



**Preschool
Parent Handbook
Procedures and Guidelines
2023-2024**

St. Benedict's Episcopal School
2160 Cooper Lake Road
Smyrna, GA 30080
678-279-4300
www.stbs.org

Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| INTRODUCTION | 3 |
| About Us | 3 |
| DAILY OPERATING PROCEDURES | 3 |
| Hours of Operation | 3 |
| Arrival | 4 |
| The First Few Days | 4 |
| Life Events & Transitions | 5 |
| Kaymbu | 5 |
| PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES | 6 |
| PikMyKid | 6 |
| Absences | 6 |
| Appropriate Dress for School | 6 |
| Tote Bags | 7 |
| Rest Time | 7 |
| Birthdays | 7 |
| Preschool 1s Program Requirements | 8 |
| Preschool 3s Program Requirements | 8 |
| SCHOOL POLICIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES | 8 |
| Student:Teacher Ratios | 8 |
| Daily Schedule | 8 |
| Curriculum | 9 |
| Curricula In the Classroom | 9 |
| Parent/Teacher Communication | 9 |
| Assessment Practices / Reports to Parents | 10 |
| Babysitting Policy | 10 |
| Toys From Home | 10 |
| Holidays and Celebrations | 11 |
| Procedures for Handling Atypical Development and Challenging Behaviors | 11 |
| Child Guidance | 12 |
| Positive Discipline | 13 |
| Biting Policy | 13 |
| FOOD POLICIES | 15 |
| Preschool 1s & Preschool 2s | 15 |
| Suggestions for Healthy Lunches | 16 |
| Preparing Food for School | 16 |
| Food Brought from Home | 17 |
| Packing Lunches & Snacks | 17 |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Keeping Cold Lunches Cold | 17 |
| Keeping Hot Lunches Hot | 17 |
| Unconsumed Food | 18 |
| Restrictions | 18 |
| Preschool 3s & PreK | 18 |
| Lunch | 18 |
| Snacks | 18 |
| Allergy Aware School | 18 |
| HEALTH POLICIES | 20 |
| Sick Child Policy | 20 |
| Notification of Communicable Disease | 21 |
| Notification of Medication | 21 |
| External Preparations Forms | 21 |
| TOILETING & DIAPERING POLICIES | 22 |
| Preschool 1s | 22 |
| Preschool 2s | 22 |
| Toilet Learning Policy | 22 |
| Preschool 3s & PreK | 25 |
| Toileting Policy | 25 |
| PARENTAL AGREEMENT FORM | 27 |

The Preschool program will adhere to all policies and procedures as outlined in the St. Benedict's Episcopal School Family Handbook. The Preschool Family Handbook outlines policies and procedures specific to the Preschool program.

INTRODUCTION

About Us

St. Benedict's preschool program strives to provide a high quality-learning environment for young children. We believe children are unique, complex human beings with an inherent desire to learn. We strive to know each child on an individual basis and develop a relationship with the children and parents to provide a loving yet motivated and developmentally appropriate learning environment.

Our goal is to nourish children's natural curiosity, energy, and enthusiasm to learn and discover the world around them. Our teachers know and treat the children in our program as individuals and foster interactions that are supportive of learning. By looking at the children individually, we hope to encourage autonomy and support them in all their areas of development: social-emotional, cognitive, creative, language and literacy, and physical, thereby achieving a positive self-image for each child.

We believe play is the most important work of a child. We believe in the sanctity of childhood. When you visit one of our classrooms you may see, at first glance, blocks strewn across the floor, paint smeared hands, dress-up clothes, laughter, singing - if you look closely, you will see children engaged in learning through experiential activities in a safe environment where they are cared for, nurtured, and respected. The classroom is full of movement and sound. Children are playing, and through play, children are learning about themselves, each other, and their environment. Through play, children are making meaning out of their world.

We allow flexibility in our daily plans to meet the interests of the children. Our teachers structure the environment but not the processes of play itself. We hope to create a framework of love and acceptance that will set the stage for discovery and growth and build a firm foundation for life-long learning.

DAILY OPERATING PROCEDURES

Hours of Operation

School Day: 8:45am - 12:45am

Morning Carpool: 8:25am - 8:45am

Afternoon Carpool: 12:45pm - 1:00pm

Arrival

Please be on time, it can be quite disruptive to a classroom for a child to consistently arrive late once the school day has started.

In order to uphold the integrity of the children's daily schedule, we request that children be dropped off at school no later than 8:45am with the exception of doctor's appointments, occasional needs, and emergencies.

Please bring your child to school on time so they can fully benefit from the day. Late arrivals often disrupt the learning environment. A continuous pattern of classroom disruption may warrant a discussion with the teacher and you may be asked to find a school that better fits your needs.

The preschool day begins with a morning meeting, which is designed to allow children to gently ease into their morning at school. This time is important to the children's growth as they learn to separate from their parents and join their friends at school. Because each portion of the school day is carefully planned to meet the children's social, emotional, physical, and academic needs, students should be present. Parents should be mindful about having their children to school on time each day.

We understand that sometimes it is challenging to get to school on time, but tardiness should be the exception, not the rule.

We also understand that, from time to time, a child may need to be dropped off late to school. **If your child will be arriving late, in a manner different from his/her normal routine, or will be absent for the day please let your child's teacher know ahead of time.**

If notification of late drop off is not given and your child has not arrived by 10:00 am, your child is assumed to be absent that day.

****Children must attend the school day in order to attend the afterschool program.****

The First Few Days

The first few days in a new classroom can be both exciting and tiring for the child. No matter how well the parent has prepared the child, perceptions and expectations vary. There will be many new experiences during the first few days.

Our teachers are trained to help make the transition as smooth as possible. Each child responds differently. Some children don't want to separate from their parent, while others wave cheerfully good-bye on the first day only to show signs of anxiety days or weeks later. Still others make the transition with no apparent difficulty.

