



Preschool Parent & Student Handbook

2026-2027

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Welcome

Faithful Beginnings at Good Shepherd is a non-profit preschool licensed by the Minnesota Department of Human Services. Faithful Beginnings at Good Shepherd aims to fulfill the needs of preschoolers (ages 36 months to the first day of kindergarten – contact the Director for extenuating circumstances related to age) with planned, developmentally appropriate curriculum. Our staff includes a director, licensed lead teachers, experienced assistants, and teacher's aides. Faithful Beginnings at Good Shepherd is committed to our policies and does not discriminate on the basis of race, age, color, sex, national origin, physical or mental disability, or religion.

Faithful Beginnings at Good Shepherd is licensed for 62 preschoolers. The school day hours are 8:30 am and 3:10 pm. In addition, Faithful Beginnings at Good Shepherd offers before and after-school care. Parents are welcome to stop in and visit the program at any time.

Good Shepherd School is a Catholic community, dedicated to the development of the whole child. We foster the spiritual, intellectual, moral, emotional, social, and physical growth of each child by providing a quality Catholic education. Our fellowship helps us to grow in our love for God, his Church, his people, and all of his creation.

Faithful Beginnings At Good Shepherd Preschool Philosophy

Faithful Beginnings at Good Shepherd welcomes children and their families with open arms into our faith-based learning environment, where each child is valued as a precious gift from God.

The mission of Faithful Beginnings is to provide a safe and supportive learning environment that encourages children to know God and enables them to reach their full potential academically, physically, and spiritually. Students engage in meaningful, age-appropriate activities — in language, music, math, science, art, and religion — that ignite a lifelong love of learning and commitment to academic excellence.

At Faithful Beginnings at Good Shepherd, children are provided with a loving, nurturing education where Catholic values shape hearts and minds. We work with each child to encourage and develop their individual strengths and talents. Our Christ-centered, academically excellent curriculum provides a fun and engaging path to kindergarten readiness.

Mailing Address:

Faithful Beginnings at Good Shepherd
145 Jersey Ave S
Golden Valley, MN 55426

School Hours of Operation:

7:15 AM – 5:30 PM, full day Monday through Friday

Preschool Program Operation:

Core Day 2-5 days/week from 8:30 am to 3:10 pm,

Before-school care: 7:15 AM to 8:00 AM

After-School Care: 3:10 PM to 5:30 PM

Telephone Number: (763) 545-4285

Website: www.gsgvschool.org

Staff Communication: Colleen King, Preschool Director, colleenking@gsgvschool.org

Stevi Evans, School Principal (763) 545 – 4285 Ext. 811 | stevieevans@gsgvschool.org

Admission Policies & Procedures

A pre-admission tour with the director, the parents, and their child is required. Visiting the program allows both the parent(s) and child to become comfortable with our environment, staff, and schedule. We want Faithful Beginnings at Good Shepherd to be a good “fit” for our families. If this is the case, families begin the admission process by applying online through our website.

Blackbaud is our online admission, enrollment, and tuition management system. A new family to Faithful Beginnings at Good Shepherd will have to perform three steps to complete their enrollment:

1. Log on to Blackbaud and submit an application
2. Once the application has been accepted, follow the link received in an email from Blackbaud to complete the enrollment process. There is a non-refundable registration fee of \$100 that is paid when the application is completed.
3. Complete a form to save the student's spot, sent by Good Shepherd School on Parishsoft, which includes a down payment of \$200, which will be applied to the student's first tuition payment.
4. Complete a tuition agreement on Blackbaud in June before payments begin in July.

The enrollment process covers all pertinent information about the child, including, but not limited to: contact information, health and allergy information, over-the-counter product permissions, media release permissions, family details and circumstances, and student intake information.

Priority Registration will be given to current Good Shepherd School staff children and siblings of current Good Shepherd School students. Followed by Good Shepherd Church Parishioners, followed by non-parishioner families.

Health Care Summary & Immunization Form

In addition to the enrollment information submitted via Blackbaud, two health records are required for each child.

The Health Care Summary is due within 30 days of enrollment. It must be signed by the child's source of medical care. One Health Care Summary is sufficient for as many years as the child is enrolled at Faithful Beginnings at Good Shepherd Preschool unless medical information changes. An immunization record is required before a child may attend Faithful Beginnings at Good Shepherd Preschool. For inadequate or unimmunized children due to medical exemption or conscientious objection, a signed notarized statement is required.

Tuition Agreements

Via Blackbaud, families will pay for the school year (September—May) in 9 installments. Families can pay automatically through their bank or via credit card. There is a 3% convenience fee for each installment from Blackbaud to pay by credit card. An annual, non-refundable registration fee is charged each year, payable at the time of registration for the following school year.

Summer tuition is billed monthly and is calculated based on the days a family elects to attend. Detailed summer programming information is available each year to parents in early spring.

Parents can direct all questions regarding the status of tuition to the director.

Preschool Tuition For The 2026-27 School Year:

Preschool School Day

- 5 Day (M, T, W, Th, F): \$10,350
- 3 Day (M, W, F): \$6,400
- 2 Day (Tu, Th): \$4,700

Tuition includes snack(s) and lunch.

Preschool All Day

- 5 Day (M, T, W, Th, F): \$13,500

Tuition includes snack(s) and lunch.

Annual Supplies Fee for Preschool: \$75

NOTE: Additional “Day Care” days on non-school days are an additional fee. Students may sign up for these on an as-needed basis.

