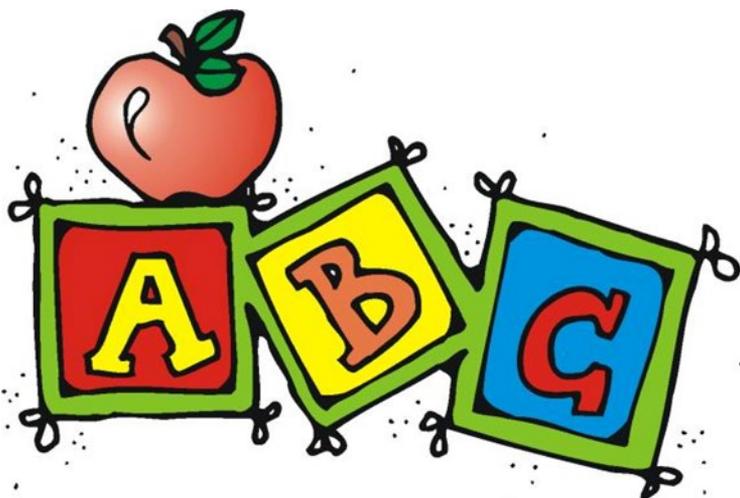


# Preschool Student-Parent Handbook



## **Diocese of Sioux Falls Parental Covenant**

*Since as parents we are the primary educator of our children, we will participate in the education of our children by:*

- . . . recognizing that all that we are and have is a gift from God
- . . . promoting positive attitudes toward school at home and in the community
- . . . bringing concerns about our child directly to the teacher
- . . . showing respect for the teacher as a professional person working for the well-being of our child
- . . . following the policies of the school
- . . . attending Mass on weekends and holy days with our children (Catholics)
- . . . participating in the sacramental life of the church regularly (Catholics)
- . . . promoting family prayer and faith traditions at home
- . . . volunteering and giving service to the school and parish (place of worship)
- . . . witnessing Gospel values in our everyday life
- . . . agreeing to not knowingly supply or assist any student in obtaining or using drugs or alcohol in my residence or any place where I am supervising students

# Bishop O’Gorman Catholic Schools Preschool Curriculum and Program Guide

The preschool program grows out of our mission:

***...to form a community of faith and learning by promoting a Catholic way of life through Gospel values and academic excellence.***

We are committed to preparing children for success at this very young age, as their experiences here will be the foundation for all future learning.

The Bishop O’Gorman Catholic Schools preschool program places a lead teacher in every classroom to attend to the social-emotional growth of each student, and to act as an instructional guide through age-appropriate lessons in literacy, mathematics, science, library, movement, self-regulation, and self-expression.

Students have the unique opportunity of celebrating Mass with the entire school community. They also have daily classroom and mealtime prayer. Preschool students participate in school-wide Advent and Lent projects, rosary prayer, and service projects. Students have the opportunity to learn about and experience their faith.



## **Our Guiding Statements of Belief:**

- Every child is special and can be successful, thus deserves multiple opportunities to succeed.
- Children learn best through play, inquiry, exploration, hands-on, and concrete experiences that allow learning to be fun.
- Children need to feel loved with positive reinforcement through teacher interaction.

## **Goals of Bishop O’Gorman Catholic Schools Preschool Education:**

- Faith: Foster spiritual development by teaching the faith through all areas of the curriculum and allowing children to experience the love of God.
- Academic: Prepare children socially and academically for Kindergarten utilizing a developmentally appropriate curriculum.
- Social: Develop social and emotional regulation
- Excitement: Foster excitement for learning.
- Introduce families to the Bishop O’Gorman Catholic Schools system.

# Preschool Curriculum

## Faith

Bishop O’Gorman Catholic Schools preschool program lives the mission to form a community of faith by promoting a Catholic way of life. It is important that preschoolers have a sense of being loved, understand God created all of us as unique and special, and are aware that God made people, holy things, the earth and all living things. Children attend Mass and pray in the classroom on a regular basis, therefore will master basic prayers of our faith. Preschool children participate in school-wide service projects.

## Social/Emotional Development

Social/Emotional development is a key component of children’s overall growth. These early years form the foundation that will be the basis of all future growth. Children need warm, responsive, and predictable environments where they can speak and are heard to thrive emotionally and socially. This will help them see themselves as individuals who are worthwhile and capable of learning.

## Literacy

Our preschool programs deliver a multifaceted approach to the development of literacy. The curriculum is based on research regarding the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that lead children to be successful readers and writers. Our literature rich curriculum focuses on oral language and vocabulary development through dramatic play, storytelling, and small group learning times.

## Math

Mathematical engagement happens across content areas. Mathematical concepts are incorporated into every area of the Preschool curriculum through intentional daily lessons. Students learn underlying mathematical operations in many of their daily activities which are highlighted by instruction geared toward creating meaningful connections between the children and the mathematical world around them.



## Science

As a result of their explorations and participation in simple investigations through play, children demonstrate an understanding of scientific inquiry, characteristics, life cycles, and environments of living things, and objects in the sky, and changes in the earth and sky.

