

# Medicine Hat Catholic Board of Education

## Preschool Handbook 2011-2012



**“Showing the Face of Christ to All”**

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# Welcome

**Welcome to the Medicine Hat Catholic Board of Education. We look forward to sharing this important year of learning, developing, and fun with you and your child.**

**This handbook is designed to provide a brief introduction to the preschool programs of the Medicine Hat Catholic Board of Education. We hope you will become familiar with this information and keep this handbook available as a reference.**

**If you have any questions, feel free to contact your child's teacher/preschool educator, the school principal and/or the Coordinator of Early Childhood Services.**

**Our preschool programs include:**

- **Activities that are planned to meet the children's needs and developmental levels. Through these activities, children are provided with the opportunity to be actively engaged with peers to foster social skills development.**
- **Classroom environments that have a variety of learning materials and centers that encourage structured, free and dramatic play.**
- **Daily child initiated active learning and formal instruction in various sizes of group settings.**
- **Both morning and afternoon programs will be offered and will vary at each school. Children can attend Kindergarten half-day and Preschool half-day. Preschool is a Fee for Service program calculated on attendance days per week \$73.00-\$365.00 per month.**
- **Preschool students are not eligible for transportation.**

# MISSION, VISION, MOTTO, VALUES AND PRINCIPLES OF PRACTICE

## Our Mission

- In partnership with family, Church, and community, we provide Catholic Education of the highest quality to our students.

## Our Vision

A Gospel-centered community committed to:

- Learning excellence
- Christian service
- Living Christ

## Our Motto

- “Showing the Face of Christ to All”

## Our Values

**We believe that** Catholic education is a ministry that is at the heart of the Church.

In our ministry, we value and celebrate:

- Teaching and living our Catholic faith.
- Our Catholic traditions.
- Our ability to offer a full range of educational programs for all students.
- The uniqueness of each child.

## Our Principles of Practice

**In our ministry we are called, always and everywhere, to:**

- Model Christ
- Prayer
- Service
- Strive for Excellence
- Build Community

# Preschools at a Glance

Medicine Hat Catholic Board of Education

1251 – 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue SW

Medicine Hat, Alberta T1A 8B4

Telephone (403)527-2292 [www.mhcbe.ab.ca](http://www.mhcbe.ab.ca) Fax (403)529-0917

<p><b><u>École St. Thomas d'Aquin</u></b>  <b>(St. Thomas Aquinas School)</b>            Mr. Robert Dumanowski, Principal            1970 – 19 Avenue S.E.            Medicine Hat, AB T1A 3X1            Phone: 527-7333 Fax: 527-7460</p> <p><b><u>Community Preschool</u></b>  <b><u>French Immersion</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 12:35 to 3:05</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>St. Michael's School, M.H.</u></b>            Mr. Ron Blackmer, Principal            865 Black Blvd. NW            Medicine Hat, AB T1A 7B5            Phone: 527-7242 Fax: 527-9651</p> <p><b><u>Community Preschool</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8:45 to 11:30</li> <li>• 12:15 to 3:00</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Mother Teresa School</u></b>            Mr. Paul Bauche, Principal            235 Cameron Road SE            Medicine Hat, AB T1B 2Z2            Phone: 529-2000 Fax: 529-2178</p> <p><b><u>Community Preschool</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9:00 to 11:45</li> <li>• 12:35 to 3:20</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>St. Patrick's School</u></b>            Mr. Chuck Hellman, Principal            241 Stratton Way SW            Medicine Hat, AB T1B 3Z2            Phone: 527-1177 Fax: 527-0985</p> <p><b><u>Community Preschool</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9:00 to Noon</li> <li>• 12:35 to 3:35</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>St. Francis Xavier School</u></b>            Mr. Kelly Wilkinson, Principal            318 – 8 Street N.E.            Medicine Hat, AB T1A 5R6            Phone: 527-7223 Fax: 527-7285</p> <p><b><u>Community Preschool</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 12:35 to 3:20</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>St. Louis School</u></b>            Mr. Andy Fune, Principal            861 4<sup>th</sup> Street SE            Medicine Hat, AB T1A 0L5            Phone: 403-527-7411 Fax: 403-527-7437</p> <p><b><u>Preschool</u></b>            8:45 to 11:30            12:30 to 3:10</p>
<p><b>Note: *Our Designated Site located in Mother Teresa school offers a Preschool that serves as a Program Centre for students with special needs. Students who qualify for exceptional coding based on Alberta Education's definitions will be contacted and may be offered placement in the Designated Site.</b></p>	

# Preschool Philosophy

The Medicine Hat Catholic Board of Education is a learning community enlivened by the Spirit of Christ. His teaching permeates our philosophy and His spirit inspires our programs.