Each family is responsible for the yearly tuition regardless of their child’s attendance. Tuition rates will typically go into effect at the beginning of September. The new rates are published in the previous spring.

Tuition assistance is available. Failure to pay tuition may result in the termination of care.

Late Pick-Up Fees:

Parents are asked to be prompt in picking up their children. Each family receives ONE five-minute grace period. After that, late fees of \$1.00/minute will be applied. The full day program closes at 5:30 pm. If a parent is unable to pick up a child by 5:30 pm, it is the parent's responsibility to make an alternate arrangement. Repeated tardiness may result in termination of services.

Termination Of Care

If families no longer need to attend Faithful Beginnings at Good Shepherd Preschool, we require that they provide two weeks' written notice of their child's last day in the program. They will be charged two weeks' tuition from the date we receive the written notice.

In the great majority of cases, termination of care by the parent is due to reasons such as relocation, the child entering school, etc. However, we also recognize that not every situation is appropriate for every child. If, for any reason, this program is found to be unsatisfactory for any particular child, we will make every effort to discuss this with the parents in order to determine the cause. Sometimes, we can partner with the parents in order to make adjustments and come up with a solution. If this is not possible, the parent and/or program may choose to terminate the arrangement on a timeline that is in the child's best interest.

On the other hand, if the child's adjustment to the program and the appropriateness of this particular care arrangement for an individual child may cause us concern or if we feel it is not in the best interest of the child, we reserve the right to terminate the care arrangement.

Calendar, Holidays, & Closings

A yearly calendar will be made available to families and staff outlining holidays and closings. Our students follow the Good Shepherd School calendar.

If there will be any additional closings during the year, all parents will be notified in advance.

Tuition remains the same throughout the year, even when Faithful Beginnings at Good Shepherd is closed for a holiday, inclement weather, or any other reason. Tuition remains the same to assure that we can provide the highest quality of service with our highly trained staff.

Curriculum & Assessment

Faithful Beginnings at Good Shepherd Preschool uses a play-based, child-centered, and thematic curriculum. We create weekly lesson plans based on the interests and needs of the children. Lesson plans include activities to promote development and growth in the following areas: Cognitive, Social, Emotional, Spiritual, Creativity, Large and fine motor skills

Faithful Beginnings at Good Shepherd Preschool has a program plan on file. Parents can contact the director if they would like to review it.

Ratios

Under licensing guidelines and Rule 3, Faithful Beginnings at Good Shepherd Preschool requires that all children be supervised by sight and sound at all times. We follow the child/teacher ratios mandated by the Minnesota Department of Human Services. Faithful Beginnings at Good Shepherd Preschool maintains a staff-to-child ratio of 1:10, with at least two staff members assigned to the class. Parent volunteers are not counted in our adult-to-child ratio. This ratio is always maintained, including indoor time, outdoor time, during transportation, and field trips.

Assessment

The preschool curriculum is designed to support the social, emotional, physical, creative, and cognitive development of each child. Throughout the year, teachers record observations on the development of each child using an evaluation form, written observation, and work samples. Each child is assessed in a manner that is particular to each child. The purpose of these observations is to better understand a child's developmental levels, interests, and needs. Teachers use the information gathered to adapt activities and lesson plans to the needs and interests of the children in the class. Standardized testing is not used in our preschool unless an outside agency has been contracted by a parent for an assessment.

New teachers are trained in this method through mentoring and meetings with veteran teachers and/or the director.

Parent/Child Orientation

Before the start of school in the fall, children and parents meet 1:1 with the teacher. This provides an opportunity for the children to experience first-hand their new environment and for parents to get questions answered before the first day of school.

Parent Conferences

Twice a year, in the fall and spring, parent-teacher conferences are offered to discuss development and to share observations. Parents and teachers may request a conference at any time during the year to discuss particular concerns. Parents are strongly encouraged to attend the scheduled conferences. Assessment methods are shared during fall conferences and during the Back-to-School Open House, as well as upon request.

Developmental Concerns And Resources

In the course of evaluation of a child, if it is determined that a child needs a referral for additional screening, the teacher and director will meet with parents in a conference to share concerns and to refer the parents to the appropriate resources. If a child requires additional services, staff members will work with the organization providing the services and the parents to assure continuity. At the request of the parents, the staff will attend assessment and transition meetings when possible. Faithful Beginnings at Good Shepherd will support a family in finding resources in their home school district or through a third party.

Additionally, if parents have any concerns about their child's growth and development, they should talk to their child's health care provider or call 1-866-693-GROW (4769) to talk to a professional and find out ways in which they can get connected to various resources in Minnesota.

Early Childhood Screening

Faithful Beginnings at Good Shepherd recommends that all children attend Early Childhood Screening. We recommend that children between the ages of 3 ½ – 4 years of age make an appointment for this screening. Children older than 4 years of age will still need to be screened. We recommend the younger ages because if concerns are found, there is a longer time to address the concerns before the child enters kindergarten. Children will not “do better” if they wait. Families can find more information at <https://education.mn.gov/MDE/fam/elsprog/>

Arrival, Departure, & Visitors

The time when children are dropped off and when they are picked up is a time of risk for under-supervision or confusion about supervision.

To ensure proper supervision, please help with the following:

Entering/Exiting The Building

The school building remains locked at all times. The doors are monitored during morning care arrival (7:15 am- 8:00 am) and school day arrival (8:15 am-8:30) and departure (3:00 pm – 3:15 pm). In addition, all building doors are monitored full-time by a staff member and cameras. Preschool families will drop off and pick up at the main entrance of Good Shepherd School for before- and after-care hours and will drop off and pick up during school day hours at door 1, the Church entrance.

