

Roncalli SonShine Patch Preschool Parent Handbook

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Our Mission

Instilling Catholic values and
promoting academic excellence by
nurturing
mind, body and soul.

Revised 2026

Welcome to the Roncalli SonShine Patch! SonShine is not spelled wrong - it stands for Jesus, God's Son, and we hope to "shine" with His love in our program! We are blessed to begin another school year and excited that you are joining us.

Our purpose is to provide a safe, caring environment with activities that promote each child's social, physical, emotional, and spiritual growth. We want to make available a place rich with sensory and concrete learning experiences that stimulate exploring and experimenting. Our primary emphasis will be on building positive self-esteem and a program to benefit the child, parents, and the Aberdeen Catholic School System.

MISSION STATEMENT

Instilling Catholic values and promoting academic excellence by nurturing mind, body, and soul.

VISION STATEMENT

As a ministry of St. Mary's and Sacred Heart Parishes, we have been commissioned to nurture a solid Catholic faith foundation. By accepting, living, and sharing the message of Christ, we will develop a sense of personal responsibility to God and His creation. By cultivating the spiritual, emotional, intellectual, and physical well-being of all members of the Roncalli school community.

STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY AND BELIEF STATEMENTS

Under the guidance and directions of the Office of Catholic Education of the Diocese of Sioux Falls, and through the patronage of Sacred Heart and St. Mary's Catholic Parishes of Aberdeen, South Dakota, the ABERDEEN CATHOLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM (ACSS) has adopted the following statements of philosophy and objectives as a guide for serving the needs of each child.

WE BELIEVE:

All children are made in the image of God.

We are created to know, love, and serve God in this world and to be with him in the next.

We will inspire all students to develop their full potential to be prepared for success in a changing global community.

Our bodies and minds are a gift from God, and we will encourage students to make healthy and holy choices.

We will share the responsibility of spiritual growth on our journey to holiness.

We will commission students to live as Jesus did.

WEBSITE ADDRESS

Please visit aberdeenroncalli.org for up to date information on the SonShine Patch

ENROLLMENT

Our Preschool enrollment is open to children, ages 3 through 6. 3-year-olds will be enrolled if they have turned 3 by the first day of school and are fully toilet trained. There will be no discrimination regarding sex, race, color, creed or political belief. Children's names will be put on a waiting list and admitted as vacancies occur. Enrollments are available to all in January. Priority is given to current Preschool and Roncalli families. Parents must complete all required forms before the child is admitted. These include:

- PreK registration form
- PreK registration fee of \$100 per child (paid only once for Preschool years)
- Current SD immunization record
 - Your child's immunization schedule will be monitored. You will be notified if he/she is in need of an updated immunization.
- A signed financial contract

PRESCHOOL OFFERINGS

We offer a part-time Preschool section for those who do not wish to send their child all day. The following are the times/days offered:

4-5-year-olds (must be age 4 by the first day of school and fully potty trained)

AM - M-W-F (8:00-10:30 AM)

PM - MTThF (12:00—3:00 PM)

(All sections offered based on enrollment numbers)

3-year-olds (Must be age 3 by the first day of school and fully potty trained)

AM - T & Th (8:00—10:30 AM)

Children are not allowed in the classroom more than 15 minutes before the start time.

Our full-time option, *Preschool Plus!* is available from 7:30 AM - 6:00 PM on all school days. This option is available for children ages 3 and older (must be age 3 by the first day of school and fully potty trained).

BILLING

Days billed are reflected in the Roncalli academic school calendar. If we are open on non-school days (some Holidays, Christmas break, etc.), children enrolled for those days will be charged an additional per-day fee. Each monthly payment will be due by the first of each month. Families will be billed regardless of attendance; we do not offer sick days or vacation days.

Bills are due the 1st of the month; a late fee of \$25 per month will be charged if payment is not received by the 1st of the month. If an account becomes delinquent, those circumstances forfeit a child's registration in the Roncalli SonShine Patch Preschool and the Aberdeen Catholic School System reserves the right to utilize the use of a collection agency to collect past due amounts.