Parents should understand that the separation process is an important issue for their child.

Parents can help ease this transition by establishing a good-bye routine.

We encourage you to always say goodbye to your child. It may seem easier to “sneak away”, but this should be avoided. Saying “goodbye” gives children the opportunity to express their feelings about separation and recognize that mommy and daddy are leaving, not “disappearing”. As children grow, they will learn that mommies and daddies leave, but they always come back.

Parents can help by being patient through this process and by maintaining a positive attitude.

Life Events & Transitions

Even at a young age, children understand when there is a change in their routine or schedule. Please talk to your child’s teacher when your child is experiencing a stressful life event.

Occasionally a stressful experience such as an extended illness, a vacation, a stressful family event, or a joyful family event (such as a new sibling) may cause a child to regress to the behaviors of the first few days. Please understand that this is a normal reaction. Communication between the family and our teachers will be invaluable in helping the child have an easier transition at drop-off.

We also ask that you talk with your child prior to any changes in pick-up (time or persons). An unexpected change to pick-up can cause the same stresses as drop-off.

Kaymbu

The Kaymbu App is one of our main methods of communication with preschool parents.

For children in the Preschool 1s & 2s classes, parents will receive a digital daily sheet at the end of each school day that informs parents of the times their child ate, had a diaper change or went potty, and napped (if staying in after care).

For all preschool classes we will use Kaymbu to send digital classroom notes home, individual students notes home, and classroom pictures home.

With the Kaymbu Family App, parents can send notes to their child’s teachers, add morning drop-off information, and mark their child absent from school.

We ask all parents to mark their child absent in Kaymbu with a note about the absence. This is helpful for taking attendance as well as being aware of any illness that may be circulating in a classroom.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

PikMyKid

All parents will use the PikmyKid app for afternoon carpool. The app will alert the school that you are on campus in carline. The student will then be called from their classroom and will be walked down to the car line. We will still utilize the car hang tags for additional safety measures so be sure you have those visible. Teachers will escort students to their appropriate cars.

Absences

Parents are asked to make a note in the Kaymbu app by 9:00am each day if the child is absent. We will contact parents if a child is absent and we have not been notified by 10:00am.

Appropriate Dress for School

Our program keeps children active and involved, and they should be dressed accordingly.

- Children should wear play clothes that are comfortable, washable, and easy for them to manage by themselves.
- We will be playing hard and children should be dressed for close encounters with paint, paste, sand, dirt, flour, water, and clay.
- **Please do not wear your best clothes because we cannot guarantee their unstained return.**
- **WELL FITTING SNEAKERS WITH SOCKS ARE REQUIRED.** No Crocs, sandals, slip-on shoes, flip flops, boots, or dress shoes of any type are allowed as these types of shoes can lead to accidents and injuries on the playground and in the classroom.
- **Light-up shoes are not allowed.**
- Shorts or leggings must be worn under dresses and skirts.
- **St. Benedict's is not responsible for any damage to your child's clothing that may happen during the day.**
- Dressing is part of our curriculum – we encourage the children to learn how to dress themselves.
- Clothing with easy snaps, buttons, and zippers will make it easier for them to do so.
- If your child is using the potty please be mindful of appropriate clothing that facilitates independence.
- Children using the potty should not wear jumpers, overalls, or other clothing that requires them to undress to use the potty.
- Children using the potty should not wear long dresses or tutus as these items are difficult for children to manage on the potty.
- Children in diapers should not wear clothing that requires teachers to completely undress the child in order to change the diaper. Please make sure clothing has snapes for easy removal.
- Bloomers are only to be worn under dresses and not as pants. Children need more protection on the playground than a pair of bloomers alone provides.
- **All children in the toilet learning process must wear pull-ups that are easy to remove**

without having to take off the child's clothes. We require that all pull-ups sent to the school have refastenable sides.

- Dress your child appropriately for the weather. We go outside every day.
- If we feel that a child is not dressed appropriately for school, we will not allow the parent to drop-off the child until the situation is rectified.

Children play outdoors everyday if the weather permits, even on rainy days and during the winter months.

Children must be dressed appropriately for the weather.

In rainy weather, children should come dressed with

- a rain jacket

In cold weather, children should come dressed with:

- a warm coat
- a hat
- gloves or mittens
- their legs should be covered

If we feel that a child is not dressed appropriately for the weather, we will not allow the parent to drop-off the child until the situation is rectified.

Parents must label all clothes and other personal items with the child's name so they will not be misplaced. Unlabeled, unclaimed clothes will be put in the lost and found.

Parents must send a change of clothing and an extra pair of shoes to be kept at school in case of a potty accident. They should be brought in a Ziploc bag that is clearly marked on the outside with the child's name.

Tote Bags

Children in the preschool program are required to bring their school provided tote bag to school each day. All items brought to school must fit inside the tote bag.

Rest Time

We do not offer a rest time during the school day. A rest time is provided for all children who stay in the after school program.

Birthdays

Each classroom recognizes birthdays in a special way. We ask that parents not send in treats for the class as we must be mindful of food allergies.

We encourage parents to donate a book to the classroom in their child's name in honor of their

birthday. Parents are invited to visit the class to read the book for their child's birthday. An email should be sent to your child's teachers a week in advance to plan schedules accordingly. For children with birthdays that fall on days when the school is closed, parents may email the teacher to arrange for an alternate date to celebrate the child's birthday in class.

Parents may not ask the classroom teachers to distribute party invitations or to deliver gifts for children. Please do not send birthday party invitations, goody bags, or candy to be distributed. These items are very disruptive to the school day and will not be passed out. A school directory and class roster may be found on each class's Shutterfly Share Site.

Preschool 1s Program Requirements

Children entering the Preschool 1s program must be able to feed themselves and must be mobile. They must be able to drink from a sippy cup, bottles are not allowed at school.