Arrival

Please set a positive tone about school even if a child does not appear happy about coming to school. All children will be greeted while in the presence of a caregiver, and their presence and arrival time will be documented using an app called Brightwheel. All parents will be given an account where they will be able to sign in and out their child. It is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to sign in/out the child each day. Older siblings are not allowed to sign in or out with their preschool sibling.

Children must wash their hands upon arrival at Faithful Beginnings. Parents or caregivers must accompany children into the building, and children are considered the responsibility of the parent until the greeting is accomplished. Parents are to directly drop off their child with their child's teacher or staff member. Our staff will then accept responsibility for your child.

Parents should have daily contact with the teacher at arrival and/or departure time to communicate things that may affect the child. At this time, any concerns expressed by the parent or caretaker, any noticeable injuries or physical problems, and any other relevant information will be noted. If parents would like to communicate a message privately or away from the child, this is done better by phone or email, or by scheduling a conference.

Departure

Once a parent has arrived to pick up their child(ren), parents assume responsibility after greeting their child(ren) and signing them out on the Brightwheel app. Children must let the caregiver know that they are leaving. A parent or alternative approved pick-up person needs to be seen by the caregiver. Parents will remove items from their child's file folder and/or cubby daily. Encourage them to check any calendars and daily notes for general information on the day. Every adult picking up children the first couple of weeks should be prepared to show identification. Alternative pick-up persons should always be prepared to show government-issued photo identification.

The Core Day ends at 3:10. After-school care is available from 3:10-5:30 pm. Parents should arrive a few minutes early to gather their child's belongings. There is a \$1 per minute late fee if the child is not picked up by 5:30 pm.

If no one picks up the child by closing time, the staff will call the emergency contacts. If these efforts are unsuccessful, staff will call authorities. Parents are expected to call the program if they will be late.

Release Of Children

Children are only released to their parents or those people listed on the "authorized pick up" list. Parents must provide written notice with the person's full name and contact information to staff if someone else will be picking up their child who is not authorized. Staff will ask for picture identification for any person they do not recognize.

If there is someone who is specifically not allowed to pick up a child, the program must be notified in writing. Copies of legal documentation must be provided to the program before a staff member can prevent a child from being picked up by a non-custodial parent.

In the event that a person picking up a child is considered incapacitated, unauthorized to pick up the child, or is suspected of abuse or neglect, the staff will contact the emergency contacts. If the person persists, the staff will call 911.

Missing Child Policy

Upon discovery that a child is missing, all staff will be alerted immediately. The director or office staff will go outdoors to search the perimeter of the building, parking lots, buses, and streets near the building. If on a field trip, the area of the field trip is searched, including buses, streets, parking lots, and buildings. The staff should search the inside of the building, including all classrooms, storage rooms, restrooms, custodial rooms, laundry rooms, kitchens, and playground areas. After a reasonable search has been made, and the child is still not found, the police will be called, as well as the parent or other emergency contact person. The staff remains at Good Shepherd until the child is found, or the police have said it is OK to leave.

Visiting And Volunteering Procedures

Faithful Beginnings at Good Shepherd has an open-door policy. All parents are welcome to visit at their convenience. Parents are encouraged to be active members of the Faithful Beginnings at Good Shepherd community. The community has many opportunities for families to be involved — on a regular or occasional basis. Information on volunteering opportunities can be found on the parish and school website, or parents will be notified by classroom teachers.

Our preschool program utilizes volunteers for planning parties, chaperoning field trips, helping in the library and with the book fair, and greeting families at the Open House. We also have Room Parents. Parents who wish to volunteer in the classroom should contact their child's teacher.

Parents who choose to volunteer directly with the children need to comply with the Archdiocesan Protecting Youth and Children Initiative (PYCI) Essential Three, which includes a background check, attending a Virtus session, and signing a Code of Conduct. Information about the Essential Three and volunteering can be found on the school website.

Miscellaneous

Bathroom Accidents

Occasional bathroom accidents do happen in preschool. If a child has regular accidents (more than 3/week), they may be considered 'not potty trained' and may be asked to leave the program until they are potty trained. When a child has an accident, the clothes will be sent home in a sealed and labeled plastic bag. Please supply an extra set of clothing to keep in your child's cubby.

Bloodborne Pathogens — Handling And Disposal Of Bodily Fluid

In compliance with Faithful Beginnings at Good Shepherd Education's bodily fluid policy and mandatory Universal Precautions training, all surfaces are wiped with a disinfectant daily or when soiled. Toys that have been mouthed are removed until they have been washed and disinfected. Surfaces that come in contact with bodily fluids are cleaned and disinfected using Universal Precautions procedures. When handling bodily fluids, Universal Precautions are taken; this includes wearing gloves and protective equipment and washing hands. Sharps are disposed of in a sharps container and kept out of the reach of children. Items that have come in contact with bodily fluids are bagged and sealed in a plastic bag and sent home. The center has a sharps container, disposable gloves, disposable bags, and eye protection for the disposal of bodily fluids.

Cleaning Guidelines

The classrooms and bathrooms are cleaned daily. All surfaces are wiped with a disinfectant daily or when visibly soiled. Toys that have been mouthed are removed until they have been washed and disinfected. Items that have come in contact with bodily fluids are bagged and sealed in a plastic bag and sent home. Surfaces that come in contact with bodily fluids are cleaned with soap and water and disinfected.

