

**Nativity of Mary School  
Preschool and Pre-Kindergarten  
Parent Handbook**

**2015-2016**



**NATIVITY** *of* **MARY**  
SCHOOL

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# Nativity of Mary Preschool

9901 East Bloomington Freeway

Bloomington, MN 55420

[school.nativitybloomington.org](http://school.nativitybloomington.org)

952-881-8160

**Principal:** Mrs.Mindy Reeder

x101

[mreeder@nativitybloomington.org](mailto:mreeder@nativitybloomington.org)

**Preschool Director/5-day Pre-K Lead Teacher:** x122

Mrs. Lisa Hegard

[lhgard@nativitybloomington.org](mailto:lhgard@nativitybloomington.org)

**5-day Assistant:** Mrs. Melissa Barnes

**2- and 3-day Lead Teacher :**

Mrs. Olivia Sage

[osage@nativitybloomington.org](mailto:osage@nativitybloomington.org)

x126

**2- and 3-day Assistant:** Mrs. Theresa Rynda

**Program Hours:** Preschool 9:30am-12:00pm

Extended day: 12:00pm -4:00pm

## Mission Statement-Nativity of Mary School

Nativity of Mary School provides a Catholic education that fosters academic excellence and spiritual growth while preparing students to become responsible citizens in a global society.

## Nativity Preschool Philosophy

Our philosophy is that children learn best in a warm, caring environment. Our program is designed to promote social skills, independence, and confidence through hands on learning experiences. We provide an engaging, comfortable environment in which children can discover their own interests and talents and to take pride in their accomplishments. We work with families to develop a well rounded child with a strong Catholic identity.

## Welcome

Welcome to Nativity of Mary Preschool! Nativity preschool is open to children ages three to kindergarten. Nativity Preschool can accommodate up to 58 children per day. Our 2- day program meets

on Tuesday and Thursday and accommodates eighteen children per day, ages 3 to 4. Our 3-day program meets Monday, Wednesday and Friday and can accommodate 20 4 to 5 year olds. Our pre kindergarten classroom meets Mondays through Friday morning and has a capacity of 20 children, ages 4 and 5 and who will be entering kindergarten next year. Our program also has an extended day / after care option for 4 and 5 year olds which can accommodate up to 15 children. Parents are invited to stop in and visit the program at any time.

### **Program Plan**

Nativity Preschool has a program plan on file. Parents can contact the principle if they would like to review it.

### **Enrollment Forms**

The following forms must be on file **before a child's first day**.

1. Enrollment form
2. Health Care Summary (must be turned in within two weeks)
3. Immunization form
4. Tuition agreement

Parents are required to submit updated health information and immunizations when necessary. All immunizations must be kept up to date to the standards of the State of Minnesota or provide necessary documentation that legally excuses them from immunizations.

### **Curriculum**

Nativity Preschool uses The Creative Curriculum by TeachingStrategies®, a play based, child centered, and thematic curriculum. The teachers create weekly lesson plans each week based on the interest and needs of the children. Lesson plans include activities to promote development and growth in the following areas:

- Cognitive
- Social
- Emotional
- Spiritual
- Large and fine motor skills

### **Communication**

Clear communication is the key to an effective program. Monthly newsletters are sent via email or as a paper copy in your child's take-home box and posted on the bulletin board and website. Flyers and emails are sent regarding important information and community events. Parents are responsible for reading the information in their child's file, sent in emails and posted on the bulletin board.

Please inform the lead teacher or principal if there is a change of address, phone number or family situation. In addition to completing the enrollment forms, 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 principle.

### **Release of Children**

Children are only released to their parents or those people listed on the "authorized pick up" list. Parents must notify 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, the staff will contact the emergency contacts. If the person resists, the staff will call 911.

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.

### **Nutrition**

Our preschool programs are served a snack each morning. Parents are asked to provide snack on a rotating basis. A schedule is sent home each month along with healthy snack suggestions. Please bring snacks from the approved list to be sure they are peanut/tree nut free. Water is provided to drink.

Children enrolled in the extended day/after care are served lunch each day at noon. Lunch is either hot lunch as served by Bloomington Public Schools or you may provide a healthy lunch from home. Milk is available for purchase in the cafeteria. Snack is also served in the afternoon. Parents are asked to contribute two snacks per month, if their child is attending the afternoon program.