Preschool 3s Program Requirements

Children entering the Preschool 3s program must be able to complete the toileting process independently.

A toilet learned child is a child who can do the following:

- Communicate to the teachers that he/she needs to go to the restroom before they need to go
- Alert him/herself to stop what he/she is doing, to go and use the bathroom
- Pull down his/her clothes and get them back up without assistance
- Wipe him/herself after using the toilet
- Get on/off the toilet by him/herself
- Flush the toilet
- Wash and dry hands
- Postpone going if they must wait for someone who is in the bathroom or if we are away from the classroom
- Wake up during nap time should they need to use the bathroom

SCHOOL POLICIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Student:Teacher Ratios

Preschool 1s: 1:4

Preschool 2s: 1:5

Preschool 3s: 1:8

PreK: 1:8

Daily Schedule

Each classroom follows a daily schedule and yearly curriculum that is designed appropriately for the age of the children enrolled. Each classroom provides children numerous opportunities for individual, small group, and large group activities throughout each day. Daily schedules are posted

in each classroom.

Curriculum

Teaching young children is a creative process that addresses all aspects of a child's development: social-emotional, cognitive, creative, language and literacy, and physical. The school is an active community, connected to the social world of which it is a part, rather than an isolated place for "learning lessons".

We enhance and foster the stages of development: trusting others outside the family, gaining independence and self-control, taking initiative, and asserting oneself in socially acceptable ways, by following a consistent schedule, interacting with each child during the day, having materials available in the classroom that are developmentally appropriate to play with, praising their efforts and allowing them to explore the environment freely. We also encourage role play, help them channel their frustrations, and encourage them to see tasks through to completion.

Our goal is for your child to develop a frame of reference of ideas, knowledge, problem solving, motor and social skills that will prepare your child for a lifetime of learning.

Curricula In the Classroom

Zoo-phonics - Preschool 1 - PreK

The Zoo-phonics® Multisensory Language Arts Program is a kinesthetic, multi-modal approach to learning all aspects of language arts, including vocabulary development and articulation, based on phonics and phonemic awareness.

Handwriting Without Tears - Preschool 3s & PreK

Handwriting Without Tears engages multiple modalities to bring learning to life. Multisensory activities and manipulatives appeal to all learning styles and provide a hands-on approach to handwriting. Handwriting Without Tears helps students develop writing skills through explicit multisensory, play-based instruction. Students move, touch, feel, and manipulate real objects as they learn the correct habits and skills that are essential for fluid writing.

Happily Ever After - PreK

Happily Ever After is a reading readiness program designed to give children the foundation they need to be successful when they begin formal reading instruction.

Parent/Teacher Communication

Communication between the family and the school is the best way to ensure a positive experience for the children. We can do our job better if the lines of communication are always open and parents keep us informed of any changes at home that may affect the child – for example: the parents are going away, the birth of a baby, a serious illness or death in the family, the death of a pet, or a separation or divorce. These types of experiences are sure to influence

the child. If made aware of these changes, we will be able to respond more appropriately, and provide support and guidance to the child. Be assured that confidentiality will always be maintained.

Program information is shared in several ways: Kaymbu app, classroom newsletters, monthly calendars, communication folders, and emails. Parents should read these carefully. They contain important information to know.

Assessment Practices / Reports to Parents

Preschool teachers will use many different forms of authentic assessment to gauge how children are doing in all areas. Both informal (observation, anecdotal records, recording conversations, etc.) and formal (developmental checklists, skills reviews, etc.) are utilized to help teachers plan appropriate and challenging instruction and social experiences. Two times a year the school will send home a progress report which will give information specific to your child. Reporting period conferences will be scheduled to further facilitate the communication between the families and teachers.

Babysitting Policy

St. Benedict's Preschool program discourages its employees from accepting extracurricular baby-sitting jobs from parents at our school. Our teachers are early childhood educators and deserve to be treated as such. Our teachers are much more than baby-sitters during the day, and should not be viewed as such by parents. In addition, after spending a busy day with children at the school, all teachers need free time away from the children and vice-versa. Please do not ask our teachers to baby-sit for your children.

St. Benedict's will not be held responsible for any action or circumstances resulting from any interaction between its employees and families that occur away from the school.

Toys From Home

We do not allow children to bring toys from home into the classroom (with the exception of designated Show-and-Tell events). With many children in our classroom, these special toys can be easily lost or broken and are especially difficult to share. We cannot accept responsibility for their safekeeping.

It may help to have a routine of saying "good-bye" to toys in the car and acknowledging that the toys will be there when the child returns after school.

A soft stuffed animal or doll is always welcome for rest time. This item needs to be inside your child's tote back at drop-off and will remain in the tote bag until rest time begins.

Holidays and Celebrations

Holidays, seasonal, and other celebrations are fun for children and adults alike. Understanding

when and how families, other than our own, celebrate special days enriches our life experience. We incorporate holidays that are important to our children and their families. Each of us reflects our own ethnic identity in our everyday lives in our celebrations. This sharing is one small step toward appreciating and respecting the similarities and differences among us. We invite families to share how they celebrate special events in their lives. Please talk with your child's teacher if you would like to help celebrate a special event in the classroom.

Procedures for Handling Atypical Development and Challenging Behaviors

Children's development and behavior is taken seriously at St. Benedict's. We feel strongly that it is the responsibility of our teachers and administration to provide a safe, supportive, and developmentally appropriate program to all children to the highest degree possible. Therefore, we will adhere to the following policy on the management of children with atypical development and/or challenging behaviors.

Definitions:

Atypical development shall be defined as that which does not meet established norms for children of the same age group in any of the domains of development including physical, language, motor, self help, cognitive, and social/emotional domains.

Challenging behaviors shall be defined as aggression such as biting, hitting, pushing, kicking, or other potentially dangerous acts toward other children or staff. Other forms of challenging behaviors are foul language, inability to follow rules and comply with directives, escaping the classroom, outbursts and tantrums, disruption of classroom activities, or any act which endangers the health and safety of self or others, damages property, or disrupts program quality.

