

# ST. BARTHOLOMEW CATHOLIC PRESCHOOL

## PARENT HANDBOOK 2021-2022

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*"We are all God's children."*

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**RIGHT TO AMEND:** St. Bartholomew Catholic Preschool reserves the right to amend this handbook for just cause. In the case that changes are made, parents will be notified by the next newsletter that goes out.

Updated 8/17/2021

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

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**The mission of St. Bartholomew Catholic Preschool is to provide high-quality early childhood education in a faithful Catholic setting.**

**We hope to inspire a life-long love of God and learning by providing an enriched, joyful environment in which our students may play, learn, interact, and develop their faith.**

## **GOALS OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW CATHOLIC PRESCHOOL**

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- Nurture Catholic faith development in each child and in each child's family.
- Provide very low teacher-child ratios with loving, well-trained staff members.
- Expose the children to a variety of learning opportunities like Spanish lessons, Faith Formation, Music class, and Fitness class.
- Teach students to respect the world around them.
- Provide opportunities for young children to learn and practice socialization skills.
- Encourage self-esteem while teaching acceptable behavior and good manners.
- Foster an appreciation of others through charitable acts of kindness.
- Offer a curriculum that will help prepare our students for Kindergarten and the world.

## WELCOME

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Dear Parents,

God is good, all the time! We are so blessed to be starting another school year.

The entire preschool staff has been working hard over the summer, training and preparing for a successful year for your children. We know that your child is your greatest treasure and we are privileged to play a part in their care and education. We do not take that responsibility lightly! It is our goal to design and implement a program that will help your children grow in love and knowledge throughout this year and beyond.

Besides educating and caring for your child, a major goal of ours is to achieve clear communication and consistent policies throughout the preschool. Always know that you may share your concerns, compliments, or ideas with us at any time. Ms. Norma and I welcome your feedback.

Thank you for sharing your precious child with us. We look forward to a year filled with wonderful relationships, enthusiastic learning, and above all, a greater love for our Lord and His Church.

Respectfully yours,

*Rose Stornello*

Preschool Director

## **1. LICENSING INFORMATION**

St. Bartholomew Catholic Preschool (SBCP) is licensed by the state of Texas through the Health and Human Services. You may review a copy of our most recent licensing report, fire inspection, health inspection, and a copy of our regulatory document, posted at the front door.

For more information on childcare licensing and on Minimum Standards in Texas, you can access the HHS website at: <https://hhs.texas.gov/>. You can also contact them at 1330 East 40<sup>th</sup> Street, Houston, TX 77022 or call them at (713) 696-7147

## **2. ENROLLMENT**

Enrollment at SBCP is open to children from age 18 months to 5 years old and shall be granted without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, or disability. Parents can apply to enroll their child by completing a Registration Form and paying the appropriate non-refundable registration/supply fees.

During enrollment, preference is given first to currently enrolled students, then to parishioners of St. Bartholomew Catholic Church, and then space permitting, to all others. A waiting list will be maintained and first, parishioners of St. Bartholomew, followed by non-parishioners registering for 5 days, will receive preference when filling available spots.

Parents are required to notify SBCP immediately and in writing, should any of the information collected at the time of enrollment changes. This includes, but is not limited to, new phone numbers, addresses, physicians, or changes to your authorization for release.

### **2.A PRE-ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS**

Before a student may begin attending preschool, parents must have completed and turned in ALL of the following: Last month's tuition (May), Registration Form, registration fee, supply fee, Permission and Release Form, Statement of Active Participation Form, a health statement, Parent Handbook Acknowledgment Form, Parental/guardian Consent form/Liability Waiver and an up-to-date immunization record signed by a physician. SBCP policy is that all students must receive immunization to be placed in a class. The state of Texas also requires all students age 4 and above to pass a hearing and vision screening. This can be done by your physician at the child's 4 year check-up.

### **2.C IMMUNIZING**

It is the policy of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston to require all children under the age of five enrolled in faith formation, nursery, mother's day out and early childhood programs at parishes of the Archdiocese to be immunized against vaccine preventable diseases caused by infectious agents in accordance with the immunization schedule adopted by the Texas Department of State Health & Human Services. Current immunization requirements can be found at [www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize/default.shtm](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize/default.shtm). An exception to the foregoing requirement is an affidavit signed by a licensed physician (M.D. or D.O.) authorized to practice in the State of Texas, and which is on the physician's letterhead. The affidavit must state that in the physician's opinion, the immunization required would be injurious to the child's health and well-being or to any of the child's family or household members. Unless a lifelong condition is specified, that affidavit is valid for one year from the date signed by the physician and must be renewed every year for the exclusion to remain in effect. Immunizations are not in conflict with the Catholic faith. AFFIDAVITS OR WAIVERS FOR CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTIONS WHICH MAY BE PERMISSIBLE FOR ATTENDANCE IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS, DO NOT QUALIFY AS AN EXEPTION FOR ENROLLMENT IN PROGRAMS OCCURRING AT CATHOLIC PARISHES. (See Attorney General Opinion Ga-0420 at <https://texasattorneygeneral.gov/opinions/opinions/50abbott/op/2006/htm/ga0420.htm>).