The School Division staff work in partnership with the parents and families who have entrusted their children to our care and the children who are the focus of all of our endeavors.

Early childhood is a significant period in human development. It is the time when children begin to develop independence, initiative, decision-making abilities, creativity, early literacy skills, language and numeracy skills, and to develop socially and emotionally.

The Medicine Hat Catholic Board of Education implements preschool programming which provides literacy based, supportive climate for children who are 3 years of age or older. In this environment, children will participate in active learning that enhances the child's development of self and the confidence that is needed for further learning and skill building in a school setting. The preschool provides a secure setting for social interaction between peers.

The second component of preschool programming is to assist parents in understanding the developmental stages and behaviors of preschool aged children and strategies for developmentally appropriate experiences.

What young children learn at this stage has a major impact on successful learning experiences in school, personal development, and future participation in society.

We are a faith community who will continue to inspire and prepare the children in our care to pray, to learn, to work and to live fully to serve God in one another.

## Eligibility Criteria

1. Catholic resident families will be given priority when space in a program is limited.
2. Children must be 3 years of age as of September 1<sup>st</sup>.
3. Children must be toilet trained.

## Preschool Programs

### **Designated ECS Special Education Program:**

Children develop and learn at their own pace and in their own way. Some children have individual special needs that require extra time and assistance to learn specific skills. The purpose of the designated ECS program is to provide a play-based learning environment where these children can best meet their educational needs. Due to the nature and severity of these needs, these children often qualify for additional government funding to provide intense, individual programming. Support services (Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Speech-Language Pathology, etc.) will be available for those children who require additional assistance to meet individual needs. An Individual Program Plan is developed for each child with identified special needs.

### **Community-Based English and French Preschools:**

Children learn through play. The community-based preschools are designed to enhance children's learning in the areas of literacy, numeracy, social skills, and spiritual development. The purpose of the community-based preschool is to offer this opportunity for early learning within a child's neighborhood. This allows children to foster important social relationships within their immediate community that may continue into the school years.

## Special Education Programs

### **Program Unit Funding (PUF):**

Program Unit Funding is funding offered through Alberta Education to provide individual programs to meet the educational needs of children with significant/severe delays. The funding is issued to the school district in which the child is registered. PUF is specifically designed for children whose disabilities/delays are significant enough that special, individual programs are necessary for them to succeed in a regular classroom setting (either in kindergarten or preschool). There are two main areas that must be considered – the child's age and his/her specific area of disability/delay.

To be eligible for funding, a child must be between at least 2 years 6 months of age on September 1<sup>st</sup> and not yet 6 years of age on September 1<sup>st</sup> of the current school year. Funding may only be accessed for a maximum of 3 years and the child must re-qualify each year. Funding is accessed during the school calendar year.

If a child qualifies for Program Unit Funding or has mild/moderate delays, they may receive services from a Speech- Language Pathologist, Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist or other resources in order to meet that child's need. In order to provide a quiet, uninterrupted therapeutic service, the child may be taken out of the Preschool classroom but not off the school premises to receive this service.

### **Mild or Moderate Funding (M/M):**

Children with mild or moderate delays may qualify for mild/moderate funding through Alberta Education. The school of your choice will assist in applying for funding and notify you if there are additional programming options for your child, who must be between at least 3 years 6 months of age on September 1<sup>st</sup> and not yet 6 years of age on September 1<sup>st</sup> of the current school year. Funding may be accessed for a maximum of 2 years.

**Family-oriented ECS Programming** (for children receiving PUF only):

Family-oriented ECS Programming is individually planned; developmentally appropriate intervention for **children with special needs** that is designed to actively involve the parent or alternate caregiver in the child's educational programming across settings. The purpose of family-oriented ECS programming is to consult with the parent and to provide coaching, information, resources, skills, and strategies to facilitate the child's development. Family-oriented ECS programming is done under the direction of a certificated teacher and is based on a 1:1:1 service delivery model involving the parent, teacher, and the child.