The step-by-step process for assessing, referring, and accommodating children with atypical development and/or challenging behaviors is as follows:

1. Teachers will bring concerns about a child's development immediately to the attention of the Director who will document those concerns and place them in the child's confidential file. The Director will inform the parent. At this time, it will be the responsibility of the parent to seek evaluation services through one of the following choices:
 - Health care specialist (if a physical concern) of the parent's choice
 - Mental Health professional (if a behavioral concern) of parent's choice
 - Public school early intervention/special education programs (children over 3)
 - Public services

Any fees related to such evaluations shall be the sole responsibility of the family. Parents will be required to submit evidence of contact/appointment with such services within one week of the referral or the child's attendance may be suspended until the evidence of contact has been made. The program agrees to cooperate with consultants and professionals in allowing them to make assessments of the child and his/her educational environment on-site. No

information about the child will be provided to these agencies or individuals without the parent's signed consent.

2. The parent agrees to provide the results and recommendations of assessments to the school for the purposes of appropriate program planning for the child. This information may be presented in writing or in a personal meeting between the parent, staff, and outside agency or professional. Any cost of such planning meetings will be the responsibility of the parent. The school agrees to follow professional recommendations regarding the accommodation and support of the child's development to the greatest extent possible while maintaining program integrity and within budgetary, regulatory, or building restrictions that would prohibit making modifications or accommodations to the program. The parent agrees to provide a copy of an IFSP and permission for the program to communicate with special education personnel and therapists for the purpose of consistency and support in a detailed plan of care as required by DPH. This program is fully compliant with the ADA. Support service professionals, therapists, and special educators will have full access and cooperation to provide services on site during regular business hours provided they are oriented and agree to follow program policies and procedures. The school in cooperation with other service agencies and transportation systems will facilitate program transitions.
3. A re-evaluation of the success of any recommendations will take place at a time set by the director, generally 7 to 30 days from implementation of any recommendations. At that time, a determination will be made to continue successful programming, modify programming for another 7 to 30 days, or recommend an alternate placement for the child. In such cases, or in the case of non-compliance with this policy, parents will have 2 weeks to make new arrangements unless the child is a danger to himself or others, or disruptive to program quality in which case dismissal from the program shall be immediate.
4. The method and schedule for continual monitoring of the child's growth and development will be determined by the director and will be dependent on the effectiveness of the program for the child. Parents have the right to access any information regarding their child's program and/or development and will be immediately informed should any issues of concern occur. Parents will have the right to make on-site visits at any time the program is in session.

Child Guidance

We honor, interpret, and respond to children's differing abilities and behavior through the lens of development.

We provide children with the opportunity to learn about themselves and others in the context of a group. We believe that in the first years of life, children are in the process of discovering who they are and how they fit into a group. We work with parents to support children as they learn about emotions, respecting others, and negotiating play as is developmentally appropriate. Since this is an important and on-going developmental step, parents and teachers will share their perceptions of the child in various contexts in order to best understand how to support each child's unique social and emotional learning.

We encourage an atmosphere where children feel safe and respected. The first job of every

teacher is to establish a relationship with every child in the group. We believe that when a child feels known and welcomed, that child will be comfortable learning and making the mistakes that come with learning. The teachers' job is to help children to navigate the social and emotional challenges that are inevitable as they learn to become members of a community. Teachers orchestrate the environment and carefully pre-plan space, group configuration, activities, and adult interaction with the children to minimize barriers to children's ability to be successful in a group. We work to provide a predictable schedule and environment with clear boundaries so that children can know what to expect and what is expected of them. For example, the idea of sharing may be a foreign concept to a young child, who is naturally egocentric. Teachers will encourage children to share, help them find ways to take turns, work together, find an alternative, or make a simple choice. We will always set realistic expectations in the context of children's age and developmental capabilities.

St. Benedict's strives to provide a safe, loving, and healthy environment for all children, and parents are expected to partner with the school in this effort.

Positive Discipline

We use positive discipline techniques in our classrooms to help children find a sense of belonging and significance.

Positive Discipline techniques:

1. Help children feel a sense of connection. (Belonging and significance)
2. Are mutually respectful and encouraging. (Kind and firm at the same time.)
3. Are effective long - term. (Consider what the child is thinking, feeling, learning, and deciding about oneself and one's world – and what to do in the future to survive or to thrive.)
4. Teach important social and life skills. (Respect, concern for others, problem solving, communication, and cooperation as well as the skills to contribute to the home, school or larger community.)
5. Invite children to discover how capable they are. (Encourages the constructive use of personal power and autonomy.)

Biting Policy

Biting is a natural, developmental behavior in which many young children engage, especially during their second and third years of life. We recognize that biting is a distressing activity for parents, staff, and the child who has been bitten. Because biting is so distressing, everyone involved would like to eliminate it quickly. Unfortunately, a “quick fix” is not usually available. We want to assure parents that when they leave their child with us we do everything we can to ensure that their child is kept safe, teachers plan activities and supervise the children, however there are times when we may not be in arms reach to prevent biting from happening as it is usually unpredictable.

Young children bite for a variety of reasons. Most of these reasons are not related to behavior problems. They bite to gain a reaction and/or because they lack language and social skills required for a particular situation. It is an indication of their developmental age, and not in any way a

reflection of child rearing practices. Since biting is developmentally related, it is more common for toddlers to bite than for older preschool age children.

Our Program, then, does not focus on punishment for the biting, but on effective techniques that address the specific reasons for the biting. When biting occurs, we have three main responses:

1. Care for and help the child who was bitten.
2. Help the child who bit learn other behavior.
3. Work with parents on specific strategies if episodes of biting are ongoing.

