

St. Benedict Preschool Handbook

2021-2022

Welcome to St. Benedict Preschool!

This handbook is to help you with answers to your questions and to share our perspectives, policies, and procedures. The preschool is a part of St. Benedict School, which has programming for students from preschool through 8th Grade and is accredited by the State of Iowa Department of Education. As one of the fifty schools of the Archdiocese of Dubuque, the school is supported by the generosity of members of St. Benedict Parish to fulfill its educational mission.

Mission

St. Benedict School is founded on the core values of faith, leadership, and responsibility with an emphasis on prayer and service, as modeled by Saint Benedict. As an educational component of St. Benedict Parish, we welcome students and families of all faiths who seek academic excellence through Gospel values and Catholic teachings. We serve students in preschool through eighth grade from Decorah and surrounding rural communities. Students are nurtured in a safe and caring environment that promotes respect and compassion. Our dedicated staff endeavors to educate students to develop lifelong learning skills and to create a positive impact in an ever-changing world.

Purpose

The goal of our preschool is to promote the development of each child's fullest potential. We want the children to develop emotionally, intellectually, physically, and socially.

Equal Opportunity/Multicultural Assurances

St. Benedict Preschool is an equal opportunity employer and school. Educational programs governed by the Archdiocesan Board of Education maintain a policy of open enrollment. No student will be discriminated against because of his or her race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, religion socioeconomic status, marital status, or disability. However, students are required to meet the school's academic and financial requirement(s).

Registration/Enrollment

Registration for the school year starts in January. Every family who attends St. Benedict School, preschool through eighth grade, will have the opportunity to register prior to the general public. Then registration is open to the general public on a first-come-first-serve basis in January. No phone registrations will be accepted. Class size is limited to 20 students in the 4/5 year old class. Preschool is taught by a certified preschool teacher and a classroom assistant. ~~An open house is held in August the week before preschool classes begin.~~ Children need to be 4 years old by September 15th to be placed in the 4 year old classroom. Children who will be 5 years old by September 15th are eligible for Kindergarten. Exceptions to this policy may be made on an individual basis with approval of administration.

Fees

-A nonrefundable \$50.00 deposit will secure a spot in a class, due when the registration form is returned. No child will be placed on a class list until the registration form and fee are returned. The registration fee is used toward classroom materials and morning milk break costs. Students on a waiting list will only be required to provide a deposit when a class spot is secured.

-Tuition for the 4 yr. old program is:

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|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| - \$35 for 4 half days (MTThF) | Half Day is 8:15 – 12:15. |
| - \$190 for 4 full days (MTThF) | Full Day is 8:15 – 3:00. |

-Lunch fees are paid to the Decorah Community School District according to their schedule. Free and reduced lunch applications are available. All monthly payments are due by the 15th of that month, beginning September 15th.

-Late fees of \$5.00 per each 15-minute block (or any portion thereof) will be assessed for any families not picking up their child on time and for those who bring their child into the classroom more than five minutes early. Any late fee will be due with the next month's tuition. The times just before the normal arrival time of students and just after the normal departure time are extremely hectic times for teachers. They need to be able to get ready for the next class and leave the classroom to make copies or arrangements outside the classroom, but they may not leave a child unsupervised so it hampers the preparations for all students. We ask everyone's cooperation with this. With any unusual circumstances or exceptions, please discuss and make arrangements with the teacher beforehand.

Enrollment:

To enroll a child, the following must be completed:

A physical exam form completed and signed by your physician

A record of immunization on the State of Iowa Immunization Certificate

Emergency contact form

Consent for Non-prescription Medication

Permission slip allowing your child to participate in field trips

Media release allowing your child to be photographed while in the preschool program

Pick-up authorization

Records/Statement of Health

The state requires each preschool age child to have an admission physical exam report. This report includes an immunization record that is in compliance with the Iowa State Health Department regulations. Each preschool-age child shall have an admission physical examination report signed by a licensed physician or designee in a clinic supervised by a licensed physician. This report shall include past health history, status of present health, and recommendations for continued care when necessary. A statement of health condition signed by a physician or designee shall be submitted annually thereafter. This does include the child who has a medical or religious exemption, which must be on record.

Required Immunizations

Applicants enrolled or attempting to enroll in a licensed childcare center shall have received all of the currently required immunizations or have a waiver on record. The preschool health records are audited by the Public Health Department and any student not in compliance may be removed from the program immediately. Plan ahead so that your child's program is not interrupted.