**Distinction between Children and Students:**

The *School Act* (RSA 2000) makes a distinction between children and students. Section 30 (1) of the *School Act* states that a board or an approved school authority may provide an ESC program to a child who is younger than 6 years of age as of September 1<sup>st</sup>. Under AB Education policy, children with disabilities/delays are eligible for up to 3 years of ECS programming, depending on age, severity of the disability/delay and its impact on the child's learning and development. *Standards for the Provision of Early Childhood Special Education* applies to children who are younger than 6 years of age as of September 1<sup>st</sup> and who meet the eligibility criteria for special education programming.

## Goals for the Program

**The Medicine Hat Catholic Board of Education** preschool programs are play based. This philosophy is based on best practices for preschool children. Play is the work of young children – the way in which they learn most easily and naturally, the way in which they come to understand how the world works and to gain a sense of how to control their environment.

Through the provision of a stimulating and nurturing play environment, children learn to explore, investigate, discuss and problem solve. Each child is unique and has abilities that are different from those of other children. The dignity and self-worth of every child is respected and enhanced. Through a variety of centers in the preschool, the children play at each center and develop social skills, language skills, articulation skills, and motor skills. The program will enhance development of reading readiness skills, and gross and fine motor skills. Through play at the centers, children are encouraged to express their creativity and to develop emotionally.

**The philosophy of Alberta Education and the Medicine Hat Catholic Board of Education** is one of equality, sharing, participation, and the worth and dignity of individuals. As such, students with special needs are full participants in our programs. In the preschool you will find typically developing children playing and learning alongside children who have mild, moderate,

or severe special needs. In the classroom, working with the teacher/preschool educator, are learning assistants, who help to meet the unique learning needs of those children with special needs.

## **Preschool Team Members**

**The following Medicine Hat Catholic Board of Education staff is available to provide support to your child and your family. Not all of these professionals will work with every child. The most suitable combination of personnel resources will be used for each child, dependent upon their needs.**

### **Coordinator of Early Childhood Services:**

The Coordinator of Early Childhood Services, through the application of Catholic principles, will provide support and leadership to Division students, staff, and families. She will be responsible to apply Catholic values to all deliberations and decisions made regarding special needs students. She will assist administrators/teachers/preschool educators and all service providers in the coordination of programming and IPPs for special needs students. The Coordinator of Early Childhood Services will work directly with Alberta Education regarding approval for PUF and M/M funding to support children.

### **School Administrator:**

The School Administrator provides leadership, direction and support for inclusive educational practices within the school community. The administrator is key in fostering an attitude of acceptance and understanding for each child in the school. He/She also ensures that all policies and procedures recommended are followed as directed by the Alberta School Act, the Alberta Childcare Licensing Act and the policies and procedures of the Medicine Hat Catholic Board of Education.

### **Consulting Teacher:**

The consulting teacher is the key professional responsible for developing, coordinating, and monitoring the program for a child with special needs. The consulting teacher, in partnership with the preschool teacher/educator, collaborates with school-based and community-based professionals in the identification, assessment, programming, and monitoring of children.

### **Designated Site Teacher:**

The Designated Site teacher is responsible for developing and implementing individual program plans for children with special needs. The designated site teacher collaborates with other professionals to meet the needs of the children in the program.

### **Preschool Educator:**

Preschool Educators, with Early Childhood training, have the responsibility to plan and implement a play-based program that will meet the developmental needs of young learners.

**Program Unit Funding Learning Assistant:**

The Puf learning assistant will work as a team member within the preschool and also provide therapeutic services to Puf children. This may take place in or out of the preschool classroom but not away from the school premises.

**Learning Assistant:**

The learning assistant will work under the direct supervision of the teacher and/or the preschool educator. The teacher and/or the preschool educator will identify the learning assistant's specific responsibilities based on the needs of the children.

**Occupational Therapist:**

The occupational therapist is a trained professional who is responsible for the identification, diagnosis and treatment in the areas of fine motor development; self help skills and sensory processing. The OT works with children to improve specific skills in these areas and provides valuable information about how these areas can be addressed in the preschool setting. These therapeutic services may take place within the preschool classroom or another location within the school.

**Physical Therapist:**

The physical therapist is a trained professional who is responsible for the identification, diagnosis and treatment in the area of body and muscle movement. The PT works with children to improve skills such as body coordination, running, skipping, jumping, balance, agility, and movement. The PT provides input to the school personnel as to how these skills can be integrated into the preschool setting. These therapeutic services may take place within the preschool classroom or another location within the school.

**Speech-Language Pathologist:**

The speech-language pathologist is a trained professional who is responsible for the identification (through testing and observation), diagnosis and treatment of various communication delays. The SLP works with children identified with these difficulties to help them learn communication, speech and language skills. These therapeutic services may take place within the preschool classroom or another location within the school.