Our teachers express strong disapproval of biting. They work to keep children safe and to help the child who bit learn different, more appropriate behavior. When there are episodes of ongoing biting, we develop a plan of specific strategies, techniques, and timelines to address it. We do not and will not use any response that harms a child or is known to be ineffective.

How Teachers Respond to Biting

Caring for the child who was bitten:

- Comfort the child and move away from the situation
- If the skin is not broken:
 - clean the wound with soap and water
 - apply a cold compress
- If the skin is broken:
 - immediately take the child to the nurse
 - if the nurse is not available
 - clean the wound carefully with soap and water
 - cover wound with sterile bandage
 - apply a cold compress
 - notify the parents immediately

Caring for the child who bit:

- Remove them from the situation
- Tell the child we don't bite, it hurts (depending on age) - we use language such as, "Ouch, biting hurts, we do not bite our friends."
- Child will go to a quiet place to reflect for a minute per year age (depending on age)
- Staff member remains near them but does not engage with them
- Children are encouraged to show they are sorry in their own way (dependant on age) - they may be asked how they can help their friend feel better or how they can show their friend a gentle touch

When children bite, their parents are informed personally and privately the same day through an incident report. When children are bitten, their parents are informed personally and privately that day with an incident report. When we experience ongoing biting, we develop a plan of action with strategies, techniques, and timelines to work on the problem.

Support for Children and Families

If several biting incidents occur within one day, the child's parents will be called and the parent will have to pick up the child from school. The child will be permitted to return the next day.

Should biting incidents continue for a prolonged amount of time, the school will arrange for meeting(s) with the family, the classroom teachers, and the Director. These meetings will involve reviewing all documentation and developing an individualized plan to support the child.

Just as each child is different, each biting episode is also different. Every effort is made to support the child and their family as well as balance the needs of the other children in the community. While no child is ever excluded permanently from our program because of biting alone, if families are unwilling to work with to resolve the issue, we do reserve the right to require a family to withdraw from the school.

FOOD POLICIES

Preschool 1s & Preschool 2s

For children in the preschool 1s & preschool 2s classes, parents are responsible for sending a nutritionally balanced morning snack and lunch for their child each day, and an afternoon snack if a child is staying in the after school program. An example of this would be a protein entrée, with a bread or grain product, a fresh or frozen vegetable, a piece of fruit, and water.

- **Lunch must be sent to school in a zippered lunch box.**
- **Snacks must be packaged separately from lunch and labeled AM Snack or PM Snack.**
- We will do our best to follow your instructions for feeding.
- We will not force children to eat certain foods or amounts of foods at any time.
- It is our belief that even a small amount of a well-balanced meal is better than an entire portion of an unhealthy choice.
- Please do not forget to include the proper utensils (clearly labeled) a drink (water only) and a napkin.
- Please remember to label all items including lunch boxes, silverware, and containers.
- We are not responsible for any items that are not clearly marked.
- **Food that does not adhere to our policies will not be served to the child and will be sent back home.**
- We encourage parents to send food in their child's lunchbox that the child enjoys eating. However, some of this food is difficult for the child to eat in a school setting, we see this especially with rice and grains. We ask that parents please refrain from packing these items in their child's lunch, unless the child has mastered eating them with a spoon. In the classroom, teachers cannot spoon feed the children. Rice and grains end up on the table, the floor, and on the child's lap, everywhere but in their tummies! It is best to send finger foods that the child can pick up and feed themselves. Please let us know if you have any questions.

Suggestions for Healthy Lunches

- Small containers of finger foods: meats, cheeses, vegetables, fruits, hard boiled eggs, cut to bite size
- Containers of spoon foods: yogurt, cottage cheese, meat pies, rice, noodles, pasta, plain tuna, cooked beans, dinner leftovers
- Sandwiches: thin, simple, cut small, not made with nut butters (an alternative is a soy butter or sunflower butter)

Do Not Send:

- Any foods, butters, or milk (Example: Almond Milk) made from tree nuts or peanuts.
- Raw carrots (to send carrots to school, cook them until they are soft)
- Popcorn
- Candy, gum, or soda
- Packaged mixes such as mac and cheese that need preparation (i.e. "Easy Mac")
- Tubed Yogurt (like Go-Gurt) or Liquid Yogurt (like Danimals smoothie). Regular yogurt in a stiff pouch or cup is allowed.
- Sweets such as cookies and other sugary snacks.
- Chewy fruit snacks (i.e. Welch's Fruit Snacks, Annie's Fruit Snacks, etc.)
- Juice of any kind (i.e. juice boxes, juice in sippy cups, etc.)

Preparing Food for School

- Independent eating is a part of our curriculum. Food must be prepared and sent to school so that children can independently feed themselves.
- Cut the following food items into small bite-sized pieces:
 - Grapes (cut into fourths)
 - Cooked carrots (cut lengthwise, no thicker than 1/2")
 - Cooked baby carrots (cut lengthwise, no thicker than 1/2")
 - Hard boiled eggs
 - Cherry tomatoes
 - Meat
 - Hot dogs (cut rounds into fourths)
 - Any other food that is larger than can be swallowed whole
- Avoid cutting foods such as hot dogs and carrots into "rounds".

Food Brought from Home

- All food and cups brought from home must have a clear label showing the child's full name, the date, and the type of food or beverage. ****Write legibly.****
- All food brought from home must be packed in a lunch box that is labeled with the child's full name.
- Include on the label if the food is for AM Snack, PM Snack, or Lunch.
- We suggest you send finger foods.
- Every child needs to bring a water bottle (or sippy cup of water) every day. No

juice.

- Pack any utensils your child will need in their lunch box.
- Your child will be assisted in opening any containers, if needed.
- Please do not send any gum, carbonated beverages, or glass containers.
- We do not have the facilities to refrigerate or warm food.
- We do not have the facilities to store leftover food or food for future use.