### **What to Bring**

Children must bring a backpack to and from school each day. This is the best way to transport crafts, papers, clothes, etc. Children enrolled in all classes need to have a complete change of clothes in their backpack. Toys and personal belonging should not come to school. Security items (blankets and stuffed animals) are welcome but should remain in backpacks. Pacifiers are not allowed at preschool. All personal items brought to school should be labeled.

### **What to Wear**

All children should wear durable clothing that they can put on and off by themselves. The focus of our day is on play and children get dirty and messy and should be dressed appropriately. Sandals, crocs and open toes shoes are not allowed. Children should wear shoes that fit well and encourage self-sufficiency (such as Velcro shoes). Children play outside everyday so appropriate outdoor clothing must be worn. Uniforms are not required. Clothing that displays inappropriate or violent images are not allowed. All clothing items brought/worn to school should be labeled.

### **Outside 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 insure the safety of the children. Children are also closely monitored to insure the safety of the children. Parents must provide the appropriate clothing for outdoor play. Parents must also send sunblock with at least an SPF rating of 15 in spring/summer (September, May, June). Parents may also provide insect repellent. Sunblock and insect repellent are applied according to manufacturer's instructions. Parents must sign permission for each product to be used.

### **Volunteering**

Parents are encouraged to be active members of the Nativity of Mary 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 through our preschool newsletters. Our preschool program utilizes volunteers for planning parties, chaperoning field trips, and helping with special projects. Emails and notes regarding volunteer opportunities are sent. Parents who choose to volunteer directly with the children need to comply with the Archdiocesan Protecting Youth and Children Initiative (PYCI) which includes a background check and attending a Virtus session. More information on PYCI can be found on the school website.

### **Family Events**

Family events are planned throughout the year. Parents will be asked to plan and put on a Halloween and Valentine's party. Watch for a newsletter from your child's teacher for information on other events.

### **Nap Policy**

Children enrolled in the extended day/after care program are required to take a rest each day. Each child is assigned a rest cot. They are invited to bring a blanket or stuffed animal from home. These are sent home on Fridays to be washed. If students have rested for 30 minutes on their mat, they will be allowed to participate in quiet activities until nap is over.

### **Field Trips**

Occasionally, off-site field trips are scheduled. These field trips may be walking trips or may require a bus ride. To help off-set the cost of the bus and the trip, an additional fee may be charged. This fee is

due with the permission slip. A permission slip must be signed for each child before they can attend the field trip.

The program works with Nativity of Mary School and community to offer onsite cultural and education experiences. The experiences include band concerts, plays, visiting artists and faith based events.

### **Birthdays**

Birthdays are an exciting time for preschoolers. We will celebrate your child's birthday or half-birthday at school. Your child will be able to provide a snack on his/her birthday and be able to invite a special adult to read their favorite book to the class. Notification will be sent home as your child's birthday approaches.

### **Staffing**

Nativity preschool takes pride in hiring qualified staff with education and experience in child development. Each staff member will be trained in pediatric First Aid and CPR. All staff members have completed an orientation and are familiar with our policies and procedures. Staff members complete a background check before they begin working in our program. Staff members supervise the children by sight and sound at all times. The minimum ratio for Nativity preschool is one staff person for ten children at all times (one staff per 9 children in the 3-4 year old class). Staff members participate in continued learning opportunities on an on-going basis.

Children thrive on consistency. Therefore, we strive to provide consistent staffing in our classrooms. Each classroom has a lead teacher and a specific assistant teacher assigned to each classroom. Staff members develop meaningful relationships with each child.

Transitions for each child are minimized by consistent daily staff and clear communication to staff members. All substitute staff are familiar with the classroom and the children.

### **Parent-Teacher Conferences**

The curriculum of Nativity Preschool 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 assessment. If translation is needed, staff works with families.

Twice a year, in November and May, parent-teacher conferences are offered to discuss development and to share observations. Parents or teachers may request a conference at any time during the year to

discuss particular concerns. Only one conference per child is offered; parents who are divorced or separated must schedule a conference together. This insures that parent receive the same information.

