

## **CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENTS**

### **Classroom Environments Initiative**

St. Luke's Day School has established 3 important values to guide our decisions for ongoing design changes in our classrooms.

#### ***Child-Centeredness***

Thoughtful selection of materials, equipment, furnishings, and lessons that support our mission;

#### ***Visual Order***

Uncluttered space to set the tone for appropriate play & learning and peaceful interactions;

#### ***Natural Elements***

Physical reflections of our Creator, God, who made all this beauty with great love for us!

The Director, Program Coordinators (ProCos), and Facility, Events and Resources Manager (FERM) will offer guidance as our plan continues to develop.

## **COMMON CLASSROOM DESIGN ELEMENTS**

### **Child-Centeredness Checklist**

- Large photos of children will be displayed in one area of the Lambs, Bunnies, Penguins, and Honeybees classrooms.
- All classrooms will incorporate photos of children in action as appropriate for documentation of activities, class books, etc.
- Children's artwork will be thoughtfully and respectfully displayed (no curled edges or out of season artwork) in one area of classroom, location chosen in collaboration with the Facilities, Events and Resources Manager.
- Family photos will be included in one area of the classroom. Possibilities include class books, placemats, crib photos and framed displays.
- A Birthday wall celebrating each child will be displayed in one area of the classroom, location chosen in collaboration with the Facilities, Events and Resources Manager.
- Cubbies will be labeled attractively with each child's name and photo.
- All equipment, toys and books will be chosen and thoughtfully arranged according to the age/stage of children assigned to the classroom.
- Special postings (who's here, pictorial daily schedule, etc.) are limited and placed in collaboration with the Facilities, Events and Resources Manager.

### **Visual Order Checklist**

- Countertops will remain free of clutter. Teacher materials should be organized attractively and purposefully. Use enclosed storage efficiently.

- Tops of manipulative shelves will remain free of teacher clutter and only hold items which enhance classroom environment or pertain to curriculum (plants, natural objects, lamps, photos, manipulatives).
- Nothing is to be stored on top of or behind cabinets, furniture, or doors.
- A Parent Communication bulletin board, issued by the Facilities, Events and Resources Manager, will be located near each classroom entry door.
- Items posted for parents are limited to Daily Schedules and Lesson Plans. Additional pertinent information may be posted if it fits neatly on your Parent Communication Board without hanging off the edges.
- All other parent communication will be shared via REMIND.
- A Communication Crate, including children's folders, will be located near classroom entry for parents' easy access.
- No postings or decorations on exterior of classroom door. Birthday signs for children may be posted on the child's cubbie.
- Centers will remain open and inviting for children; please do not cover with cloth or turn them to indicate centers are closed. (See Facilities, Events and Resources Manager for suggestions)
- Window of classroom door will not be obstructed.
- Rest mats will be stored out of sight.
- No Teacher Supply Store or similar "store bought" or computer graphic decorations or labeling will be used in classroom; see the Facilities, Events and Resources Manager if you have questions.
- No items with logos, product placement, cartoon, or Disney characters are to be used in classrooms.
- Classroom rules are not posted on walls.
- Lunch box notes are not posted; instead make a binder that can be kept in your Book Nook.

### **Natural Elements Checklist**

- Natural elements will be used liberally throughout your classroom environment (creative uses for baskets and light as well as materials for children to explore including shells, rocks, water, sand, and plants).
- Windows will be accessible to children; do not block with furniture without approval.
- Window blinds will remain open until nap time to allow for natural light.
- Include lamps or alternative light sources in the classroom when possible.
- Manipulatives and materials will be shelved in open, natural baskets or neutral-colored containers (not plastic tubs). Limit choices so as not to overwhelm or clutter, and rotate materials frequently.
- Please incorporate at least one live plant in your classroom. You may enhance other areas with a limited number of approved artificial plants.
- Neutral colored soft elements and textiles should be used throughout your classroom and must be washable.

### **Classroom Set-up Checklist**

- ▶ Arrange the room attractively in a variety of developmentally appropriate learning centers. The centers are arranged to accommodate children individually, in small groups, and in large groups. Private areas where children may play alone are available.