Surfaces used for eating are sanitized before and after eating using a three-step system. Staff will 1. Wash (soapy water), 2. Rinse (clear water) and 3. Disinfect (pre-mixed disinfectant) all surfaces before and after meals are served and any time surfaces come in contact with blood, bodily fluids, dirt, art supplies, or look, feel, or smell dirty.

Staff are aware of allergies and keep areas clean of known allergens that may affect enrolled children.

We aim to use fragrance-free, 3rd party certified, least-toxic cleaning products in our classrooms and buildings. The director works with the Director of Maintenance to choose these products.

Sensory tables and other containers used for water play are drained, cleaned, and sanitized between each group. Water play is supervised to ensure that children are not drinking the water and that only healthy children participate in group water play.

Clothing/Uniform

All children should wear Faithful Beginnings at Good Shepherd clothing: this includes short/long sleeve t-shirts, sweatshirts, and black pants. A separate flyer will be included in the fall packet with uniform details and how to order. Sandals, Crocs, and open-toe shoes are not allowed. Children should wear shoes that fit well and encourage self-sufficiency (such as Velcro shoes).

Children play outside every day so appropriate outdoor clothing must be worn.

Parents will provide an extra set of clothing – including socks and underwear – to be left at school.

Water Bottles

There is no need to send a water bottle with your child. Throughout the day, students will be taking many water breaks at the drinking fountains, and each classroom has a pitcher of water with disposable cups.

Communication

Clear communication is the key to an effective program. Children enrolled in the full-day classes receive daily notices and photos of their child's daily activities on the Brightwheel app. All families receive a weekly email from their child's teacher, weekly newsletters from the school office, and information is posted on the school website. Flyers and emails are sent regarding important information and community events. Parents are responsible for reading the information in their child's Brightwheel account, sent in emails, and posted on the school website.

Parents will inform the lead teacher or director if there is a change of address, phone number, and/or family situation. In addition to completing the enrollment forms on Blackbaud, parents are encouraged to share family information with their child's teacher in face-to-face communication, phone calls, or emails. Any concerns about an experience or an event should be shared with the lead teacher or the director.

Family Events

Family events are planned throughout the year. We welcome each and every family to attend, volunteer, and mingle with others. Parents will be notified of events through the Wednesday newsletter.

Field Trips

Both on-site and off-site field trips are offered during the year, and the school will cover all field trip fees. A permission slip must be signed for each child before they can attend the field trip.

The program works with Faithful Beginnings at Good Shepherd School and Community to offer on-site cultural and educational experiences. The experiences include band concerts, plays, visiting artists, and faith-based events.

Meals & Snacks

Breakfast is served each morning, and each afternoon a snack is provided for students, which includes items from two food groups.

On school days, lunch is provided through the Good Shepherd School lunchroom or can be packed from home. Lunch begins at 11:30 am. Lunch from home must contain a serving of grains, a serving of protein, and two servings of a fruit or vegetable. Milk is provided. All lunches must meet nutritional guidelines. Those that do not will be supplemented, and a note will be sent home. We cannot microwave food items; therefore, lunches must be ready to eat.

Naps & Rest

Preschool students will participate in quiet activities each afternoon, but a formal naptime will not be required. Students will nap/rest/relax for 30 minutes, and no child will be confined to nap/rest for more than 30 minutes unless he/she wishes to rest longer. Children wishing to rest longer will be provided with a quiet space for additional nap/rest. Faithful Beginnings will follow parent wishes for nap/rest in conjunction with the Minnesota Department of Human Services Nap/Rest Policy. Faithful Beginnings will have cots available for children to rest. The nap/rest space is in the preschool classroom and is supervised by classroom teachers. Bedding and blankets are provided by the family and must be taken home weekly for washing, or when wet or soiled.

Nut-Free Facility

Due to food allergies, Faithful Beginnings at Good Shepherd is a nut-free preschool. This includes peanuts and tree nuts. Tree nuts include almonds, walnuts, peanuts, pistachio, pecans, cashews, macadamia, pine nuts, hazelnuts, Brazil nuts, hickory nuts, chestnuts, and coconut. All processed items should be checked to ensure they come from a peanut & tree nut free environment.

Outdoor Play

Children have the opportunity to play outside every day, weather permitting. When weather does not permit outside play, children have the opportunity to participate in large motor play inside. Equipment is chosen to ensure the safety of the children. Children are also closely monitored to ensure their safety. Staff members are situated on the playground so that all children can be seen. Parents will provide the appropriate clothing for outdoor play.

Preschool children and staff will not go outside when the heat index is over 100 degrees and when the temperature with windchill reaches 0; teachers will use their best judgment and will limit or restrict outdoor time.

Families must send sunblock with at least an SPF rating of 15. The first coat of sunblock needs to be applied before dropping off at school. Sunscreen will be reapplied before children play outside in the afternoon with a parent's written consent.

Families may also provide insect repellent. Sunblock and insect repellent are applied according to the manufacturer's instructions. Parents must sign permission for each product to be used and must provide the product.

Pets

The program may have a fish. Children will wash hands any time they are touching or feeding pets.

Air Precautions

When a smog or air quality alert is issued, the staff will limit outdoor play time. Faithful Beginnings at Good Shepherd Preschool protects children and adults from the environmental hazard of poor indoor air quality, lead poisoning, and asbestos contamination by contacting the MN Department of Health's Environmental Health Division when/if there is an issue with the indoor or outdoor air quality. They will inspect and monitor our site if needed.