**Student Services Administrative Assistant:**

The Student Services Administrative Assistant will work under the direction of the Early Childhood Coordinator. She will provide support to the team members and provide general student services information.

# Guidelines for Appropriate Behavior

The ultimate goal of discipline in the Medicine Hat Catholic Board of Education Preschools is to lead all children to a greater degree of self-discipline while maintaining a satisfactory learning environment.

## Guidelines Specific to Preschool:

### Personnel Expectations:

1. Preschool personnel are to deal with all discipline matters in a calm, objective and professional manner, reflecting individual differences and situations.
2. The teacher/preschool educator shall be responsible for the discipline in the classroom and should communicate expectations to children early in the school year and on an ongoing basis.
3. All staff should employ methods which support and seek to develop self-esteem and respect.
4. Preschool staff should involve parents or guardians in dealing with behavioral difficulties.

### Expectations:

To the best of their ability:

1. Children will have respect for self and others.
2. Children will have respect for property of self, others and the school.
3. Children will accept responsibility for actions.
4. Children will attend regularly.

# Child Guidance Policy

The staff at the Community Preschool will serve as positive role models to the children, parents and their co-workers. They will encourage children to treat others with similar respect. Children will learn to cooperate and share with other children. Our goal is to provide a positive educational experience, to encourage and enhance their growth and allow them to develop while in our care.

## Child Guidance Techniques:

1. Active listening - encourages expressing a child's feelings.
2. Negotiation - helping children solve problems/conflicts.
3. Setting limits - keeps children safe and in bounds.
4. Modifying the environment - making changes when necessary.
5. Facilitating - helping children solve problems.
6. Positive Reinforcement - making children feel important and valued, telling them they did a good job/made a good choice.
7. Redirection - direct a child's attention to a different program activity.
8. Quiet Time - if a child's behavior remains inappropriate after several attempts to redirect, then a staff member will remove the child from the situation and talk to them about appropriate behavior.

When aggressive behavior arises, it will be handled in a positive manner by working with the child and using the above referenced Child Guidance Techniques. Any disciplinary action taken must be reasonable in the circumstances.

Actions that are humiliating or frightening to a child are prohibited. Examples of prohibited actions include:

- Spanking, hitting, pinching, shaking, or inflicting any other form of corporal punishment.
- Verbal abuse, threats or derogatory remarks about the child or the child's family.
- Withholding or forcing meals, snacks, or naps.

Through the use of positive guidance, the Community Preschool program provides an enriching, safe and educational environment for the children, helping them develop self-control, self-esteem and respect for the rights of others.

Staff are informed of the Child Guidance Policy through the Preschool Staff Handbook and during the staff meeting held at the beginning of the year.

Parents will be informed of the Child Guidance Policy through the Preschool handbook. The preschool educator reviews this policy with the children at the beginning of the year and throughout the year as necessary.

# Preschool Fees

## 1. Cost:

<b>AM or PM</b>
<b>\$365.00</b> per month for <b>five half days/week</b>
<b>\$292.00</b> per month for <b>four half days/week</b>

<b>\$219.00</b> per month for <b>three half days/week</b>
<b>\$146.00</b> per month for <b>two half days/week</b>
<b>\$ 73.00</b> per month for <b>one half day/week</b>

## 2. Method of payment:

- When registering, parents are required to submit ten postdated cheques for the school year.
- Program start and end dates will follow the school division calendar.
- A non-refundable deposit of \$73.00 must accompany the registration form. This amount will be applied to the first month of preschool fees.
- Default of payment – Payments not received will result in the removal of the child from the program.
- No time in lieu or refunds will be granted for days lost due to illness or school closure.

One month written notice must be provided to inform the Preschool Educator of your intent to exit your child from the program.

# Parent Concerns and Appeals

If you have any concerns about the program, please let us know.

- Step 1** Ask for a meeting with the teacher/preschool educator. At this meeting, you should present your reasons for calling the meeting and state the action you wish taken. Usually we can solve most problems that affect your child at school.
- Step 2** If a solution to the problem is not found, request another meeting with the teacher/preschool educator and the school administrator.
- Step 3** If the problem persists, you may wish to contact Kym Porter, Coordinator of Early Childhood Services by calling (403)502-8354.

