, ideas, concerns, and payments can be placed in the school office.

**Formal Conferences:** Formal parent-teacher conferences will be held twice a year for all students (Fall and Spring). In addition, parents are welcome to ask the teachers on a regular basis about their child's progress.

### **Parent Volunteer Hours**

Parents are encouraged to volunteer their time to assist teachers with various classroom activities, field-trip driving, and other school-related tasks. Indeed, many private schools "require" all parents to log a minimum number of volunteer hours (to help keep tuition costs down).

The Board of Early Childhood Ministries has adopted a policy whereby each family attempts to provide at least 10 hours of volunteer time for the school. In the back of this publication you will find ten (10) vouchers that each have a value of \$5.00. If you so choose, you may use these vouchers for each hour you volunteer at school (up to ten hours) and turn them in towards your school tuition up to \$50 per student or \$100 per family. If you have used up your vouchers, we encourage you to continue to help volunteer at the school as volunteers are the strength of many of our programs.

There are many opportunities for parents to offer their time, including being a playground supervisor, assisting with fundraising projects, working in the school library, school office, helping out with building projects, and of course, offering your time to assist teachers with classroom activities. We understand that some parents will not be able to provide any assistance during the school day, but there are many things that can be done in the evenings or at home. We appreciate the support of our parents and welcome any time you can spare to assist with various projects.

### **SAFETY**

St. Michael Lutheran School and Christ for Kids Childcare have worked in conjunction with the County Emergency Management Agency and local police and fire departments to develop Crisis Plans for the safety of our students and staff. These plans are available to review in the school office upon request.

### **Weapons Policy (School-wide)**

Saint Michael Lutheran School (SMLS) and School Board maintain a 'zero tolerance' policy regarding weapons. SMLS and Board prohibit students, staff and visitors from possessing, keeping, manufacturing, or using a weapon in any setting, on or off campus, which is under the control and supervision of the school for the purpose of school activities approved and authorized by SMLS and Board.

**DEFINITION OF WEAPON:** The term "weapon" means any object which could be used to inflict serious bodily harm or property damage, as well as used to endanger the health and safety of people. Weapons include, but are not limited to, firearms, guns of any type, including air and gas-powered guns (whether loaded or unloaded), tazers, knives, daggers, dirks, stilettos, razors, clubs, electric weapons, metallic knuckles, martial arts weapons, ammunition, explosives, sling-shots as examples.

School suspension or expulsion will also result from crimes such as false fire alarms, bomb threats or intentional calls to falsely report a dangerous condition.

According to State Law, the Principal will refer any student who violates this policy to the student's parents or guardians and to the law enforcement agency. The student may also be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion. Such expulsion is mandatory, unless the student establishes in a clear and convincing manner, at least one of the following:

1. that the object or instrument possessed by the student was not possessed for use as a weapon, or for direct or indirect delivery to another person for use as a weapon;
2. the weapon was not knowingly possessed by the student;
3. the student did not know or have reason to know that the object or the instrument possessed by the student constituted a weapon or dangerous weapon; or
4. that the weapon was possessed by the student at the suggestion, request, or direction of, or with express permission of school or police authorities.

### **Expulsions/Suspensions (School-wide)**

A student whose actions are in any way threatening to the welfare of the school, its students or staff, may be suspended for a period of up to three days or expelled depending upon the seriousness of the situation. Three behavioral detentions in a quarter may result in suspension. Six behavioral detentions in a quarter may result in expulsion. The Principal is the final recourse in all disciplinary situations and may waive any disciplinary rule for just cause at his discretion.

CFK reserves the right to remove a child from the Center upon the recommendation of the Director and the Board of Early Childhood Ministries should the child be considered a detriment to the other children and/or the program. Meetings will be set to discuss the issue with the parents, and if a course of action is not agreed upon, the parents will be given a 2-week notice for the withdrawal of their child. All fees must be paid in full at the time of withdrawal. We will try in every situation to work with the parents for the benefit of the child.