Program Evaluation

Each April, an evaluation is provided to parents regarding the entire school and preschool program. Parents are encouraged to complete the evaluation. This information is compiled electronically. The results are used to guide decision-making and setting goals for the program.

Research/Public Relations Activities

Parents are notified in writing in the event that a child or the preschool is to be involved in any research or public relations activities. Written parental permission is required before a child is involved in any type of activity.

What To Bring

Preschool children are required to have the following on the first day of school:

- Completed Registration & Agreement, Vaccine records, Health Care Summary, Emergency Card
- A backpack or bag
- An additional complete set of seasonally appropriate and labeled clothes (shirt, pants, underwear, socks) in their cubby/locker.

Children are encouraged to bring a blanket or small comfort item for Naps/Rest.

Toys and personal belongings should not come to school. Pacifiers are not allowed at preschool. All items brought to school should be labeled.

Safety

The safety of our students is our main priority. The following section outlines all of the ways we are looking out for our families.

Daily Safety Expectations

Each classroom has a daily accountability sheet. As children leave, they are checked out on the Brightwheel app. The teachers have a daily roster with check in/out times on the app. They also have a clipboard that contains the hourly head count and student rosters. Name-to-face attendance is taken regularly and each time the group transitions to a new area.

The safety of the children is the most important concern in the day-to-day operations of the Faithful Beginnings at Good Shepherd Preschool program. All staff members are expected to take responsibility to make sure that the environment and activities do not endanger themselves or the children. Teachers inspect classrooms daily for potential hazards and bring them to the immediate attention of the director. Staff members inspect the playground and common areas and remove or fix any potential hazards. Specific steps for ensuring the safety of the children include:

Injuries

- Staff members remove any broken or damaged items in the inside or outside environment. Broken equipment is brought promptly to the attention of the director. Activities are planned and monitored to ensure the safety of all participants.

Burns

- Children must not be in proximity to an oven, glue gun, or any other hot surface. Hot beverages are kept in a locked cabinet. Cooking activities are done under the constant supervision of an adult. The staff is responsible for seeing that every child has sunscreen administered before going outside each day in the summer months using sunscreen provided by the parents and a written consent form.

Poisoning

- All chemicals and hazards are kept out of reach of children or in a locked cupboard. Bleach sprays are kept out of reach of the children. In the event of accidental consumption, staff will contact the Poison Control Center.

Choking/Suffocating

- Staff members monitor materials and equipment and remove any choking or suffocating hazards.

Traffic/Pedestrian Accidents

- Traffic laws are followed at all times when transporting children. Children are only transported by bus if necessary and never in the personal cars of staff. When moving around the school property or in the neighborhood, children use crosswalks and sidewalks whenever possible. Walking during times of high traffic is discouraged.

Playground

- Staff members position themselves on the playground so that children in all parts of the playground can be adequately supervised.

Slips

- All floor coverings are secured to keep staff and children from slipping. Staff should also take precautions to avoid falls and back injuries. Staff members are required to view safety videos to minimize their risk of injury on the job.

Minor & Major Injuries

Whenever there is an incident that results in a minor injury – small cut, scrape, bruise, etc. - an Incident Report is prepared and immediately sent via the Brightwheel app. These incidents are logged and monitored for ongoing safety or behavior issues and kept for reference.

In the event of a major injury that requires medical attention, every effort will be made to notify the parents by phone. If we cannot reach the parents, we will call the emergency contacts listed in their file. If necessary, the staff will call 911 so the situation can be assessed by the First Responders. Staff members will keep emergency cards and special medical plan information accessible. If necessary, staff will arrange to transport the child by ambulance to the hospital indicated on the registration form. A staff person will stay with the child until a parent arrives. Major injuries are documented on the Incident Report as well as reported to the Minnesota Department of Human Services within 24 hours of the incident.

First Aid

All Teachers are trained in Pediatric First Aid and CPR, and a trained staff member is always present in the program. Each classroom has a fully equipped First Aid kit in the classroom “Go Bag.” This bag accompanies the class whenever they leave their classroom.

- Every abrasion must be washed with soap and water, and a bandage should be applied.
- In case of bleeding, compresses should be applied until the bleeding stops. Teachers will wear protective gloves.
- Bites must be washed with soap and water, and an ice pack should be applied. If a bite breaks the skin, the director and parents should be notified immediately.
- In case of serious injuries, such as a deep cut or an injury that is causing a child to be uncomfortable for a long period of time, parents should be contacted so they can bring their child to their primary physician.
- If a child stops breathing or sustains an injury such as a serious head injury or broken bone, staff should contact 911. Parents should then be called.

Staff members treat every injury seriously and apply proper first aid. If a child sustains a serious injury, including a head injury, parents are notified with a phone call. All injuries are recorded on an incident report form that includes the child's name and age, date and location of the accident, injury or incident, type of injury, and action taken by staff person(s). Parents sign the form and may request a copy of the incident report. These incidents are logged, and a monthly and an annual review take place.

Confidentiality

All documents provided by parents to Faithful Beginnings at Good Shepherd Preschool are considered confidential and are treated as such. Files are available only to staff who work with that child. Before sharing information with any agencies or programs outside of Faithful Beginnings at Good Shepherd, staff obtain

written consent from parents or legal guardians. Staff members only discuss matters pertaining to a child with parents or legal guardians unless specific permission has been given.