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 works 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. Nativity Preschool has an established relationship with the Bloomington Public Schools Early Childhood Special Education.

All preschool children must be screened through your district's Early Childhood Screening office. Please do this as soon as your child turns 3 years old or as soon after as possible.

### **Withdrawal**

If parents choose to leave the program, please inform the staff verbally or writing as soon as possible.

### **Illness/Injury**

Health and safety are of great importance. A current Health Care Summary and Immunization Form must be on file before your child can attend their 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 Nativity Preschool if they are ill or if they exhibit any of the following conditions.

- Thick mucus or pus draining from 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.
- Has had 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 your child is absent from school for illness or other reasons, please notify the teacher at 952-881-8160 x 126 (Ms. Sage) or x122 (Mrs. Hegard) **and** the main office attendance line at 952-881-8160



If a child exhibits any of the above symptoms while at Nativity 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 time.

If a child becomes sick or injured while at Nativity Preschool, every effort will be made to notify the parents by phone. If we cannot reach the parents, we will call the persons listed as the emergency contact. If a child is seriously injured, staff will call 911 and administer first aid until a first responder arrives. Parents will be contacted and if necessary, the child will be transported by ambulance to the hospital indicated on the registration form. A staff person will stay with the child until a parent arrives.

Whenever there is an incident that results in injury, an incident report is prepared. Parents should sign the report and may request a copy. These incidents are recorded and monitored for ongoing safety or behavior issues.

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.

### **Medication**

Written permission is required before administering any medication. Prescription medications require a written permission signed by the child's doctor and parent. This form must contain directions for administering medication. Parents must sign a written permission form before over the counter medication can be administered. Medication is administered according to the directions on the original container. All medications must be in their original container.

### **Allergies**

Our staff works closely with families to create a safe environment for children with allergies and sensitizes. Children with allergies must have an allergy plan on file. A list of allergies and the allergy plans are posted in each classroom. Staffs read through the plans in advance and are trained in the use of epinephrine pens. It is the parent's responsibility to keep allergy plans and medication up to date.

### **Safety**

Preventative measures are taken by the staff to assure that all poisons are kept out of the reach of children. In the event of accidental ingestion, the staff will consult with Poison Control Center.

### **Behavior Guidance**

Nativity Preschool 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, Nativity Preschool expects children to exhibit appropriate and acceptable behavior and strives to help children learn to behave in appropriate ways.

Nativity Preschool children 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 development 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
- Eye contact
- Verbal direction
- Redirection
- Natural and logical consequences
- Removal from situation with which the child is having difficulty

### **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 to the group. Such a separation is communicated to 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.

1. Staff will observe and record behaviors and the staff member's response to the behavior for two weeks.
2. If the above guidance strategies are not effective, a conference will be schedule with the parents, teacher, and principal to establish a behavior modification plan.
3. 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 recommendation from a professional. The recommendation will be reviewed by the parents and staff together. The parents and staff will cooperate to implement the recommendations.
4. If no behavioral changes occur, the program reserves the right to terminate the enrollment.
5. 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 using of mechanical restraints; and the withholding of food, light, warmth, clothing, or medical care as punishment.

## **Grievance Policy**

Clear and frequent communication between staff and parent is important for a good relationship. Parents are encouraged to contact the lead teacher 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 your concerns.

1. Parent should first contact their child's lead teacher or the teacher assistant either verbally or in writing. The concern will be addressed within seven days.
2. If the individual making the complaint feels that it has not been properly addressed or if it is of a serious nature, the complaints should go directly to the principle.

If steps one and two 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 651-296-3971.

## **Program Evaluation**

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

## **Pets**

Parents are informed before any animal visits the program. Please do not bring pets to the program without asking the staff at least 24 hours in advance.

## **Research/Public Relations Activities**

Parents are notified in writing in the event that a child or Nativity 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.

## **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.

**Confidentiality**

All documents provided by parent to Nativity Preschool are considered confidential and are treated as such. Files are kept locked and are available only to staff who work with the child. Before sharing information with any agencies or programs outside of Nativity of Mary, staff will obtain written consent from parents or legal guardians. Staff members only discuss matter pertaining to a child with parents or legal guardians unless specific permission has been given