Packing Lunches & Snacks

- Pack just the amount of perishable food that can be eaten at lunchtime or snack time. That way, there won't be a problem about the storage or safety of leftovers.
- After lunch, all leftover food will be sent home; used food packaging and paper bags will be discarded.
- Leftover food that is sent home cannot be sent back to school the next day. Since food is not refrigerated throughout the school day we cannot give children food that has already been opened on a previous day.
- Insulated, soft-sided lunch boxes are best for keeping food cold, but pack at least two ice sources with perishable food in any type of lunch box you use.

Keeping Cold Lunches Cold

- To keep lunches cold include at least two cold sources; you can use two frozen gel packs (not smaller than 5x3-inches each) or combine a frozen gel pack with a frozen bottle of water.
- When packing the bag lunch, place the cold sources on top and bottom of the perishable food items to keep them cold.

Keeping Hot Lunches Hot

- Use an insulated container to keep hot foods hot.
- Fill the container with boiling water, let stand for a few minutes, empty, and then put in the piping hot food.
- Keep the insulated container closed until lunchtime to keep the food hot — 140 °F (73.9 °C) or above.

Unconsumed Food

- Any portions of food which are served to children or placed on the table for service and are not consumed at that meal or snack by the children to whom the portions are served shall be thrown away.

Restrictions

- Peanuts, whole or sliced hot dogs, raw carrots, popcorn, fish with bones, and whole grapes shall not be served to children less than three (3) years of age.
- Children older than three (3) years of age may be served these foods provided that the

foods are cut in such a way as to minimize choking.

- Foods and drinks with little or no nutritional value, i.e. sweets, etc. shall be served only on special occasions as approved by the school and only in addition to the required nutritious meals and snacks.
- Hot dogs must be cut into bite-sized pieces (cut in circles and then cut the circles into quarters.)
- Grapes must be quartered.

These guidelines are from the National Health and Safety Performance Standards; Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs, Third Edition and the USDA Food Safety Education website.

Preschool 3s & PreK

Lunch

Children in the Preschool 3s or PreK program may bring lunch from home or parents may purchase lunch through the school lunch program.

For guidelines and suggestions for food sent from home, please refer to the Preschool 1s & Preschool 2s food policy section.

Snacks

Parents of children in the Preschools 3s program are responsible for sending a nutritionally balanced morning snack.

Parents of both Preschool 3s & PreK students must provide a nutritionally balanced afternoon snack if their child stays in the after school program.

Snacks must be packaged separately and labeled AM Snack and PM Snack.

Allergy Aware School

As a school dedicated to some of the youngest members of our community, we understand that many of our students are not old enough to make sound decisions when it comes to what should go into their mouths and are therefore less able to manage their allergies. **For this reason, no peanuts, tree nuts, shellfish or products that contain these ingredients should be brought into the school.** Foods sent in for snack, lunch, or any class event (including parties, etc.) should be carefully checked to ensure they are allergy free. Families can help ensure that our school stays allergy aware by reading packaging labels and by reminding children not to share food with other children at school.

Individual classrooms may have additional restrictions if a member of the class has an allergy that requires excluding a particular food from the classroom for the safety of the individual.

While the school is dedicated to being allergy aware, please note that other groups using the

church campus do not regulate the activities of those groups.

HEALTH POLICIES

The Preschool will follow all health policies as outlined in the St. Benedict's Episcopal School Parent Handbook.

St. Benedict's is a "well-child facility". At no time do we provide care to sick children. Communicable diseases can spread quickly among young children in school settings. To limit the spread of illness, the following policies will be strictly enforced in our preschool program, for the health, well-being and safety of all concerned.

Sick Child Policy

- Under no circumstances may a parent bring a sick child to school, if the child shows any signs of illness, or is unable to participate in the normal routine and regular school program.
- Sick children will expose all children and staff members who they come in contact with. These people can in turn expose the other children as well as their own families.
- Sick children want care from their parents in the comfort of their own homes.
- If other children become ill due to exposure to your sick child, either because he/she was returned to school before full recovery or because he/she was not picked up promptly upon notice of becoming ill, other parents will be unnecessarily inconvenienced.
- Because this is disruptive to other children and their families, your cooperation on this issue is extremely important.
- If your child is unable to participate in the normal activities of the school day (including being able to play outside), then your child **MUST** stay home.
- If your child has a fever, vomits, or has diarrhea in the evening he/she needs to stay home for 24 hours.
- Children will be visually screened when they arrive in the morning, if a teacher observes signs of an illness parents will be asked to take the child home.
- In the event a child becomes ill and needs to be picked up, the parent(s) will be called and are expected to come pick the child up within one hour (60 minutes). If the parent(s) cannot be reached, or have not arrived within an hour, the emergency contact person will be called and asked to come pick the child up.
- If your child is sent home from school for a fever, vomiting, diarrhea, or any other health reason, they may not return the next day. Your child must be symptom free for 24 hours prior to returning.
- If your child has a fever, vomits, or has diarrhea between the time they leave school and the start of the next school day, they may not return to school until they have been symptom free for 24 hours.
- If a child receives an antibiotic for an ear infection, he/she may return to school immediately if he/she has been free of other symptoms mentioned for at least 24 hours.
- Allergy related symptoms, and non-communicable illnesses do not require exclusion if you have a note from your doctor.

- If your child has red bumps around his/her mouth or cold sores in his/her mouth or a rash of any kind, we require a doctor's note stating that they are not contagious before they can return to school.
- If you aren't sure about whether or not to bring your child to school, please contact the director to discuss it.
- Every effort is taken to reduce the spread of illness by encouraging frequent hand washing and disinfecting toys and surfaces daily or as needed throughout the day.

Notification of Communicable Disease

Parents will be notified by email of any possible exposure to communicable diseases. This notification means that a parent of a student in your child's class has notified the school that their child has been diagnosed with a communicable disease. Since communicable diseases spread quickly in school settings we alert parents of symptoms for which to be aware.