Emergency And Disaster Planning

Safety rules are followed and practiced to avoid injuries, burns, poisoning, choking, suffocation, and traffic and pedestrian accidents. Parents and staff should also work cooperatively in looking for potential hazards that could include fire, severe weather, and dangerous objects. Below, several of our safety rules and policies are outlined.

Fire

In case of a fire, staff members follow the posted instructions to exit the building with the children. The lead teacher takes the accountability clipboard and leads the children out the designated doors. The second staff member gathers the “go bag” with emergency medication and the first aid kit and follows the children, turning off the lights and closing the windows and door after all the children have left. Once outside, the staff count and make sure that all of the children and staff are accounted for.

The number to call in case of a fire is 911. To use a fire extinguisher, the pin is pulled, and the extinguisher should be aimed at the fire and used until the fire is out or until the extinguisher is empty. The primary responsibility of staff is to get themselves and the children out of the building safely. The primary exit for each classroom is the main door; the windows are the secondary exits.

Fire procedures and training on use of a Fire Extinguisher are presented and reviewed each August at the staff in-service. A monthly fire drill takes place at the program and is noted by date and time in the Fire Drill Log.

Mrs. O'Donnell's classroom (Rm 107):

- ROUTE 1: Exit classroom to the right and proceed out the 5th/6th grade Hallway to the west exit
- ROUTE 2: Exit classroom to the right and proceed out the 1st/2nd grade Hallway toward the Parish Office

Mrs. Conway's classroom (Rm 102):

- ROUTE 1: Exit classroom to the LEFT and proceed out the 3rd/4th grade hallway to the front playground
- ROUTE 2: Exit classroom to the left and proceed out the 1st/2nd grade hallway toward the Parish Office

Mrs. Sauer's classroom (Rm 109):

- Route #1: Exit classroom to the right and proceed straight out the 1st/2nd grade hallway toward the Parish Office
- Route # 2: Exit classroom to the left and exit through the preschool playground doors

Inclement Weather

In case of severe weather, the staff will monitor the situation using a weather radio or cell phone with weather-related access. In case of high winds or a tornado warning, the staff will lead the children into the student bathrooms or into the gym closet. The children will sit away from all the windows against the wall until the weather situation has improved. The program will hold a monthly drill from April to October to familiarize staff and children with the procedure. The drills are noted on the Tornado Drill Log.

Tornado Shelter:

Mrs. O'Donnell's classroom: All students shelter in the classroom bathrooms

Mrs. Conway's classroom: All students shelter in the classroom bathrooms

Mrs. Sauer's classroom: Exit classroom to the right, proceed down the hall to the girls' bathroom

In the case of a severe winter storm, the program will close with the Good Shepherd School or at the discretion of the principal. If the program will not open, the closing will be announced on local news and through the parent alert system. If the program closes early, staff will call parents to pick up their children. Two staff members, including at least one lead teacher, will remain at the program until all of the children are picked up.

Lockdown Drills

Drills are held several times (a minimum of 3) during the year to ensure a safe and rapid exit should an emergency arise. All drills are conducted in an orderly manner. Notices are posted in each classroom indicating the exits and procedures to be used. Drills are practiced to be prepared and empower students to know what to do should a situation occur. Parents will be notified of drills so they can follow up and reinforce with their child(ren) at home. Teachers and staff work appropriately with their students to limit fear and anxieties that can arise when practicing drills. The full lockdown procedures are not published for parents/guardians to protect student safety, but are accessible to any adult/volunteer working in the building. Good Shepherd's drills and procedures have been evaluated by local law enforcement and administration, and are communicated to all staff regularly throughout the year. A few general safety procedures in place included (but are not limited to): school-wide communication systems, doors are not to be propped, all visitors are screened prior to entering the building, all doors have key fobs and additional locking mechanisms, and all staff persons are trained in ways to exit the premises with reunification spots as well as in hide, escape, and fight protocols.

Grievance Policy

Clear and frequent communication between staff and parents is important for a good relationship. Parents are encouraged to contact the child care director if they have a concern or if they feel that their child's needs are not being met. The following is the most effective procedure to follow to voice their concerns.

Parents should first contact their child's lead teacher or the director either verbally or in writing. The concern will be addressed within seven days.

If the individual making the complaint feels that it has not been properly addressed or if it is of a serious nature, the complaint should go directly to the director.

If, after contacting the director, the individual does not feel that the complaint has been properly addressed, they should submit their concern in writing to the school principal.

If steps 1 through 3 have been taken and the grievance or complaint has not been resolved, the individual has the right to inform the Department of Human Services. The phone number for the division of licensing is (651) 431-6600.

Maltreatment Of Minors

All staff members are mandated by law to report any suspected physical abuse, neglect, or sexual abuse to local county child protection services.

"Physical abuse" is defined by the Department of Human Services as any physical or mental injury inflicted by a person responsible for the child's care other than by accidental means, or any other physical or mental injury that cannot be reasonably explained by the child's history or injuries, or any aversion or deprivation procedures that have not been authorized.

"Neglect" means failure by a person responsible for a child's care to supply a child with necessary food, clothing, shelter, or medical care when reasonably able to do so, or failure to protect a child from conditions or actions which imminently and seriously endanger the child's physical or mental health.

"Sexual abuse" includes threatened sexual abuse and subjecting a child to any act of sexual abuse.

Internal Review

If a report of maltreatment has been made against the center, the following steps will be taken to assure the health and safety of the children in the program. The review is conducted by the Director, or if the director is involved in the complaint, by the school principal.