### 3. FINANCIAL INFORMATION

SBCP is a non-profit business and a ministry of St. Bartholomew Catholic Church. The tuition payments and fees cover the basic operating costs of running the preschool. All fundraisers and donations are used for capital improvement projects (ex., new furniture or materials) or special activities. Below is an overview of this year's tuition and fees:

| Number of Days | Registration Fee<br>(nonrefundable) | Supply Fee<br>(nonrefundable) | Parishioner Tuition<br>(Sept. – May) | Non-Parishioner<br>Tuition |
|----------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 2              | \$100.00                            | \$75.00                       | \$210.00                             | \$230.00                   |
| 3              | \$100.00                            | \$75.00                       | \$295.00                             | \$325.00                   |
| 4              | \$100.00                            | \$90.00                       | \$370.00                             | \$405.00                   |
| 5              | \$100.00                            | \$90.00                       | \$430.00                             | \$470.00                   |

#### 3.A TUITION & PAYMENT SCHEDULE

Your monthly tuition is due on the first school day of each month and is considered late a week thereafter. (*Ex., First day of school is September 7<sup>th</sup>. Tuition is due then and considered late on September 14<sup>th</sup>*) Tuition checks must be placed in your child's envelope and put in the black tuition box inside the preschool office. You can also pay through Faith Direct at <https://membership.faithdirect.net/events/details/3374>.

***No refund or prorates are made for absences, bad weather days, vacations or teacher in-service days, holidays or any day the school is closed due to unforeseen circumstances including closures initiated by state officials, CDC, or administration. Absences may not be made up by attending on an alternate day. Payment of your tuition assures that your child's place in our program is maintained during his or her absence.***

**PANDEMIC TUITION POLICY** – Should we need to close for Pandemic reasons, full tuition will be due for 1 month of closure. If we close longer, we will reevaluate the situation.

If at some point you anticipate difficulty with paying on time, please discuss the matter with the Director immediately to request alternate arrangements.

#### 3.B FEES

Both the registration fee and the supply fee are paid once each year and are non-refundable.

#### 3.C PENALTIES

Late payment penalty – Any tuition payment received one week after it is due will be assessed a penalty of \$10.00, plus \$2.00 for each additional calendar day late until paid in full.

Unless previous arrangements have been made with the Director (see 3.A Tuition and Payment Schedule), any student whose account falls more than one month behind in payment will be un-enrolled from the preschool and liable to lose their spot if a waiting list exists. In order to re-enroll, the parents will be required to pay their account in full plus another registration fee.

All late fees must be paid before registering your child for the following school year.

Returned check penalty – If your check is returned from the bank for any reason, you will be assessed a \$25.00 returned check penalty. If this happens a second time, in addition to paying the penalty, all further payments must be made with certified funds (i.e., money order, certified check, Faith Direct, or cash.)

Late pick-up penalty – Children must be picked up from school between 1:50-2:00 pm. The first time a parent picks up a child late they will receive a warning. Any further late pick-ups will result in a late pick-up penalty of \$1.00 per child per minute late. Recurrent late pick-ups could result in dismissal from the preschool.

#### **4. ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL**

The riskiest time in our day is when our students are arriving and dismissing. It is up to all of us to work together and follow these procedures in order to ensure our children are appropriately supervised at all times. We ask that you refrain from using your cell phone during these times (see 14.A Cell Phone Policy).

##### **4.A ARRIVAL PROCEDURE**

The **18-month class and 2-Year-Old classes** will have a **walk-up arrival**. Parents will enter the front porch area via the ramp. If the parent has older children that attend our preschool, they can enter with their siblings then be handed off to a designated staff member to take them to their classroom.

The **3-year-old classes and 4-Year-old classes** will have a drive thru drop off. Parents will pull up in front of the preschool building. The designated staff member will open the car door. Then a designated staff member will help the child out of the car and send them up the steps to a designated staff member and they will watch them arrive to their classrooms and the teachers will sign them in.

Our teachers have big plans for their students each day and we want to minimize distractions to learning whenever possible, so we ask that you please arrive on time.