# Emergency Evacuation Procedures

1. Initiation of evacuation procedures will be signaled by a bell, alarm, or announcement on the public address system.
2. Staff takes portable record and class list.
3. Exit the building via the closest exit or alternate exit if closest is blocked.
4. Ensure children know these procedures and exit in an orderly fashion.

5. Close doors and shut off lights.
6. Proceed to designated meeting area.
7. Children who are already outside at the initiation of an evacuation procedure will go directly to the pre-determined outside check-in location.
8. Take attendance once outside school.
9. Re-enter the school at “all clear” signal (ringing of school bell).

Staff and children will have the opportunity to practice this process in advance of during monthly fire/evacuation drills. Two to three times a year, a lockdown drill is also practiced. In order to be prepared for any emergency drill, all persons in the school must wear footwear throughout the day.

Staff members are oriented to this procedure through the Preschool Staff Handbook and at the preschool staff meeting at the beginning of the year. The procedure is also posted beside the classroom door.

In the case of inclement weather or other circumstances that make waiting outside the school unsafe, students will walk to the designated alternate site. Staff outside at the time of an evacuation procedure should direct the children and remain with them until informed that the situation is clear. The Preschool Educator will carry the Portable Emergency Information Record when outside the building, in order to notify parents in the case of an Emergency Evacuation. This Portable Record also has the phone numbers for local emergency response service and poison control center.

<b>Community Preschool</b>	<b>Designated Alternate Site</b>
Mother Teresa School	Ross Glen School
St. Francis Xavier School	McCoy High School
St. Michael’s School, M.H.	Church of Christ
St. Louis School	Cape School
St. Patrick’s	St. Paul’s Church
École St. Thomas d’Aquin	Crestwood School

## Communicable Diseases

The Community Preschool staff will contact the parent or legal guardian of the child to request that they remove their child from the program if the child appears to be suffering from a disease as listed in Schedule 1 of the Communicable Diseases Regulation. Parents of a child with a diagnosed contagious condition are asked to notify the preschool as soon as possible. The Preschool Educator will alert other parents to watch for symptoms in their own children. Children suffering from these conditions must be kept at home until the infectious stage has passed as directed by their physician.

**Children will not be able to attend if they have the following conditions:**

1. Fever 100 F or higher - child needs to be fever free for 24 hours.
2. Nausea or vomiting.
3. Diarrhea - runny or watery stools or 2 looser stools within last 4 hours.
4. Sore throat, loss of voice, hacking or continuous coughing, runny nose with colored discharge.
5. Runny or crusty eyes - watery, matted, red or pink eyes.
6. Unexplained rash.
7. Excessive crankiness - child is irritable, excessive whining or crying, wants to be constantly held.
8. Lice - may not return to program until completely cured.
9. Other communicable diseases - Chicken Pox, Mumps, Measles, Flu, Roseola, and Conjunctivitis (pink eye).

# Administration of Medication

Where it is absolutely necessary for children to take medication at the preschool, the principal must receive signed parental consent and written instructions from the child's physician, dentist or parent. Only staff members with a current first aid certificate are allowed to administer medication.

The written instructions from the physician must include:

1. The length of time for which the drug is to be administered.
2. The required dosage.
3. Action to be taken in the event of possible hazards or side effects.

Prescription medication to be given in the preschool must:

1. Be in the original labeled container.
2. Have the child's full name listed.
3. Have the name of the drug and the dosage listed.
4. Have the time the drug is to be administered listed.
5. Have the physician's name listed.

The medication must be administered according to the labeled directions.

When medication is administered to a child, the following information must be recorded:

1. Name of the medication.
2. The time of administration.
3. The amount administered.
4. The initials of the person who administered the medication.

All medication must be stored in a locked container that is inaccessible to the children. Emergency medication may be store in a place unlocked but that is still inaccessible to the children.

# Nutrition

To ensure the children have ample energy and focus, parents are responsible to provide a nutritious snack for their child. Each snack must include two of the four food groups from the Canada Food Guide. The Preschool program will supplement if necessary. Snack time is scheduled approximately halfway through the program (during both morning and afternoon sessions). Children always have access to the water fountain if they are thirsty. Children are seated at the table during snack time.

# Thank You

**Thank you for choosing to register your child in one of our Catholic Preschools.**

**We look forward to the opportunity to serve you.**

### **For More Information Contact:**

- **Mrs. Kym Porter, Coordinator of Early Childhood Services (403)502-8354 or**
- **Mrs. Cheryl Aasman, Student Services Administrative Assistant (403)502-8365**



**A Catholic School:  
A learning community enlivened by the Spirit of Christ.**