- The accused staff member will be put on administrative leave.
- There will be an evaluation of whether policies and procedures were followed.
- There will be a determination of whether or not our current policies are adequate.
- A determination will be made regarding the necessity of additional staff training.
- A determination will be made regarding the necessity of corrective action.
- A corrective policy will be created.

Handwashing

Handwashing is the single most important way to reduce the spread of infections. Children will be taught proper hand-washing techniques. Additionally, step-by-step photos are by most sinks to remind children of the proper techniques. Staff regularly observe and assist children with hand washing.

The following describes proper hand-washing techniques: rubbing hands vigorously with soap for at least 20 seconds, including back of hands, wrists, between fingers, under and around any jewelry, and under fingernails; rinsing well; drying hands with a single-use towel, and avoiding touching the faucet with just-washed hands.

Families will wash hands and assist their child with washing hands upon arrival to the preschool and entering the classroom.

Children will be asked to wash their hands during the following circumstances:

- After using the toilet
- After wiping their nose, coughing, or sneezing
- After handling animals or pets.
- Before and after eating or handling food.
- After playing outside
- After moving from one location to another
- Before and after using moist items (play dough or similar)
- After water play with 2 or more children
- Before going home

Staff washes hands after handling garbage and cleaning. Hand washing sinks are not to be used for bathing or cleaning up toileting accidents. If hand washing sinks are used for food preparation, the sink is cleaned and sanitized before food preparation takes place. Staff should use gloves when handling bodily fluids. After removing gloves, hands are washed.

Illness

Our students' health is of great importance. A current Health Care Summary and Immunization Report must be on file before a child can attend the first day. Parents should notify staff of any special medical conditions, and they must update their child's immunization form throughout the year.

A child cannot attend preschool if they are ill or if they exhibit any of the following conditions:

- Thick mucus or pus draining from the eye or nose
- A serious illness or condition that is termed contagious and has not had sufficient treatment from a physician
- Chicken pox virus that is still infectious
- Vomited two or more times in the previous 24 hours
- Two or more abnormally loose stools in the previous 24 hours

- Contagious pink eye
- Harsh or persistent cough
- Lice, ringworm, or scabies
- A temperature over 100 degrees in the previous 24 hours
- Undiagnosed rash
- Unexplained lethargy
- Respiratory distress
- Not able to participate in program activities with reasonable comfort
- Requires more care than staff can give without compromising the health and safety of the other children

If an ill child is brought to school, the parent will be advised that their child must be taken home. A child sent home for illness cannot return to Faithful Beginnings at Good Shepherd Preschool for a minimum of 24 hours. Children must be fever-free without the use of fever reducing medication for 24 hours. If the illness is gastrointestinal, the child can return to school 24 hours after the LAST episode.

If a child exhibits any of the above symptoms while at preschool, a parent will be called to pick up the child. The child will be isolated from the other children and provided with a place to rest until the parent arrives. The child will be offered appropriate activities and will be supervised at all times.

Communicable Disease Reporting

Parents are notified if there is an outbreak of infectious or communicable disease. Parents are required to notify the program within 24 hours if their child is diagnosed with a contagious disease or infection. Students whose health would be adversely impacted because of compromised immune status or because they are choosing not to be immunized will be advised to remain out of school. All enrolled children must be fully immunized according to the requirements to the state of MN unless they have a medical exemption.

Staff members follow these same guidelines for illnesses and reporting illness. Staff members should take necessary precautions to avoid contracting illnesses.

Medication Administration

Written permission is required before administering any medication. Over-the-counter medications require written instructions from a doctor. Prescription medication must have the original prescription information and container. A form must be completed with directions for administering the medication and will be administered as such. Medication cannot be expired. To ensure that medication is administered correctly, staff follow safeguards including:

- Verifying that the right child receives the medication
- Verifying the correct medication
- Verifying the correct dose
- Documenting the administration of the medication

Maintenance medications (prescriptions taken on a regular basis at certain times for a period of time) are kept in the nurse's office in a locked cabinet. All medications must be labeled with the child's first and last name and dated. Medications that assist in emergency situations (e.g., EpiPens, inhalers) are kept in the Go-Bags in each classroom. These bags are hung out of children's reach but easily accessible by teachers.

Cough drops are not allowed.

All staff are trained in the administration of common medications (EpiPens, inhalers, prescriptions, etc.) at their initial orientation. Review of procedures occurs during yearly Health and Safety Updates or as necessary.

Allergies

Faithful Beginnings at Good Shepherd staff works closely with families to create a safe environment for children with allergies and sensitivities. Children with allergies must have an allergy plan on file prior to enrollment that includes, but is not limited to, a description of the allergy, specific triggers, avoidance techniques, symptoms of an allergic reaction, and procedures for responding to an allergic reaction, including medication, dosages, and a doctor's contact information. Staff members are trained annually or as updates are made on allergy-related information regarding each child and the center's policies.

A list of allergies and the allergy plans are posted in each classroom and where food is prepared and served. All staff read through the plans upon orientation, annually and with any changes, and they are trained in the use of epinephrine pens and other allergy medications. Allergy medication is securely stored in the classroom and is readily accessible to staff in the classroom, on the playground, and when on field trips. Emergency contact cards and an ICCPP allergy plan are stored with the medication. When a child shows signs of an allergic reaction, is exposed to triggers, and/or if staff administer medication for an allergic reaction, the parents of the child will be notified, and an incident report will be completed.