LATE PICKUP FEE

Please be aware that we close at 6:00 PM. We will charge \$1.00 per minute after 6:00 PM. After three (3) occurrences, the family will meet with the Director to determine a possible solution.

MAKING PAYMENTS

On FinalSite, you may add your bank information for your monthly payments to be taken out automatically. If you are paying by check, please leave your payment with the Roncalli Primary School secretary or put it into the payment drop box on the secretary's desk. Please place all checks/money orders, or cash in a sealed envelope with your family's name on it. Thank you.

WITHDRAWAL

A fourteen (14) day written notice to the SonShine Patch Director is required for release from the tuition contract, and the parent/guardian will be responsible for the payment of one month's tuition following withdrawal, plus non-refundable fees.

HOURS/DAYS CLOSED

For those attending our *Preschool Plus!*, our center will be open from 7:30 AM - 6:00 PM. every day Roncalli Schools are in session. Occasionally, the SonShine Patch will be open on some no-school days for childcare when there are at least 20 children signed up, and adequate staffing is available. The SonShine Patch will be open for childcare on some early dismissal days and teacher collaboration time at no additional cost to parents. Please note, this does not include parent-teacher conferences. Snow days - the SonShine Patch will follow the school's decisions on weather related delays and closures. Please listen to local radio reports. If school begins late due to inclement weather, there will be no part-time AM Preschool session that day. Please refer to the Aberdeen Catholic School System Academic Calendar on the website for days school is in session.

DAILY ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE

Please walk your child in daily through the east gym doors. Please park your vehicle in the southeast parking lot across from the drop off lane or in the east parking area next to the gym.

We are utilizing the Smartcare sign in/out system. Parents will receive a pin code and QR code along with access to an app. At drop off and pick up times, parents will use either the pin code on a kiosk or scan the QR code from the app to sign in/out. If other contacts will be picking up/dropping off, they can use the pin code provided to them to sign the child in/out. Policies for parent drop off and pick up are subject to change.

If you are not picking up your child, please keep us informed as to who is authorized to do so.

If your child does not show up for a scheduled day without notification from a parent, the teacher will either send a message through class dojo for confirmation as to where the child is or the school secretary will call the parent.

STAFF

The SonShine Patch employs certified Preschool teachers. By state law, we will hire an aide to assist in classrooms that have more than 10 children, as well as utilizing college students and volunteer help. All are required to have CPR training, safe environment training, and 20 hours of staff development each year.

When hiring, a complete background check is completed. No staff member or volunteer will be hired if he/she is found to have:

1. A substantiated report of child abuse and neglect.
2. Been convicted of a felony within the past five years, a sex offense, a crime of violence, or a crime against children.
3. His/her name on the sex offender registry.

CURRICULUM

The preschool teachers at the SonShine Patch refer to the SD Early Learning Guidelines in planning the day to day activities to ensure that the children are receiving a developmentally appropriate preschool experience. The activities planned allow children to become a community of learners, helping each other learn and enhance their skills. STREAM (Science, Technology, Religion, Engineering, Arts, Math) activities are planned throughout the day and integrated within all our daily activities.

Prayer, daily blessings, and the teachings of the Catholic Church are integrated throughout each day. We believe children learn best through meaningful experiences. By integrating a meaningful child-centered program, we encourage curiosity, discovery, and problem solving which allows individual growth and development of a positive self-image, thus preparing the child for his/her school career.

We want you, as a parent, to look into our busy, happy, noisy, creative classrooms and see your child at work and play. We want you to realize the validity and the equal weight of importance work and play contribute to early learning. Parents and teachers together can help the children to develop their full potential.

If you are interested in seeing the Early Learning Guidelines, please let any Preschool teacher know, or you may visit this website: https://dss.sd.gov/docs/childcare/early_learning_guidelines.pdf

PHILOSOPHY

As Early Childhood Educators, our ethical responsibility is to provide a safe, healthy, and nurturing environment for each child. We are committed to supporting children's development and learning by offering a developmentally appropriate environment that does not infringe upon the necessary psycho/social development. We respect individual differences and help children learn to live, play, and work cooperatively.

