

Dear Kindergarten Families,

I am delighted to welcome you and your child to kindergarten. I hope you had a fun, safe, and relaxing summer! I want to take this opportunity to introduce myself and express my excitement about working with you and your child this year.

I am a graduate of Madonna University with a Bachelor of Arts degree with minors in Social Science, Elementary Education and Early Childhood Education. I earned my Master in the Art of Teaching degree from Marygrove College. I have been teaching for 26 years. I taught in Catholic schools for 3 years at the beginning of my career, moved on to charter and public schools for 13 years and for the past 10 years, MCES has been my home. Most of my career has been spent teaching kindergarten. My passion and my heart are with teaching the younger students.

I will be using our classroom website as an extra form of communication. I will post our weekly newsletter and any other upcoming events. You can also check your child’s folder for important information.

It is my goal to ensure your child’s kindergarten experience is full of growth academically, spiritually, and socially. I believe that students learn the best in a positive, nurturing, structured and hands-on environment. It is important that we work together so each child reaches his or her fullest potential.

Please, if you have any questions or concerns let me know. I can be reached by email at [stephey@monroecatholicschools.com](mailto:stephey@monroecatholicschools.com).

Sincerely,

Jennifer Stephey

**Arrival/Dismissal:**

Morning drop off begins at 7:30am. Teachers and students will line up in the gym. At 7:45am, we begin our Morning Assembly with prayer, pledge, and our Mission. Then we will go to our classroom. School begins promptly at 7:45am. Any time after that your child will be marked tardy. Please try to be on time so that your child may be settled before they start a new day of learning.

Dismissal begins at 2:30pm. **You must get into the circle loop to pick up your child instead of parking and walking to get them.** You will stop at one of the numbered pick up spots where a teacher will be waiting with your child. Once you have stopped, we will help to get your child into the car. We will **not** buckle your child in, so if they need help doing that, please go through the line and pull into a parking spot to get out and buckle them yourself. **Please do not get out of the car and buckle your child while still in the pick-up line.** Our main purpose is to keep the children safe, keeping the parking lot as clear as possible and keeping the pick-up line moving will help us to do that.

**Snack:**

Students are responsible for bringing in their own snack every day. Please make sure they are healthy choices. In addition, they need to be able to fit in a snack/sandwich size Ziploc bag, or a pre-packaged snack. Make sure it is something they will eat in 15 minutes. Please stay away from snacks that need to be refrigerated, peeled, or heated up. **I DO allow water bottles, but please make sure that you send your child with WATER only in case of a spill.** Water bottles are sent home daily to be washed and refilled for the next day. Water bottles will be refilled at school as needed.

**Lunch:**

Lunchtime is from 11:30am-11:55am every day. Please remember that we will not be microwaving any food so refrain from packing anything in your child’s lunch that needs to be heated up. Also, try to pack/make items as easy as possible for your child to open. This will help to make your child as independent as possible.

**Specials:**

Starting **after** Labor Day, we will begin specials, which will be Art, Music, Gym, Technology, Atrium, and Garden (fall and spring). Students are to wear their gym uniform on gym days with tennis shoes. A schedule will be sent home with your child, when it is finalized. I always put the specials for the current week and the next week in my weekly newsletter and on my website. Post my newsletter on your fridge or check my website if you need to reference the specials schedule.

**Field Trips:**

We had loads of fun going to the Trabbic Pumpkin Farm and Indian Creek Zoo. We plan to return to Trabbic Pumpkin Farm again this year, stay tuned for details. To be a chaperone, you **MUST** have taken Protecting God’s Children, signed the Volunteer Code of Conduct, and completed the iChat Background Check. If you have not done these, please contact the office. You can sign up for Protecting God’s Children at www.virtus.org

**Weekly Newsletter:**

At the beginning of each week, you will receive a newsletter that is sent home in your child’s folder. **Please be sure to read it,** as I will write in it what we are working on in class along with other important information pertaining to the classroom. I will also have the newsletter posted on my website so you can refer back to it if you misplace it. To find my website go to [www.mcesmonroe.com](http://www.mcesmonroe.com), click on the Staff & Academics tab, click on Faculty & Staff, scroll down to St. Michael Campus, click on my name.

**Behavior:**

I believe consistency and routine are very important in my classroom because it establishes a sense of security for the children. Therefore, we will spend a lot of time the first few weeks establishing the class routine, discussing and clearly demonstrating the expected behavior in our room. The classroom environment will be structured and nurturing, and the children will be expected to follow the rules and treat others with respect.

In September, we will begin using a monthly calendar to communicate daily behavior. Please keep this calendar in your child’s folder so it is stamped. Our classroom management policy will focus on positive behavior, by teaching all students to be bucket fillers.

We will use the bucket filler books and our lessons on the Virtues to introduce behaviors that would make them bucket fillers. We will model and role play bucket filler behaviors as well as bucket dipper behaviors. We will discuss which behaviors are acceptable and not acceptable.

Each child will start the day as a bucket filler (name on smiley face bucket). If they are having difficulties and are making bucket dipper choices, they would move their name to the frowny face bucket. If bucket dipping continues, they would move to the sad face bucket. The children can move their names back and forth based on their bucket filling and dipping during the day. When children are being bucket fillers, their name will stay on the happy face bucket.

Bucket filling is actions or words that show that you care about someone. Saying or doing something kind. Giving someone a heartfelt smile. Using names with respect. Helping without being asked. Giving sincere compliments. Showing respect to others. There are many more wonderful ways to fill buckets.

Bucket dipping is making fun of someone. Saying or doing unkind things. Refusing to help. Failing to show respect or being intentionally disrespectful. These are just a few ways to be a bucket dipper.

Through the course of the day students may move off the happy face, but they always have the opportunity to move back to happy face by the choices that they make.

**Birthdays:**

As you know, our little ones love their birthday and who does not love a special day that is designated just for them? I want to make sure that the children get the recognition for their day, but we also want to make sure the other students in the classroom are able to participate as well. Since there are so many different types of allergies out there, we ask that no type of food birthday treat be brought in for the students in the class. Instead, your child could bring in stickers, bubbles, pencils, Play-Doh, or any other item you think the children would enjoy. You do not have to do any of this; it is just a suggestion in case you were interested in doing something extra. We will still celebrate in the classroom and your child will receive something from me. **Students may dress down on their birthday. However, if their birthday falls on a mass day they cannot dress down that day. They may dress down the day before or the day after.**  In addition, if you plan to have a birthday party at home, I would be glad to pass out invitations **only** if everyone in the class is invited. If not, I do not want to have any hurt feelings in the classroom. **If your child just celebrated a birthday in August, please let me know what day you would like me to celebrate your child and I will do that.** We celebrate June and July birthdays at the end of the year.

**Room Parents:**

If you would like to be a room parent and help to celebrate various holidays, please email me that you are interested. I will put together a list and then email you all with each other’s information so you can work together to help plan any classroom parties we have. Room parents do not have to attend the parties if your work schedule does not allow for that. You can help assist in making and getting crafts ready for our Halloween and Christmas/Advent parties.

**Star Student:**

Starting in September, we will celebrate a Star Student each full week of school. The Star Student will have special jobs at school during their week. They will also have tasks to complete, and these tasks will include your help at home. A Star Student letter will be sent to you the week before your child is supposed to be Star Student so you can have time to work on a poster and prepare.

**Transportation Home:**

Please fill out and return the Transportation Home form that was given to you at Move-In Night. This form will help me ensure that things run smoothly, and we get your child where he/she needs to be. If your child’s way home should need to be changed, please let me know by way of email, note in their folder, or you can call the office by 1:30pm.