### **Playground Discipline (K-8)**

If disciplinary action becomes necessary, our playground staff will administer a warning for a first offense. A second offense will result in the child receiving a disciplinary slip, a copy of which will go to the parent and teacher. After receiving two slips in a marking period, the child may temporarily lose playground privileges for up to 5 days.

### **Visitors**

Between the hours of 8:15 am and 3:45 pm Monday through Friday, all individuals who are not employees or students of SMLS or CFK and who are not directly involved in drop-off/pick-up of a student must sign in at the school office and wear a visitor's badge during their time at school. For CFK this provision shall be in effect between 6:30 am and 6:00 pm. Visitors are to record in the school office the purpose of their visit, including the location and/or teacher they are meeting with. Such visits must be of legitimate benefit to the school or childcare. This procedure is critical to maintain the safety of our students and staff.

All visitors who are volunteering on a regular basis must first provide proper information and give permission to have appropriate background checks completed. All such school

volunteers who are working one-on-one with children shall be supervised by a school employee. Within CFK and preschool areas, no volunteer may have unsupervised contact with a student.

### **Field Trips**

A “Volunteer Driver Checklist” must be completed and turned in prior to anyone driving students on a field trip. Please see page 7 for more information. Permission forms for each child must be completed in advance for each field trip. Parents who are planning to chaperone a field trip should not bring other children as they may distract from the chaperone duties. Due to allergies, parents are also asked not to provide snacks on a field trip unless asked by a teacher.

### **Student Photographs**

No photographs taken of children while at SMLS/CFK or within any SMLS/CFK sponsored activity shall be posted on the Internet or otherwise used unless all of the following occur:

1. Parental permission is obtained
2. Children are in groups of 2 or more
3. No last names of children or families are mentioned
4. Photographs are only placed on school-sanctioned websites or within school-sanctioned materials

### **Pets**

Due to safety and liability, we ask that pets not be brought in the building or on school grounds. Students wanting to share a pet during class must first receive permission from the Principal. Once permission is received, pets must be contained in a pet carrier, shown for the specific purpose, and then returned home. They may not stay all day.

### **Discipline Policy**

All school educational programs and other activities will be conducted in an environment of Christian love and support. Children will be guided to relate to each other with respect, understanding, and to appreciate the consequences of their actions and how they affect others. Self-control and cooperation will be facilitated, using positive methods of discipline.

SMLS strives to promote a Christian attitude when dealing with discipline. Rules and discipline will be administered with concern for the growth and safety of each child. Students will be held responsible for their actions. Positive discipline is achieved through proper modeling and self-control. Self-controlled Christians control their behavior because they know that doing what is right and just is better than doing what is wrong. Discipline, in order to work, must be done with patience. The goal of our staff is to move students to practice the self-discipline they will need as they mature into adulthood. We hope that in knowing and respecting limits of behavior, our students will learn what is acceptable in society, as well as the classroom. **Bullying at St. Michael is not tolerated.** We define bullying as “repeated unkind actions or words, with the purpose of hurting another’s body, feelings, friendships or property.”

From the first day of school we, as a school family, begin to establish trust in each other, and the students learn what the teachers’ expectations are. Classroom rules are displayed in the class, discussed on a daily basis, and whenever possible, disciplinary action is handled in private between the student, teacher and parents (as needed).

Five basic rules will be enforced by all school teachers and staff:

- 1) Voices off and eyes forward when teachers are speaking.
- 2) No teasing or put downs. Treat others with respect.

- 3) Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself.
- 4) Follow directions the first time they are asked.
- 5) Always do your personal best.

In the event that disciplinary action becomes necessary, our teaching staff will follow a 4-step procedure, with subsequent steps being taken until the issue is resolved. First, a student will receive a warning about their inappropriate behavior. Second, they will lose a classroom privilege. Third, they will receive a slip and a visit with the Principal, where they may need to call their parents, and tell them about their behavior. Fourth, they will receive an after-school detention (following another phone call to his/her parents). If a child receives more than two detentions, parents will be called for a formal meeting.