As Early Childhood Educators, we are facilitators, creating a community of inquiry. Through forming relationships, creating an environment of trust and mutual respect, and allowing the child to lead the direction of his/her learning within a curated environment, we are building a strong foundation for the child's school career.

Children learn concepts best when they are meaningful and relevant to them. They acquire knowledge through the active exploration of their environment and experiences, not solely through direct instruction or a reference *to* the experience. Teachers take the time to observe and reflect within the classroom, allowing them to change and adapt to each child's needs, thus benefitting the whole learner. (adapted from NAEYC code of ethics)

MEALS

Children may take part in the school lunch program. Lunchtime Solutions provides balanced meals, which include foods from the food pyramid. The school board sets meal prices every year. Please send lunch money as a separate check from your SonShine Patch payment in a sealed envelope marked "lunch money." Menus for the week are kept posted at the door and on the district website. Sack lunches from home are welcome, however, no fast food can be sent for lunch, we are a "nut-free school," and state regulations require that meals from home consist of one-third of your child's nutritional needs. If your child's lunch does not meet these needs, we will supplement and add the charge to your bill.

SNACKS

Snacks will be served twice daily for Preschool programs. Please check the schedule for your child's Preschool only class for snack times. We supply 98% fruit juice, milk, or water.

We will plan around your child's birthday as this is such a special day and treats can be served. Remember, Roncalli is a "nut-free school."

ALLERGIES

If your child has any food allergies, please mark this on the registration form and provide the school with a note from your doctor. If your child requires only specified foods and ingredients due to allergies, you must supply the snacks for your child. We read labels carefully and avoid anything made with or processed near peanuts or tree nuts. However, if the allergy is severe, it may be safer for your child if you supply his/her own snacks. If your child requires an EPI pen for severe allergies, please provide the pen, a complete medication form for the school and a doctor's note. All EPI pens are stored in the classrooms with child's name clearly written on the outside case.

BUSING/FIELD TRIPS

Various field trips will be announced throughout the year. The State Seat Belt Law requires we must have child restraint systems whenever children are transported. We contract with Rideline to transport the children on field trips. We may occasionally use parent drivers, if parent drivers are used, each vehicle will carry only the number of children allowed by vehicle passenger capacity (the number of safety belts in the vehicle). No children are allowed in the front seat. Volunteers who help drive are required to fill out a driver form, background check, and view the safe environment video through the Sioux Falls Catholic Diocese. All drivers are required to provide proof of liability insurance information. More information will be given to parents about the needed paperwork.

ITEMS FROM HOME

Toys from home are NOT allowed except on specified days.

Please speak with the Preschool teacher if a pet is to be brought in. If so, the parent must stay with the pet and take it home after visiting for 10-15 minutes.

Please send a large labeled school bag EVERY DAY. Please try it out before you buy it. Can your child open it easily? Is it easy to carry? This promotes responsibility and organization for our future school years.

PICTURES

All Preschool children enrolled will have a chance to have their picture taken through the school picture program. Information will be sent out in September before picture day. If you have your child's picture taken, he/she will be in the annual Roncalli Yearbook!

PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION (PTO)

As a family enrolled in the SonShine Patch you are a member of the Parent Teacher Organization. We encourage you to help raise funds for Roncalli through participation in fundraisers and we invite you to participate in fun activities put on for students and families. Funds raised can then be requested for use by the SonShine Patch to purchase needed supplies.

DRESS

Play is the work of childhood! As such, clothing should be comfortable and casual. We play and learn with paint, dirt, sand, etc. Younger children tend to go home with their art ON them. If you don't want clothes ruined, please do not send your child in them. Shoes are important in comfort and balance. We will be active inside and outside, so please no clogs, flip-flops, jellies, cowboy boots or shoes that slip. Tennis shoes are best.