##### **4.B NOTIFICATION OF ABSENCE**

If your child is going to be absent for any reason, please inform their teacher or the preschool office in advance. You can reach the preschool by phone at (281) 391-0993, by email at [rose@st-bart.org](mailto:rose@st-bart.org) or [norma@st-bart.org](mailto:norma@st-bart.org) or notify by Brightwheel.

##### **4.C SEPARATION ANXIETY**

Some children exhibit separation anxiety when it comes time for their parent to leave. In general, the best way to handle teary goodbyes is a good hug with an “I love you and I’ll see you soon,” before leaving with no looking back. We will be happy to give extra support to children having difficulty transitioning to school. This might include bringing a stuffed animal to school or perhaps beginning with a shortened day.

##### **4.D DISMISSAL PROCEDURE**

If you plan to pick up your child before 1:30pm please inform their teacher that morning so we can have them ready for you. When you arrive, use the intercom and a staff member will get your child for you. There will be no child pickup at the front door after 1:30pm due to dismissal procedures.

For severe weather, please check Brightwheel for any changes or updates to the drop off or pick up procedures.

If you plan to pick up your child before 1:50pm please inform their teacher that morning so we can have them ready for you. When you arrive, use the doorbell to get access to the building and the Director or Assistant Director will get your child so that you may sign them out.

Normal dismissal time is from 1:50-2:00pm and children will dismiss from their classrooms. Parents are asked to come in through the main entrance on the east side of the building and go to the doorway of their child's classroom. The students will be seated near the door, ready to go and the teacher will dismiss your child to you. After 2:00pm, you are considered late and will incur a warning or late pick-up penalty (see 3.C Penalties for details).

Unfortunately, teachers do not have time during dismissal for extended conversations. If you need to speak to your child's teacher for more than a minute, please leave a note or request a conference. Some days, your child's teacher will be able to meet with you for a few minutes once dismissal is complete and she is no longer supervising other children. If your teacher states that she is available to talk after dismissal, please wait in the entry until she comes to get you.

#### **4.E DISMISSAL TO AUTHORIZED PERSONS**

At enrollment, parents designate any persons who are authorized to pick up their child from school. ALL changes to pick-up authorizations must be made in writing or through the Brightwheel App. Any authorized person coming to pick up your child that is unknown to the school will be required to present a photo ID before we will release your child to them.

#### **5. CATHOLIC FAITH FORMATION**

At SBCP, we happily admit students of any race, color, creed, religion, national origin or gender. However, we are a Catholic preschool and our curriculum is founded on those Catholic beliefs and traditions. We do not modify curriculum or classroom activities to accommodate other religious beliefs.

We recognize parents to be the primary educators of their children and, as such, encourage you to take this responsibility, especially in the area of faith formation, very seriously. Practicing your faith within your family (regular Mass attendance on Sundays and other holy days, participating in the sacraments, praying as a family, etc.) will lay the foundation for your child's faith formation throughout their life.

#### **5.A HOLY DAYS**

In order for our staff to attend Mass, preschool classes will begin at approximately 9:45 am on All Saints Day (Monday, 11/1/21 and The Immaculate Conception (Wednesday 12/8/21). Parents are strongly encouraged to join us and attend Mass (which begins at 8:30 am) with their child on these days.

#### **6. COMMUNICATION**

Strong communication between school and home is a main priority of our preschool. We are always looking for new and better ways to keep you informed and involved. During school hours, you may contact the preschool by phone at (281) 391-0993. You can reach Rose or Norma by email at [rose@st-bart.org](mailto:rose@st-bart.org) and [norma@st-bart.org](mailto:norma@st-bart.org). Also, please take a minute to check out and "like" our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/stbartspreschool](https://www.facebook.com/stbartspreschool).

The preschool office relies primarily on electronic communication (email) to communicate with parents. Every family is asked to provide at least one email address where important information may be sent.



Teachers will be communicating primarily through Brightwheel and paper notes sent home in your child's backpack. Please be sure to check their backpack every evening!

If you ever have a concern about anything at SBCP, please let us know immediately. Our doors are always open for your questions, concerns and compliments!

## **7. CONFIDENTIALITY**

Maintaining confidentiality of children and families is very important at SBCP. The student files that include medical information, family information, and assessment results are kept in a locked room. Additionally, we require that any observation or information concerning children and families that a parent may gain while volunteering must be kept confidential.

### **7.A PHOTO POLICY**

We understand that it is important to you to photograph your little one's special days and we welcome you to take pictures of your own child at any of our many special events. However, we discourage parents from taking photographs of other children and recommend that you never share any photographs of children other than your own, especially on social media (like Facebook or Instagram).

## **8. CLASSROOM INFORMATION**

Classroom assignments are made based on student schedule and not parent request. Each teacher will maintain consistent classroom procedures that parents and students are expected to follow. Important information (daily schedule, lesson plans, evacuation routes, etc.) will be posted in each classroom for the parent's benefit.