It is the parent's responsibility to provide and to keep allergy plans and medication up to date. As some of the most common allergens, nuts and peanuts (and products containing nuts or peanuts) are not allowed in the preschool.

Behavior Guidance

The Faithful Beginnings at Good Shepherd staff is committed to providing a safe, secure, and healthy learning environment for all children. To achieve this environment and safeguard the safety of the children and the staff, children are expected to exhibit appropriate and acceptable behavior. The staff strives to help children learn to behave in appropriate ways. Preschoolers are provided with positive models of acceptable behavior by adults and/or other children. Such behaviors are recognized and reinforced. Behavior expectations are discussed regularly with the children.

Behavior guidance is appropriate to the developmental level of the children served and protective of their safety and that of the staff. The staff employs the following behavior guidance strategies:

- Instruction related to problem solving and teaching acceptable alternatives to problem behavior
- Eye contact
- Verbal direction

- Redirection of children and groups away from problem behavior to reduce conflict
- Natural and logical consequences
- Removal from situation with which the child is having difficulty
- Provide immediate and directly related consequences for a child's unacceptable behavior

Persistent Unacceptable Behavior

There are certain behaviors that are unacceptable within our program. These behaviors include biting, cursing, pinching, kicking, hitting, choking, or other actions that pose a threat to another child or adult. Such behaviors will be immediately stopped by a staff person. If their attempts to correct the behavior are not successful, the child may be separated from the group until they are ready to return. Such a separation is communicated to the parent in writing and will be documented on the separation log. A child who persistently demonstrates any of these behaviors will be subjected to the following steps:

Staff will observe and record behaviors and the staff member's response to the behavior for two weeks.

If the above guidance strategies are not effective, a conference will be scheduled with the parents, teacher, director, and principal to establish a behavior modification plan.

If the unacceptable behavior continues for two weeks after the plan has been in place, the program has the right to require an evaluation and recommendations from a professional. The recommendation will be reviewed by the parents and staff together. The parents and staff will cooperate to implement the recommendations.

If no behavioral changes occur, the program reserves the right to terminate the enrollment.

If parents are unwilling to participate in steps two and three, care may be terminated.

The Minnesota Department of Human Services requires that all licensed centers have behavior guidance policies prohibiting certain actions. Included in the prohibited actions are: subjection of a child to corporal punishment or emotional abuse punishment for lapses in toilet habits, the use of mechanical restraints, and the withholding of food, light, warmth, clothing, or medical care as punishment. Corporal Punishment includes: rough handling, shoving, hair or ear pulling, shaking, slapping, kicking, biting, pinching, hitting, or spanking. Emotional abuse includes name calling, ostracism, shaming, derogatory remarks about a child or their family, and using language that threatens, humiliates, or frightens the child.

Restraining A Child

A child may only be physically restrained by a staff person when it is necessary to protect the child or others from harm. A child may only be restrained by being held by a staff person. The use of mechanical restraints, such as tying, is strictly forbidden.

Separation From The Group

No child may be separated from the group unless

- The less intrusive methods of behavior guidance spelled out in the “Behavior Guidance” section have been tried and found to be unsuccessful.
- The child’s behavior threatens their own well-being or the well-being of other children.
- A child who is separated from the group must remain within an enclosed part of the classroom where the child can be seen and heard by a staff person.
- The child must be returned to the group once the child’s behavior that caused the separation has ceased.

When a child is separated from the group, the child’s parent must be notified. A program incident report must be completed with one copy being given to the parents and one copy given to the director for the child’s file. All separations from the group must be recorded on the daily log in the program’s office. The log information must include the child’s name, the staff person’s name, time, date, information about the unsuccessful guidance methods used, and how the child’s behavior threatened themselves or other children.

If a child is separated from the group five or more times in one week, eight or more times in two weeks, the procedures in the persistent unacceptable behavior section will be followed.

Staffing

We take pride in hiring qualified staff with education and experience in child development. Each staff member is trained in First Aid and CPR. All staff members have completed an orientation and will be familiar with these policies and procedures. Staff members will complete and pass two background checks before they can begin working in our program.

New staff members must be at least eighteen years old and have completed high school or the equivalent.

Ratios

Faithful Beginnings at Good Shepherd maintains a staff-to-child ratio of 1:10. Volunteers are not counted in our adult-to-child ratio. This ratio is maintained at all times, including indoor time, outdoor time, during transportation, and field trips. Staff members supervise the children by sight and sound at all times.

Two staff members are always present in the building, and a staff member doesn’t work alone unless they are qualified and have become proficient in their position. Substitutes, support staff, and volunteers do not work alone with children. They are always directly supervised by regular teaching staff.

Relationships And Communication

Teachers are encouraged to develop professional relationships with families by getting to know the child and their family. Written daily notes, emails, and face-to-face conversations are used to learn more about families and to share information specific to a child. Websites, emails, Brightwheel message/photos and newsletters are used to communicate information regarding the program, curriculum, and to share information about supporting child development.

Families will complete an informational form about their child prior to the first day of class. This information is used to plan and make adaptations in the lessons to best meet the needs of the children in the program. These forms can be found in the child's file.

Effort is made to hire staff members who speak the language of the children served. When this is not possible, volunteers may be recruited to interact with children in their home language.

Drug And Alcohol Policy

Use of alcohol or drugs by any staff member, license holder, subcontractor, or volunteer is strictly prohibited. Any staff person who is found to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs on the property of the program during program hours will be terminated from employment immediately.