***Preschool Specific:*** In the event disciplinary action becomes necessary, staff will utilize the common steps of conflict resolution. Those involved will be guided in the use of conflict resolution as needed in order to empower each child with the ability to problem solve. The children's attention may be redirected to an appropriate activity. If necessary, the children may be directed away from the other children for a brief "thinking time". Staff will encourage self-control and cooperation using positive methods of discipline. Children will be guided to understand the consequences of their actions and how their actions affect others. Respect is stressed more than anything else in our classrooms.

## **Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment of or by any student at St. Michael Lutheran School shall not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary and/or legal action, including possible suspension, or expulsion.

Sexual harassment has the purpose or effect of having a negative impact on an individual's performance or of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment and includes, but is not limited to:

1. Verbal conduct, such as derogatory comments, unwanted sexual advances, sexual jokes, etc.
2. Visual conduct, such as derogatory cartoons, drawings, pictures, gestures, etc.
3. Physical conduct, such as leering, assault, blocking normal movement, touching an individual's body or clothes in a sexual way, etc.
4. Threats and demands to submit to sexual requests.
5. Retaliation for reporting a violation or participating in an investigation.

Teachers may discuss this policy with their students at the beginning of the school year in age-appropriate ways, and assure them they need not endure any form of sexual harassment. Anyone at St. Michael Lutheran School who is subject to or witnesses sexual harassment should immediately report such conduct to a teacher, the office staff, or the pastor of St. Michael Lutheran Church. Complaints of sexual harassment shall be promptly investigated in a way that ensures the privacy of all parties concerned. In no case shall a student be required to resolve the complaint directly with the offending person. If the person reported to does not promptly remedy a situation involving accusations of sexual harassment, a complaint of harassment can be filed with the Board of Early Childhood Ministries.

## **Pesticide Treatment**

The St. Michael Lutheran Church and School complex is periodically professionally treated for pests. Prior to any treatment parents will be notified both in the school newsletter and signs will be posted on the entrance doors. Further information can be obtained from the school office if there are any questions or concerns.

## **Lockers**

Lockers are the property of St. Michael Lutheran School and students may use them without charge. Students who use a school locker are presumed to have no expectation that the locker or the locker's contents are exempt from reasonable search and possible seizure of property.

The principal or his or her designee may, with reasonable cause, search a student's locker and the locker's contents. In the course of a search conducted pursuant to this policy, the privacy rights of the student shall be respected regarding any items that are not illegal or against school policy. Any illegal items obtained as a result of a search of a student's locker or locker's contents may be admissible in any court or administrative proceedings.

At the request of the school principal or his or her designee, law enforcement agencies having jurisdiction over the school may assist school personnel in conducting a search of a student's locker and the locker's contents.

## **Electronic Communication Devices**

Students may have in their possession cellular telephones or other electronic communication or gaming devices (ECD) in school, on school property, at after school activities and at school related functions. However they may not be used during school hours or in Before/After school childcare. During these times all ECD's must be turned off and kept in the student's locker or backpack. ECD's shall not be used during the described times unless specific permission is given by a teacher or administrator.

Possession of a cellular telephone or other ECD by a student is a privilege, which may be forfeited by any student who fails to abide by the terms of this policy, or otherwise engages in misuse of this privilege. In instances of non-compliance, the cellular telephone and/or ECD will be confiscated for return to a parent or guardian.

The student who possesses a cellular phone or ECD shall assume responsibility for preventing theft, loss or damage to cell phones or ECDs.

**St. Michael Lutheran School Receipt & Acknowledgment of Handbook Content**

We have read the St. Michael Lutheran School Parent/Student Handbook, and agree to abide by the established policies contained within.

---

Student Signature

Date

---

Parent Signature

Date

**Please sign and return this form to your teacher no later than Friday, September 18, 2009.**