### **8.A BIRTHDAY AND HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS**

Your child's birthday is reason to celebrate! If you are planning on your child celebrating their birthday at school, please give the teacher advance notice in order for her to plan for it and inform you of any allergies in the class. A special birthday snack (not lunch) may be brought to school to share (no whole cakes, please). This celebration will be for the class only, no visitors please. Birthday party invitations may be distributed at school if there is one for each child.

SBCP celebrates many holidays and special events throughout the school year. Some special lessons will take place during the school day with only staff and students. However, if a class party is being planned, parents will be invited, and information will be sent home with details. Due to class size, space and fire safety rules, we do ask that no strollers be brought into the school during parties.

### **8.B CURRICULUM**

We believe that offering a wide range of learning experiences to our students will help them to become well-rounded learners and thinkers. To that end, we have designed our curriculum to ensure students are engaged, learning and developing in all of the following areas: faith formation, language and literacy development, physical development, foundations of math and science, and social/emotional development. We also use Handwriting Without Tears and Frog street to further the foundation of learning.

### **8.C EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

SBCP offers one extracurricular activity each day to extend the learning that our students do in their classrooms. These special classes include Religion, Music & Movement, Fitness and Spanish.

## **8.D OUTDOOR PLAY**

Outdoor learning and the opportunity for outdoor free play is very important to the development of young children. Our students will play outside every day that weather permits. Besides being good practice, it is also required by HHS child-care licensing.

## **8.E WATER ACTIVITIES**

Splash/Sprinkler Play may be offered during the month of May. It may consist of, but is not limited to, sprinklers, bubbles, water color spray art and popsicles. Parents will be notified in advance of the Splash day. Parents will be asked to bring a swim suit, swim diaper (if applicable), towel and change of clothes. If your child needs sun screen, please apply before coming to school. Children wearing regular diapers will not be allowed to participate in the Splash day.

## **8.F SUPPLIES**

Every child should have a non-rolling backpack (large enough to fit a standard folder), a lunchbox, change of clothes, and a filled reusable water bottle that comes to school with them every day. Your teacher will provide a folder for you that will be used for home/school communication.

Everything that comes to school with your child needs to be clearly labeled with their name. We cannot be responsible for lost items that are unlabeled.

## **8.G TODDLER CLASS**

Our toddler class has scheduled naptime each day (although children are never forced to nap) and every student is asked to bring a nap mat and blanket (large enough for the mat) to school. The nap mats and blanket will be sent home each day. Additionally, each child in the toddler class will need to bring the following items in their bag each week: diapers, wipes, a change of clothes, and a sippy cup (no bottles).

## **8.H TOILET TRAINING**

Toilet training and independence in the bathroom is a life skill we address at a developmentally appropriate level with all our students age 2 and up. Your teacher will give you specific guidance about their classroom bathroom procedures. Teachers will always be available for assistance and supervision during bathroom times. However, all students in our three-year-old, and four-year-old classes are expected to be fully toilet trained. If a child in one of these classes has more than occasional bathroom accidents, the class placement may not be appropriate, and a conference will be scheduled to address the issue. If you ever have questions or concerns in this area, please let us know.

## **8.I DRESS CODE**

Children should be dressed in simple, washable clothes that are easy for them to manage. Our days involve many fun, hands-on activities and some may be messy.

For safety reasons; Jewelry and things around the neck should not be worn. We require shoes with closed toes, closed heels, and rubber soles. Other types tend to be slippery on our floors. No flip flops, boots, crocs, sandals, etc.

In your child's backpack, please keep a full change of clothes, appropriate for the season (top, bottom, socks, and underwear. Also, while toilet training, include a spare set of shoes in their backpack) in a clear plastic zipper bag labeled with their name.

## **9. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

In cases of emergency, the preschool will use every means available to us to communicate to parents, including telephone, our website, Brightwheel, and our Facebook page. The preschool staff will attempt to protect the health and safety of our students during an emergency by all means necessary.

First aid kits are stored in the Teacher Workroom. Defibrillator is located on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor, in the southern corner of the hallway, and every classroom has a battery powered flashlight, in accordance to childcare licensing regulations.

### **9.A EVACUATION/ALTERNATE SAFE LOCATION**

In the event that our building needs to be evacuated for any reason, we will walk all the students including children under 24 months to the Family Life Center of St. Bartholomew Catholic Church at 5356 11<sup>th</sup> street, Katy, TX 77493. The teachers will bring with them the iPad and binder of information on all the students. Parents will be notified to pick up their child at the main entrance of the Family Life Center.