Notification of Medication

Please notify your child's teacher, by putting a note in Kaymbu, when your child is on medication, even if the medication is not being administered at school. It helps us to know if the child is on medication at home because often medications can cause side effects such as diarrhea, change in appetite, rashes, and an upset stomach. If your child is exhibiting these side effects we must have a note from their doctor indicating that the child is not contagious. If we know that these conditions are a result of the medication at home we will better know how to care for the child.

External Preparations Forms

The Preschool 1s & 2s classes use an "External Preparations Form" for diapering. This form must be completed by a parent/guardian and must list all external preparations that the parent expects the staff to use on their child. This form must be returned to your child's teacher and will be kept in the classroom with your child's belongings.

This includes the following items:

- Baby Wipes
- Non-Prescription Ointment (such as A & D, Desitin, Vaseline)
- Baby Powder
- Moisturizer

All products must be non-prescription, non-medicated, free of antibiotic or steroidal components, and free of para-aminobenzoic acid (PABA) or its derivatives.

TOILETING & DIAPERING POLICIES

Preschool 1s

Children in the preschool 1s class must wear diapers or pull-ups to school even if they are learning to use the potty at home. For sanitary reasons, we cannot allow underwear to be worn by children in the preschool 1s classes.

Parents must provide diapers or pull-ups, baby wipes, and diaper creams (if needed). A completed *External Preparations Form* must accompany the wipes and creams.

Preschool 2s

Children in the preschool 2s classes may fall anywhere on the toilet learning spectrum. Some start school in diapers or pull-ups and some have already learned to use the potty at home and are wearing underwear.

For children in diapers/pull-ups, parents must provide diapers or pull-ups, baby wipes, and diaper creams (if needed). A completed *External Preparations Form* must accompany the wipes and creams.

For children in Preschool 2s in the toilet learning process, parents must send them to school in pull-ups with release tabs on the sides. Children sent to school in diapers or pull-ups without release tabs will be changed on the changing table.

For children in underwear, parents must have a conversation with the teacher before sending their Preschool 2s student to school in underwear to assure that the child has become proficient in all aspects of the toilet learning process.

Toilet Learning Policy

We do not start toilet learning at school.

The phrase "toilet learning" should replace the old term "toilet training" or "potty training." Toilet learning is a developmental process rather than a type of training. Toilet learning is easiest when children are physically and emotionally ready, which happens typically between age two and three years.

We believe there are two stages or steps to toilet learning.

These stages are:

1. Toilet trained (adult-directed) – The child is capable of using the toilet BUT it is the adult who gets the child to the bathroom on time by putting the child on the toilet at certain times or on a schedule. At this stage, the child often needs assistance with the whole toileting process – this includes pulling pants up and down. Accidents occur frequently in this stage. This is the first stage towards becoming toilet learned or potty trained.
2. Toilet learned (child-directed) – The child is not only capable of using the toilet BUT has the developmental ability to express the need to go (both urine and bowel movement). In this stage, the child will demonstrate all or most of the readiness signs as listed below. Accidents occur, but very infrequently in this stage.

Verbal Stages of Toilet Learning Readiness

- Basic verbal skills – the child is able to speak in three to four word sentences.
- The child tells you when he or she has wet his/her diaper (recognizes he or she is wet).
- The child tells you when he or she is wetting his/her diaper (recognizes the sensation of wetting a diaper).
- The child tells you that he or she needs to go to the bathroom (can control self and go to use the toilet).

Physical and Psychological Signs of Toilet Learning Readiness

- Child stays dry for a long time – able to hold their urine or bowel movements.
- Has bowel movements at regular times. The child chooses when to have a bowel movement.
- Adult can recognize when the child is having a bowel movement.
- The child can undress and pull up their own clothing/pants.
- Child initiates using the toilet and asks to wear underwear. This is also a sign of wanting to be independent, which is very important.
- Emotionally ready and open to learning.
- Can follow three to four step instructions. This is critical to learning to pee, wipe, flush, and wash hands.

Toilet Learning should be a positive experience for everyone involved. It should only take a short period of time when your child is truly ready. Problems arise when adults (parents and caregivers) do not pay attention to the child's lack of readiness. There is no right or wrong age to potty train a child. It should only be determined on an individual basis, much like learning to walk. No two children will potty train in exactly the same time frame or even in the same manner.

Toilet learning should begin at home with the child's parents or caregivers and at a time when there are not a lot of changes in the child's life. Life must be fairly stress free during this time for the child. We will assist your child in toilet learning once the signs of readiness have been observed by the parents, as well as the classroom teacher and parents and teachers have met and discussed the next steps.

Many children may show these signs of readiness at home, but not at school and sometimes vice-versa. It is encouraged that the first steps towards toilet learning begin at home when you, the parents, are able to devote your time to helping your child. Please keep in mind that the activity level here at school can distract your child from responding to an urge to use the potty, more so than at your home. Therefore we will use pull-ups until your child can and will announce that they must use the bathroom and can control their bladder and bowels for a few minutes beyond that announcement.

When your child is successful for a **full two weeks** at school in pull-ups, then your child's teacher will let you know that your child can attend school in underwear. Please notify your child's teacher the morning that your child has underwear on and not a diaper or Pull-up, as to minimize any

surprises. At that time, the teacher will take your child to the potty during regularly scheduled potty breaks. Please remember that it is nearly impossible for a busy teacher to remember to remind a child (or perhaps children) every half hour to hour to go in and use the potty, while also caring for others in the class. For that reason, your child needs to be able to communicate the need to go potty by his or herself without reminders from an adult. We will not provide rewards of any kind for using the potty.