1. Assess your furniture needs. Speak to your Program Coordinator about furniture ideas before turning in an official request. Make sure all furnishings are clean and in good repair. Request maintenance as needed.
  2. Check out toys, manipulatives, puzzles and books for your classroom. Make sure they are all in good repair and no pieces are missing.
  3. Wash dramatic play and baby doll clothes as necessary.
  4. Get crayons, markers, paper, etc. from the **Resource Room EW-136**
  5. Complete a final safety check: no sharp edges; no pinch, crush, or shear points. Toys for children two years and under must be checked to ensure that they are large enough to prevent swallowing and/or choking.
  6. The room is arranged so that adults can supervise children at all times.
  7. Diverse, nonsexist, non-stereotypical pictures, dolls, books, and materials are available.
  8. The environment includes soft elements.
- ▶ Organize your closet space to best meet your needs. Due to our extremely limited storage space teachers may not keep large amounts of personal teaching items at school. See the Facilities, Events and Resources Manager with specific questions.
  - ▶ Make sure storage areas (i.e., cubbies, hooks, closets) are ready for each child's personal belongings.
  - ▶ Create photo/name labels for cubbies, hooks and diaper bag storage for younger children.
  - ▶ Ready your approved bulletin boards with appropriate displays or make them ready to post children's work. No pre-packaged bulletin board sets or borders from the teacher supply store! Be creative.
  - ▶ Make sure the Emergency Procedure Plan and Evacuation Map are posted near or on the back of the classroom door.
  - ▶ Handwashing and Diaper Changing Rebus Charts are posted by the Facilities, Events and Resources Manager. Please request one if yours is missing.
  - ▶ Children's Name/Birthday List is kept nearby for reference.
  - ▶ Allergy information will be posted near your sink area (Any rooms without a sink area will see the Facilities, Events and Resources Manager for alternative)
  - ▶ Notes for a Substitute are kept in an easily accessible folder in the teacher area of the classroom or in the classroom emergency backpack.
  - ▶ Obtain "Where Are We?" sign from Facilities, Events and Resources Manager.
  - ▶ Locate all necessary diaper changing supplies, including wipes, gloves, changing paper, soap and water bottles, and disinfectant. The diapering area and covered trash can are clean.
  - ▶ All chemicals and potentially dangerous products are stored in labeled containers out of the reach of children – preferably in locked cabinets.
  - ▶ Walkie-Talkies and other electronics should be charged out of reach of children. Please do not unplug the Sunday School nametag printers or use the outlets where these are located. Please do not store anything on or in the printer boxes. These are for Sunday School use only.

- ▶ Check that a broom and dustpan are available and stored appropriately for use in your classroom.
- ▶ Each room has two trash cans, lined with plastic bags. Plastic trash cans are clean. Food items and diapers go in the cans with lids. All paper and other non-food trash goes in open cans. Materials contaminated with blood or bodily fluids should be sealed in a plastic bag before disposal in a can with a lid.
- ▶ Comfortable arrangements for rest time are planned. The school provides mats for all Toddler classes. Parents of Twos-K purchase mats from the school and bring to the class. If a mat is torn, it must be replaced. Bedding (cover sheets, blankets, etc.) may not be stored with mats. Parents may not send cloth covered mats. Blankets are not allowed for infants under one year old.

## **A FEW MORE THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR DAY SCHOOL CLASSROOM**

### **Housekeeping**

At day's end:

1. Toys are back on shelves
2. Blocks are put back according to size
3. Tables are wiped clean and sprayed with disinfectant
4. Messy art areas are cleaned up
5. Floors are swept of food
6. Glue is removed from tables
7. Paint brushes are cleaned
8. Paint cups are wiped clean or disposed of; paint should never be poured down a drain
9. Chairs stacked on top of tables
10. Countertops are cleared of clutter and teaching materials are put away
11. Overhead fluorescent lights are turned off
12. Floor lamps or table lamps are turned off
13. Doors closed and locked

### **Reduce, Reuse, Recycle**

Please make every effort to make our school an environmentally friendly place. Look for ways to “go green” in your classroom and teach the children appropriate practices for reducing waste while reusing and recycling classroom materials. Children and adults are to bring re-usable cups, containers, and utensils that will be sent home daily for washing/disinfecting.

### **Maintenance Requests**

Maintenance requests for classrooms or DS equipment should be submitted to the **Facilities, Events and Resources Manager by email**. Do not make requests directly to the custodial or church facilities staff.

### **No Postings on Day School Painted Hallways or Doors**

Do not use tape, staples, ticktack, or any other materials on painted hallway walls or doors. Notices may be placed on a clipboard inside your room or communicated to parents via REMIND.