### **9.B FIRE**

Our building is inspected annually for fire safety and has a built-in smoke and fire alarm system and sprinklers. Fire drills will be practiced monthly.

### **9.C SEVERE WEATHER**

In cases of severe weather, students will be gathered together into an interior room or the Preschool hallways until the severe weather passes. Severe weather drills will be practiced 4 times per school year.

### **9.D SHELTER IN PLACE**

If the Health Department or municipal authorities ever notifies us to shelter in place, the preschool will be placed into "lockdown" mode. The exterior doors of our building will be locked, and children will remain in their classrooms with the doors locked. In this circumstance, no one (including parents) will be allowed to enter the building for any reason until the preschool is notified that the shelter in place requirement has been cancelled. Shelter in place drills will be practiced 4 times per school year.

### **9.E SCHOOL CLOSINGS**

SBCP will generally follow Katy ISD in deciding to close or delay start of the preschool due to inclement weather (hurricane watch, flooding, icing, etc.) The preschool will also close in the following cases: being without electricity for more than 2 hours, without water for more than 1 hour, Health Department concerns regarding the spread of illness, or adequate staffing is not available to maintain minimum required ratios. Being that we are a private school, and we have students and teachers that work different days, we will not make up any days.

## **10. FOOD POLICY**

SBCP does not serve or provide breakfast in the morning. As required by state Child Protective Services, parents must feed their child breakfast prior to arriving at school.

We are not able to refrigerate or heat snacks or lunches. Each child's parents are responsible to provide their morning snack and lunch each day. Snacks should be packed in their own separate container or baggy (labeled with their name) to be served mid-morning. For lunch, we ask that you pack a variety of healthy choices in easy open containers (no

glass). Please limit sweets. NO candy is allowed in snacks or lunches. We are a **PEANUT FREE SCHOOL**. This **policy** serves to set out all measures to reduce the risk to those children and adults who may suffer an anaphylactic reaction if exposed to nuts to which they are sensitive. ... We do not allow **peanuts or peanut products** in school lunch boxes or snacks bags.

Food should be prepared so that each child may eat independently. Foods that require cutting, especially those that present a choking hazard (hot dogs, raw carrots, grapes, etc.) must be pre-cut. If utensils are required, please provide those as well.

## **11. GUIDANCE AND DISCIPLINE**

Learning to walk in the light of Christ is God's educational goal for everyone and the highest calling of a Catholic school. Teaching each student to develop self-control and conduct themselves to act in loving and responsible ways is a lasting gift. Guidance and discipline shall be a positive ongoing process that teaches children how to effectively relate to others. We encourage the use of self-control, cooperation, problem-solving and redirection. Rarely, a short supervised separation time or "time out" is used but always at a developmentally appropriate level. SBCP will never use corporal punishment or negative discipline that may hurt or humiliate a child.

### **11.A EXPULSION POLICY**

To ensure a safe learning environment for all staff and students, it may be necessary for the director to dismiss the child from school. Thus, if corrective measures have not been successful and if the safety of the child, other children or staff is jeopardized, the director reserves the right to dismiss the child upon notification to the parent.

In cases involving physical misbehaviors (such as biting, hitting, kicking, etc.) the following measures will be applied: the first offense will result in a note to the parent sent home with the child along with a phone call to the parent by the teacher. For the second offense, the child will be taken to the director for a visit and the director will also make a phone call to the parent to discuss the incident. After the third offense the director will arrange a meeting with the parents and the child may be dismissed from school for a specified period of time or for the remainder of the school year.

## **12. HEALTH AND SAFETY**

### **12.A ALLERGIES**

It is the parent's responsibility to inform the school if their child has any allergies. This includes allergies to foods, insect bites, medications or other substances. Parents of children with allergies will be asked to provide documentation from their pediatrician that includes the details of the allergy and procedural guidelines in cases of an allergic reaction.

### **12.B BITING**

Biting is an issue we sometimes see in early childhood development, especially at the toddler stage. We try to prevent this from happening by offering great teacher to student ratios and a high level of attention for each child. However, if biting does occur, good communication between home and school will help to determine why a child is biting and to implement a plan to solve the issue. We will work quickly and closely with the child and parents to resolve any biting issues, but the preschool reserves the right to suspend or dismiss a child who injures other children (as stated in 11. Guidance and Discipline).

## **12.C DISPENSING OF MEDICATION**

SBCP will not administer medication to your child, except when required by severe allergic reactions, chronic illness or disability. In other cases, if a child is on regular doses of medication that fall within the school day, you may meet your child in the office to administer the medicine yourself.