We request that the following guidelines are followed when children are toilet learning or wearing underwear at school:

- Your child **MUST** wear loose fitting clothing that is easy for the child to pull up or down.
- **NO** overalls, jumpsuits, pants that require the use of a belt, t-shirts with snaps between the legs, or pants with snaps and zippers that the child cannot get in and out of.
- **NO** long dresses or tutus that can be difficult for children to manage independently while on the potty.
- A change of clothing, underwear, socks, and shoes that are kept in your child's cubby in case of accidents. Please be sure to change out clothes when the weather changes.
- Training pants (the thick 5 layer underwear) are preferred.
- If your child is male, inform the teacher if your son will be sitting or standing. This really should be determined right from the beginning of the toilet learning process. It is recommended that boys first learn to sit and pee in the potty and once they are consistent then can be taught to stand and go. This will also lessen problems with learning to put BM's in the toilet and will also avoid constipation issues.
- Keep a small supply of Pull-Ups available at school. Your child will be in a Pull-Up during naptime.
- We do not rinse out or wash soiled clothing so any clothing that becomes soiled during the day will need to go home that afternoon. Your child's teacher will place them in a plastic bag and will put them in your child's tote bag.

Please keep in mind that often children will show a readiness and have success for toilet learning at home before the signs are seen at school. There may be a period of time where your child is toilet learned at home and not at school. That is perfectly normal and has been seen quite often. If your child comes to school with underwear on and has 2 accidents in a short period of time, a diaper or Pull-Up will be put on your child and we can try again another day when he or she shows signs of being ready at school. Patience is very important during this time. Toilet learning occurs for all children sometime in their life – there is no right or wrong age.

Preschool 3s & PreK

Children enrolled in the preschool 3s & PreK program must be able to complete the entire toileting process independently before attending school.

Toileting Policy

Children enrolled in the preschool 3s & PreK program must be toilet learned before attending school. Children must be wearing underwear. A child having accidents daily would not be

considered toilet learned. Please note that wearing pull ups is NOT considered toilet learned.

Why do children have to be toilet learned before they begin preschool 3s & PreK?

- There are strict standards for changing and disposing of wet or soiled diapers/pull ups and our preschool 3s & PreK classrooms are not equipped for this.
- When an adult is busy changing a child's soiled clothing, it is taking away from learning time for all students and it removes one adult from the direct supervision of and interaction with the rest of the class.

We do understand that even toilet learned children will occasionally have accidents. By definition, "accidents" are unusual incidents and should happen infrequently. In these instances, the teachers will help children to change their clothes, encouraging independence as much as possible.

A toilet learned child is a child who can do the following:

- Communicate to the teachers that he/she needs to go to the restroom before they need to go
- Alert him/herself to stop what he/she is doing, to go and use the bathroom
- Pull down his/her clothes and get them back up without assistance
- Wipe him/herself after using the toilet
- Get on/off the toilet by him/herself
- Flush the toilet
- Wash and dry hands
- Postpone going if they must wait for someone who is in the bathroom or if we are away from the classroom
- Wake up during nap time should they need to use the bathroom

We have scheduled potty breaks during the day when we will ask your child if they need to use the bathroom. A teacher will assist children as needed, but children should be able to complete toileting activities independently. This is an issue which protects all concerned.

It is not uncommon for a child who is fully toilet learned to have a setback when he/she is in a new environment. Teachers are aware of this and will assist the children when necessary.

- Please have your child dressed in clothing that he/she can easily manage independently.
- NO overalls, jumpsuits, pants that require the use of a belt, t-shirts with snaps between the legs, or pants with snaps and zippers that the child cannot get in and out of.
- NO long dresses or tutus that can be difficult for children to manage independently while on the potty.
- Please send a complete change of clothes (including shoes) appropriate for the season. These will be left at school in case of accidents, and returned at the end of the school year.
- Parents will be notified if a child has a toileting accident.

We understand that each child arrives at this milestone differently, therefore we will allow 4 weeks from the first day of school for your child to demonstrate accomplishment of this goal. However, if the situation is not manageable within the classroom environment, we will discuss the issue with

the parents and reserve the right to suspend attendance of the child at such time. A child will not be considered toilet learned for our preschool program if the child continues to consistently have toileting accidents after the first 4 weeks of school.

After the first 4 weeks of school, the following policies will be in place for children who have accidents:

- If one or two accidents occur in one week, the parents will be notified with the understanding that the issue needs to be addressed and corrected.
- If three or more accidents occur in one week, the parent will be notified with the understanding that if the issue is not corrected by the end of the second week the child will have to stay home at least one week or longer until he/she is completely toilet learned
- If multiple accidents occur in one day, the parent will be notified on that day; and if not corrected by day three, the child will have to stay home at least one week or longer until he/she has completed the toilet learning process.

Please note that this policy is not in place to shame or punish a child or inconvenience primary caregivers. Rather, cleaning accidents in the preschool setting is time consuming, and this time that teachers spend attending to and cleaning accidents is time that they are not spending interacting with children and facilitating the curriculum in a safe manner. This policy is intended to ensure the safety and happiness of children and staff at St. Benedict's.

PARENTAL AGREEMENT FORM

After you have reviewed the handbook, please sign and submit the attached Parental Agreement Form to show that you have read and understand everything in this handbook. If you have any questions regarding any of our policies, please contact our office and we would be happy to help you.

Thank you for choosing St. Benedict's Episcopal School. We look forward to getting to know you and your family.

PARENTAL AGREEMENT FORM

I/We, _____, have carefully read, discussed with a staff member, and fully understand all the policies and procedures in the St. Benedict's Episcopal School Preschool Parent Handbook, which includes:

- Daily Operating Procedures
- Parent Responsibilities
- School Policies and Responsibilities
- Food Policies
- Health Policies
- Toileting & Diapering Policies

I also understand that St. Benedict's Episcopal School reserves the right to change any of these policies or tuition rates with written notification.

Child's Name _____

1. Parent/Guardian's Signature _____

2. Parent/Guardian's Signature _____

Date _____