Please send an extra change of clothes (labeled) to keep in school bag for "emergencies". It is remarkable how many items are lost during the year - (especially mittens and boots), but labeling helps greatly.

MEDICATION/ILLNESS POLICY

There is no reason to exclude mildly ill children (runny nose, light cough) or those under medication unless:

- Your child does not feel well enough to participate comfortably in the day to day activities.
- Your child is running a temperature of 100 degrees or greater.
- Your child shows signs of a contagious disease: pink eye, strep throat, vomiting, diarrhea, impetigo, etc.
- The staff cannot care for the sick child without interfering with the care of the other children.

If your child is running a temp of 100 degrees or above/or shows signs of being ill, please do not bring him/her. Also, if signs of illness (fever, pain, etc.) develop at school, your child will be separated from others and will rest near the secretary's office until a contacted person arrives to take them home. Children who have a 100 degree temperature will be sent home until they are fever free for 24 hours **without** medication. We want to keep a healthy group so this is best for all. Also if your child contracts an infectious disease, we must notify parents and the State Health Department, so please let us know.

Medication will only be given to the child with the specific written directions and a signed consent form from the parent or guardian, which must be filled out prior to administering.

Medications will be kept in their original container with the original label with legible directions for use, expiration date, the child's name, and the physician's name. The contents of any drug container without a label or with an illegible label shall not be permitted at the center.

All medications will be kept out of the children's reach and properly refrigerated, if need be. The parent is expected to bring the medication into the room and hand it to a teacher and take it home every night.

PARENT COMMUNICATION

We hope you know that you are welcome to stop in or visit anytime. We value your suggestions and support. We will have two (2) conferences throughout the school year. This is a great opportunity to set aside time to ask questions, share concerns or give "pats on the back". However, any time you need to talk about our program, check on your child's involvement, or have questions answered, our Director and teachers will be available to visit with you. Our teachers also use a classroom app as a means of communication. If at any time you wish to call your child's teacher to discuss your child's health, development, behavior, or have other questions, you may call the school at 225-3460 to schedule a time to meet.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION PLAN

We share the same plan as the school in tornado or fire evacuation. Our routes are posted at the door and we will have at least four (4) fire drills, one (1) tornado drill, and one (1) lockdown safe drill per year. We do follow the ACSS Emergency preparedness and response plan.

DISCIPLINE

Our emphasis focuses on positive reinforcement of correct behavior. We will set clear-cut limits and promote respect for the rights of others.

Our expectations are simple and clear cut for children ages 3-5. We expect them to respect their friends and teachers. This might be worded differently from room to room, but the message is consistent.

On occasion, there are students who we must remind of the rules continually. We will contact parents when:

- A child shows behaviors, which are consistently disruptive to the rest of the class and/or require constant 1-on-1 supervision by a teacher.
- A child shows aggressive behaviors, which may hurt the other children.
- On occasion, the children exhibit behaviors, which are not age appropriate. In these cases, the teacher in charge will use their discretion and call the parent or talk to the parent at pick up time.

Expectations of parents: We expect the parents to support the teachers in dealing with discipline issues. At any time, parents may contact the Director to schedule a meeting to discuss what he/she feels is appropriate discipline techniques.

We want your child to have a positive experience here at the SonShine Patch, and if for some reason we cannot professionally give this, we may need to reconsider whether the SonShine Patch is the right environment for your child.

We will not allow degrading punishments such as: spanking, hitting, pinching, shaking, verbal abuse, threats or restrictions of movements or meals.

Any form of child abuse will not be tolerated and will be reported to the proper authorities in this manner:

- Immediate reporting to law enforcement or Social Services.
- Staff member involved in child abuse/neglect incident will be immediately evaluated on employability.

When hired, all staff reads and signs a statement defining child abuse and neglect and what to do in reporting responsibilities and procedures.

Thank you for reading this handbook. Please keep it handy for future reference. As questions arise, please do not hesitate to contact the SonShine Patch at Roncalli Primary School:

605-225-3460

We feel incredibly blessed to be a part of this school family and look forward to working with you to ensure a successful school year for all!