If medication is required for severe allergies, chronic illness, or disability, the parents must fill out an Allergy Emergency Plan Form, Medication Authorization Form, and provide the medication in its original container, labeled with the up to date, accurate prescription label. The medicine will be locked and out of reach of the children and must be replaced when expired.

## **12.D SKIN CARE PRODUCTS**

Licensing regulations do not allow us to apply sunscreen or insect repellent to your child. Any concerned parents are encouraged to apply these products to your child before they get to school. Please ensure that these products, along with any hand sanitizer or medications are NOT kept in your child's backpack, as they pose a poison hazard to our children.

## **12.E ILLNESS**

Children who are ill should not attend preschool. SBCP has the responsibility to send home or deny entry to any child that shows signs of communicable illness. A child exhibiting any of the following symptoms must be kept home:

- Fever of 100.0 degrees or higher
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chills
- Nausea, vomiting or diarrhea
- Skin rash or sores
- Inflamed, swollen, heavy eye discharge or red eyes
- Heavy nasal discharge
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat

We have the right to request a Doctor's note to return to school at any time if it is in the best interest of *SBCP*. If you felt it was serious enough to seek medical assistance, please remember to ask for a Doctor's note to return to school while still at the Physician's office.

Children should be symptom free without medication for at least **48 hours** and be well enough to participate in outdoor activities before returning to school.

If a child becomes ill while in our care, parents will be contacted immediately to pick up the child. The student will be cared for apart from the other children until the parent arrives. If a parent cannot be reached or cannot pick up the child within a reasonable amount of time, emergency contacts will be called.

In cases of severe injury or illness, SBCP reserves the right to call an ambulance at the parent's expense.

## **12.F DISCLOSURE STATEMENT**

I understand that outside of care, in order to control my child's exposure in the community, I will comply with any and all state, county or local stay-at-home orders.

I will immediately notify SBCP Director if I become aware of any person with whom my child or I have had contact exhibits any of the symptoms listed above, is advised to self-isolate, quarantine, or has tested positive, or is presumed positive for COVID-19 or any other infectious illness. Further, I will immediately notify St. Bartholomew Catholic Preschool Director if anyone from my place of employment is presumed positive or tests positive for COVID-19 or any other infectious illness whether or not I have had direct contact with that person.

## **12.G INCIDENT/ACCIDENT REPORTS**

Should your child ever become ill or injured while in our care, we will complete an Incident/Accident Report on Brightwheel. The report will be sent to the parent shortly after the incident.

In cases of minor injuries and accidents, staff will administer basic first aid. If an injury is more significant and might require medical attention beyond that, the parent will be contacted. As stated in the Emergency Medical Treatment Authorization form you signed, SBCP reserves the right to access emergency medical care for your child in cases that require immediate attention.

## **12.H HEAD LICE (NO NITS POLICY)**

Head Lice, also called Pediculosis, represents one of the most common communicable childhood diseases, and it is important to acknowledge head lice as a problem when raising or caring for children. The school should be notified if your child has Pediculosis. SBCP and its employees must take all reasonable measures to help ensure that infested children do not join the group setting. It is more than fair to expect that uninfested children will be safeguarded while infested children will be cared for with sensitivity.

Students with nits (eggs) will be excluded from school until they are nit-free. All children excluded from school due to head lice and/or nits must be checked by the Director or Assistant Director before they will be allowed to return to school.

## **13. MANDATED REPORTING OF CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT**

The staff of SBCP is dedicated to the protection and welfare of all children and as mandated by the state of Texas and the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, we are required to immediately report any instance where there is reason to suspect the occurrence of physical, sexual, or emotional child abuse, child neglect, or exploitation.

We highly recommend all our parents to attend a child protection training provided for free by the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston called Safe Environment and Procedures for reporting suspected abuse or neglect of a child through the HHS at <https://hhs.texas.gov/> This training increases employee and parent awareness of issues regarding child abuse and neglect, including warning signs that a child may be a victim of abuse or neglect. This also increases employee and parent awareness of prevention techniques for child abuse and neglect. If you are interested, please contact the Director for more details.

Parents are also urged to report suspected child abuse to the 24-hour Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-252-5400.

## **14. PARENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Achieving an ideal environment at our preschool is not only the responsibility of the staff but is the responsibility of each and every adult who enters our building. Parents and other adults are required to behave in a manner that fosters this ideal environment.

### **14.A CELL PHONE POLICY**

Clear communication is imperative when working with young children and it is difficult to communicate when cell phones are in use. Parents may not use their cell phones while in a classroom (due to HHS regulations) or at any time during drop-off or pick-up. The children must be everyone's main focus at those times.