Withdrawal

If you find it necessary to withdraw your child from our program for any reason, we ask that you give one week's notice in writing. If a child stops coming and written notice is not given, you will continue to be charged until such notice is received, as we can't give your child's space to a child on our waiting list unless we know for sure that she/he will not be returning.

Early Childhood Learning Goals / Archdiocese of Dubuque Catholic School System

- demonstrate respect for social and cultural diversity, for community and social roles.
- use language to effectively communicate and gain satisfaction through reading, writing, listening, and speaking.
- represent ideas and feelings through creative play, drama, dance and movement, music, art, and construction.
- think critically, reason, and solve problems.

Children:

- demonstrate a positive self-concept, appropriate self-control, and a sense of belonging.
- demonstrate curiosity about the world, confidence as a learner, creativity and imagination, and personal initiative.
- demonstrate relationships of mutual trust and respect with adults and peers, understand
- construct understanding of relationships among objects, people, and events such as classifying, ordering, number, space, and time.
- construct knowledge of the physical world, manipulate objects for desired effects, and cause and effect relationships.
- demonstrate appreciation for the fine arts, humanities, and sciences.
- become competent in management of their bodies using both gross and fine motor skills.
- demonstrate knowledge about the care of their bodies and maintain a desirable level of health and fitness.

Program Expectations:

The content for the preschool program is developmentally appropriate and reflects the purpose previously described and based on each of the following foundational premises:

The St. Benedict Catholic School preschool program provides unique opportunities to enhance the development of the whole child. Child-centered and developmentally appropriate experiences enable each child to foster feelings of self-worth, self-respect, and love for others.

A cooperative and supportive teaching partnership between family and school is essential in providing a positive and enriching early childhood experience (learning and life).

The teacher's role is to facilitate the child's experiential learning process by providing an integrated and multi-sensory environment that uses a variety of materials and modes.

The young child needs a flexible environment that offers the security of definite limits while providing freedom and flexibility so that each child can grow in self-expression in a noncompetitive environment.

The preschool program provides appropriate developmental aesthetic and artistic experiences that enable the child to:

- Develop enthusiasm for the arts
- Imagine and visualize through the arts
- Respond through the arts
- Express and represent through the arts
- Interpret through the arts
- Create through the arts
- Appreciate the arts
- Think, learn, and communicate through the arts

The preschool program provides appropriate developmental intellectual experiences that enable the child to:

- Sustain and extend natural curiosity
- Develop thinking through meaningful learning experiences
- Use language to facilitate thinking and learning
- Use language to communicate effectively
- Develop and integrate the attitudes, skills, and knowledge of the fine arts, humanities, practical arts, and sciences
- Become an independent lifelong learner

The preschool program provides appropriate developmental experiences in the development of responsibility, which enable the child to:

- Value and respect individual contributions
- Value, respect, and appreciate cultural identity and heritage
- Accept and demonstrate empathy
- Establish a collaborative environment and acquire cooperative and independent social skills
- Respect and care for the environment
- Adapt to a changing world

The preschool program provides appropriate developmental emotional and social experiences which enable the child to:

- Develop a positive, realistic self-concept
- Develop interdependence
- Set appropriate goals and feel satisfaction in accomplishments and efforts
- Cope with change
- Share and cooperate
- Develop friendships
- Learn from others
- Enjoy living and learning

The preschool program provides appropriate developmental physical development experiences that enable the child to:

- Learn and practice safety procedures
- Take care of and respect their bodies
- Develop awareness of good nutrition
- Develop a wide variety of motor skills while maintaining physical fitness
- Develop an appreciation and enjoyment of human movement
- Learn social skills in a physical activity setting

Birthday Treats & Snacks

Families will supply birthday treats and school snacks. In accordance with the Healthy Kids Act, St. Benedict Preschool encourages students to provide healthy treats. All treats/snacks must be purchased and in their original packaging. Examples of healthy snacks may include:

Trail Mix	Graham Crackers	Low-Fat Pudding
100 Calorie Snack Bags	Granola	Low-Fat Popcorn
Raisins/Craisins	Cereal bars	

Child/Staff Ratios

1 caregiver to 10 children

Class size is limited to 20 students in the 4/5-year-old section with a certified preschool teacher and a classroom assistant.

Field Trips

Field trips may be offered at preschool. Permission slips will be required in advance of any field trip off school property.

Absences

If your child will not be attending class for any reason, we ask that you inform us as far in advance as possible. If your call is outside normal school hours, please leave a message on the answering machine. No refunds or credits will be given for absences. In the event of a long-term absence due to illness, possible adjustments to your tuition/fees must be discussed with the principal.

Accidents/Emergencies

Incidents or accidents resulting in injury to a child will be reported on the day of the accident. The written report will be prepared by the staff person supervising the child at the time and shall include a general description of the incident and of the action taken, if any, by the staff at the school. If a child is hurt more severely, parents will be contacted and, if possible, the staff will transport the child as quickly as possible to the Emergency Room. Otherwise, an ambulance will be called.

Change of address

Please notify the preschool immediately if you have a change of address or telephone number. This information must be kept up to date and is especially important in case of an emergency.

Emergency Closing

In the event of school closings due to inclement weather, please utilize the notification system from the Decorah Community School District or listen to the local radio station. Our school closings or delays will be the same as the DCSD.

Discipline

It is important to treat each child as an individual in a manner which is appropriate to the child's development, activity, and general well being. Consistency, positive reinforcement, natural consequences, and positive redirection are used at the preschool to shape appropriate behaviors in the children. When necessary "time out" or a brief isolation from the group is used. If your child is exhibiting a behavior problem, we will call you to discuss the situation. Please discuss with the staff any changes, observation, questions, or suggestions you might have in dealing with your child. No punishment will be used in connection to rest, food or toileting.

Dismissal Policy:

Occasionally, a child will experience difficulty in adapting to the environment and/or abiding by certain rules of behavior in the group setting. If your child should experience some difficulty, corporal punishment including spanking, slapping and shaking shall not be used. A conference will be scheduled with your child's teacher or the director. We will work closely with you to see if the problem(s) can be resolved. If a child's behavior and attitude continues to be disruptive to the group or to other children's welfare, we reserve the right to ask you to withdraw the child from our program.

Arrival & Departure

Arrival: Parents are responsible for dropping their children off using the preschool entrance. For safety reasons, parents are **never** to drop a child off and allow him or her to come into the building **unattended**. It is the parent's responsibility to make sure that a teacher/staff person knows the child has arrived and the parent is leaving. (See the notice about early arrival/late fees.) However, as students become more familiar with the preschool routine, parents are encouraged to walk students to the outer door and leave quickly. This allows students to hang up their own jacket, empty their own book bag, and so forth. Teaching independence, separation skills, and self-help skills is a major aspect of the preschool curriculum. Your help in this area is appreciated.

The playground will be supervised beginning at 7:40 for morning drop off. Please make sure the supervisor is outside before leaving your child. If you choose to do this please notify the preschool teachers.

Also, for safety reasons, please keep the center area in the parking lot free for access for all. Please do not park in the bus loading zone.

The preschool entrance doors by the parking lot will open beginning at 8:10. If your child arrives after 8:20, the entrance doors near the preschool will be locked. Please escort your child to the main school entrance and check in at the school office.

Likewise, at the end of the day, parents should personally inform the staff when taking a child home. The preschool teachers will escort the preschoolers outside the preschool entrance doors. Parents do not need to come in to the preschool room at the end of the school day. A direct parent contact for emergency purposes is needed on the emergency contact form. Please share a cell phone number or a phone number where a person will answer.

Calendar & Days

An official calendar for the school year will be provided to parents at the August Open House. It coincides with St. Benedict's K-8 schedule as well as Decorah Community School District's, with the exception of the first day of school.

The 4-year-old class can choose either 4 half days, or 4 full days. Classes will meet on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday. The half day option is from 8:15-12:15 and the full day option is from 8:15-3:00.

Shoes

Please make sure that your child has comfortable shoes to wear. Sandals should have backs to enable the children to participate in all activities and to prevent unnecessary slips and falls.

Toys

Students are asked to not bring toys to preschool. We cannot be responsible for lost or broken toys. A large assortment of toys are provided.

Staff Descriptions

The staff includes a certified preschool teacher with experience in early childhood education and a teacher assistant qualified by their education and past experience with children. All staff participate in a minimum of six hours of in-service per year, and have met the Child Abuse/Mandatory Reporting requirements.

Volunteers/Student Teachers

Occasionally you will see a new face at the preschool. Students from Luther College may be helping out from time to time. Volunteers help us to meet each child's specific needs. Each has been screened before receiving permission to volunteer.