### **14.B CODE OF CONDUCT**

Parents must refrain from swearing, threatening or confrontational words or behavior, or smoking anywhere on the preschool grounds. Parents must also uphold the confidentiality policy (as detailed in 7. Confidentiality). Please keep in mind that our preschool is a place for children to feel safe and loved, and we ask that all act accordingly.

SBCP must follow and enforce the HHS standards regarding the use of discipline with children. *This includes situations where you are disciplining your own child while still on our property.* Parents must follow these guidelines that prohibit all negative discipline such as yelling, humiliation, and corporal punishment.

### **14.C CUSTODY ISSUES & COURT ORDERS**

If the child is the subject of a court order, SBCP must be provided with a certified copy of the most recent order and all its amendments. The orders of the court will be followed exactly as written. In the absence of a court order on file at the preschool, both parents will be given equal access and rights.

### **14.D VOLUNTEERING**

If you would like to volunteer at the preschool or have a special skill that you are willing to share, please let your child's teacher or the preschool office know.

All parents are welcome to attend All Saints Day Parade, Christmas Party, Donuts with Dad, Mother's Day Tea and End of the Year Party; however, no siblings please. This is a special time designated for you to spend with your child at the preschool. Parents who are volunteering with children must meet the requirements of the Archdiocese by attending a Safe Environment training. Here is the link for the free training <https://www.archgh.org/offices-ministries/office-of-child-and-youth-protection/safe-environment-training-for-adults/>

## **15. PARENT/TEACHER COMMITTEE**

SBCP is blessed to have a dedicated Parent/Teacher Committee made up of teachers and parents, who assist in planning fundraisers and special events.

If you'd like to become involved with the Parent/Teacher Committee, or wish to give feedback, please contact Rose or Norma.

## **16. STAFF**

### **16.A QUALIFICATIONS**

Every staff member is fully qualified by the standards of the Health and Human Services, including being First Aid and CPR certified. Staff members have experience working with young children that meets or exceeds the requirements set by the state. We are committed to continuing education and all our teachers and assistants receive at least 24 hours of training every year covering various areas of child development and best practices in early childhood education. Please see below for Health and Human Services required annual training topics. Every staff member is also background checked, fingerprinted and Safe Environment Trained.

At least six clock hours of the annual training hours **must** be in one or more of the following topics:

- (1) Child growth and development;
- (2) Guidance and discipline;
- (3) Age-appropriate curriculum; and
- (4) Teacher-child interaction.

For child care center directors:

- (5) Serving children with special care needs.

At least one clock hour of the annual training hours must focus on prevention, recognition, and reporting of child maltreatment, including:

- (1) Factors indicating a child is at risk for abuse or neglect;
- (2) Warning signs indicating a child may be a victim of abuse or neglect;
- (3) Procedures for reporting child abuse or neglect; and
- (4) Community organizations that have training programs available to employees, children, and parents.

If a caregiver provides care for children younger than 24 months of age, one clock hour of the annual training hours **must** cover the following topics:

Recognizing and preventing shaken baby syndrome and abusive head trauma;

Understanding and using safe sleep practices and preventing sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS); and

Understanding early childhood brain development.

The annual training hours **must** also include training on the following topics:

Emergency preparedness;

Preventing and controlling the spread of communicable diseases, including immunizations;

Administering medication, if applicable, including compliance with §746.3803 of this chapter (relating to What authorization must I obtain before administering a medication to a child in my care?); Preventing and responding to emergencies due to food or an allergic reaction; Understanding building and physical premises safety, including identification and protection from hazards that can cause bodily injury, such as electrical hazards, bodies of water, and vehicular traffic; and Handling, storing, and disposing of hazardous materials including compliance with §746.3425 of this chapter.

The remaining annual training hours must be in one or more of the following topics:

- (1) Care of children with special needs;
- (2) Child health (for example, nutrition, and physical activity);
- (3) Safety;
- (4) Risk management;
- (5) Identification and care of ill children;
- (6) Cultural diversity for children and families;
- (7) Professional development (for example, effective communication with families and time and stress management);
- (8) Topics relevant to the particular age group the caregiver is assigned (for example, caregivers assigned to an infant or toddler group should receive training on biting and toilet training);
- (9) Planning developmentally appropriate learning activities;
- (10) Observation and assessment;
- (11) Attachment and responsive care giving; and
- (12) Minimum standards and how they apply to the caregiver.

**Directors:**

(1) Five or fewer years of experience as a designated director of a child care center must complete at least six clock hours of the annual training hours in management techniques, leadership, or staff supervision;



(2) More than five years of experience as a designated director of a child care center must complete at least three clock hours of the annual training hours in management techniques, leadership, or staff supervision.

**Before Transporting Children:**

An employee and directors must complete **two hours** of annual training on transportation safety in order to transport a child whose chronological or development age is younger than nine years old. This training is in addition to other required training hours. The employee must obtain these two hours of transportation safety training prior to transporting children.

**16.B RATIOS**

SBCP is committed to providing low teacher to student ratios, better than those required by the state. By assigning one Teacher and one Assistant to every classroom, they can implement lesson plans and supervise children together. This allows us to offer more love and attention to each child.

**16.C TEACHER VACCINATION POLICY**

SBCP does not require teachers to receive adult immunizations. However, we encourage our staff to receive the Covid 19 vaccination.

**16.D RELATIONSHIP WITH PRESCHOOL FAMILIES**

Although we are a church community and many of us know each other personally outside of school, SBCP encourages teachers and parents to maintain a professional relationship in regard to preschool matters. Additionally, due to liability issues, we discourage staff members from accepting employment (babysitting, housesitting, carpooling, etc.) with our preschool families during the school year.

**17. GANG-FREE ZONE**

The state of Texas requires us to inform you that under the Texas Penal Code, any area within 1000 feet of a child-care center is a gang-free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to harsher penalty.

**18. OPEN AND CONCEALED CARRY**

You may be aware of recent changes in Texas law that went into effect on Jan. 1, 2016, regarding carrying firearms in open view in some locations. We would like to reassure you that SBCP has never allowed handguns or other prohibited weapons to be carried into our school facilities.

School grounds have been considered “gun-free” zones under the federal Gun-Free Schools Act that was enacted more than 20 years ago. Texas law also does not permit handguns or certain other weapons to be taken into any school buildings or carried anywhere that school-sponsored activities are taking place. Handguns and firearms are not allowed at any school-sponsored activities, regardless of whether the events or activities take place on or off school property or on school passenger vehicles like school buses.

**19. 2021-22 COVID PROTOCOLS**

Mask wearing – Staff and parents that are unvaccinated will be asked to wear masks in the facility. Any children or adults may exercise the option to wear a mask at any time. If a person is exhibiting allergy symptoms (such as a cough) may be encouraged to wear a mask to promote confidence to others. If community health conditions should change, then this policy may need to be reviewed.

Unvaccinated – If an unvaccinated person becomes exposed to a COVID positive person they will have to follow the current local health department recommendations at the time.

Washing & Disinfecting –

- Children, Staff & Parents disinfect hands before entering a classroom
- Before or after eating
- After coming in contact with bodily fluids
- After outdoor activities
- After using the restroom
- When moving from one group/room to another

Exclusion criteria for staff and children – If a staff member or child exhibit any signs or symptoms of any illness it is important for them to stay home. If a runny nose or cough is persistent, the child or staff member will be sent home. A note clearing the child or staff member for care will need to be provided from a doctor. Families with known allergies will be asked to stay on allergy medication regime to avoid being sent home. Morning and/or mid-day temp checks may be used as needed.

Parent access to school wide events – All school wide events that are held in large spaces or outdoors may include parents. However, events that would exceed classroom occupancy/capacity limits, may not include an invitation to parents. Capacity may be limited.

Volunteers – May be used again if they have completed their Safe Environment Training.

Class size and Ratio Requirements – Return to normal capacity.

Parent Drop off screening questions.

1. Does your child, anyone in the household, or anyone you have been in contact with presently have any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 like fever, cough, shortness of breath within the last 48 hours?
2. Has your child, anyone in your household, or anyone you have been in contact with had a fever or greater than 100.0 in the last 48 hours?
3. Has your child taken any fever reducing medication in the last 48 hours?
4. In the last 2 weeks has your child, anyone in the household, or anyone you have been in contact with tested positive for COVID-19, or assumed positive, but awaiting results from a COVID-19 test?

We will limit parents' time in the building to avoid long exposure.

Enhanced cleaning and disinfecting measures – The cleaning frequency and solutions required by childcare licensing will continue in compliance with minimum Standards using licensing acceptable cleaning products.

Travel – If a family (with unvaccinated members) travels on vacation/holiday or for any other reason, CDC guidelines for return from travel should be followed. Travel exclusions should be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

## **20. WITHDRAWAL**

Written notice at least 30 days must be given the first day of the month prior to the child withdrawing for any reason. In the event that proper notice is not given, parents are held liable for the next month's tuition.

# PARENT HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM

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These policies are subject to change at the discretion of the Director with explicit guidance from the Archdiocese and CDC guidelines.

Please initial the following statements:

\_\_\_\_\_ I have seen a copy of The St. Bartholomew Catholic Preschool Parent Handbook for the 21-22 school year.

\_\_\_\_\_ I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the policies outlined within.

\_\_\_\_\_ I agree to abide by these policies.

Name of Child(ren) \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Name (Please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_