## Social Studies

Through their explorations, play, and social interactions children demonstrate an understanding of groups and communities, recognize the passage of time and how the past influences the future, gain an understanding of their physical environment and its impact on daily living, and realize how people work together to grow, produce, distribute, and consume goods and services that meet their wants and needs.

## Health and Physical Development

Children demonstrate healthy habits and safe practices, engage in play and movement to develop gross (large) motor skills, and develop fine (small) motor skills.

## Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum

### 3 Year Old Curriculum

- Creative Curriculum by Teaching Strategies
- Social interaction through play
- Handwriting
- Religion curriculum
- Introduction to the alphabet, letter sounds, and numbers
- Indoor/Outdoor play
- Gross motor development
- Gross fine motor development
- Hands-on center-based activities

### 4 Year Old Curriculum

- Creative Curriculum by Teaching Strategies
- Phonics
- Gross and fine motor skills
- Hands-on center-based activities
- Social interaction through play
- Handwriting Without Tears
- Religion curriculum
- My Math McGraw-Hill Math curriculum
- Focus on the alphabet, letter sounds and numbers
- Indoor/Outdoor play
- Creative arts

### 5 Year Old Curriculum

- Creative Curriculum by Teaching Strategies
- Gross and fine motor skills
- Hands-on center-based activities
- Social interaction through play
- Handwriting Without Tears
- Religion curriculum
- My Math McGraw-Hill Math curriculum
- Phonics and sight words
- Focus on the alphabet, letter sounds and numbers
- Indoor/Outdoor play
- Creative arts

Preschool enrollment is open to any child, ages 3 through 5. Preschool students must be 3-years old on or before November 1 of the year of enrollment and must be fully toilet trained. There will be no discrimination in regard to sex, race, color, creed or political belief. Bishop O’Gorman Catholic Schools requires a Baptismal certificate (if Catholic) and a copy of current immunizations.

# Preschool Program Guide

## Attendance

Parents must notify the school office of student absences.

## Before and After School Care Program

Some elementary schools offer Before School Care and all elementary schools offer After School Care programs during the school year for an additional fee. The program runs in conjunction with the school year calendar and offers options for additional care when school is dismissed early or on days school is not in session (in-service, vacation, conference days, etc.) The Before and After School Care Program is not available on holidays and follows Bishop O’Gorman Catholic Schools emergency closing procedures. If you have questions or would like to participate, see the school principal.



## Behavior Expectations

Each child deserves to be in an excellent and safe learning environment. Bishop O’Gorman Catholic Schools strive to guide children in courtesy, kindness, respect, and self-discipline. Our program stresses positive support for appropriate behavior, sets clear limits, and promotes respect for the rights of others.

Our rules are simple: helping hands, kind words, listening ears, walking feet. These four rules encompass everything we expect of the children.

### Parent/Guardian will be contacted when:

- A child shows behaviors which are consistently disruptive to the rest of the class and/or require constant supervision by one teacher.
- A child shows aggressive behaviors which may hurt others.
- A child exhibits behaviors that are not age-appropriate.

## Birthdays

Schools recognize each child’s birthday in a special way. Summer birthdays may be celebrated during the school year as half birthdays.

If allowed, classroom treats (one per child) should be scheduled ahead of time with the classroom teacher. Parents should verify with the teacher if there are any food allergies in the class before sending treats. Nutritional treats are recommended. Homemade treats and soda are not allowed.

Treats must be packaged in the original container from the store with an ingredient label. This allows teachers to verify the ingredient list before serving them to students who have allergies. If treats are sent that do not comply with these guidelines, they may be returned home.

Due to potential health risks for students with allergies, latex balloons are not allowed in the classroom. Outside deliveries will be held in the school office and distributed at the principal's discretion to avoid interruptions to the school day.

Invitations to parties or special activities outside of school should not be sent to school or handed out during school time unless they are for the entire class (or all girls/boys). Disruptive activities, such as limos, singing telegrams, etc., are not allowed.

## **Emergency Closing**

In the event of school closing, late start, or early dismissal, parents will be notified through the SchoolMessenger Notification System. Parents should listen to the message before calling the school. An announcement will also be broadcast through social media and local television and radio stations.

**In the event of inclement weather where school is not cancelled or postponed, parents are encouraged to use their discretion in sending their child to school or picking them up early. If you decide not to send your child to school, please notify the school office.**

**School Cancellation:** School cancellations must be authorized by the Bishop O’Gorman Catholic Schools President. Closing announcements will be made through the SchoolMessenger Notification System as well as various media sources. Notification will be made as early as possible on the day of such closing.

**Early Dismissal:** Should school be closed after students arrive, parents will be notified utilizing SchoolMessenger and various media sources. Students will be supervised and released to their parents or legal guardian per emergency card information unless the school is notified by said persons as to other dismissal arrangements.

**Late Starts:** In the event of a late start, parents will be notified utilizing SchoolMessenger and various media sources as early as possible. A **“one-hour late start”** delays all normal school start procedures by exactly one hour from regular start time. All classes/activities then follow a normal school day schedule with dismissal at the regular time. A **“two-hour late start”** cancels morning only preschool classes; however, students registered in Preschool Plus programs may report to school two hours late and finish the school day. Afternoon preschool classes will run at normal times and are not affected by the late start.

## Field Trips or Activities

Occasional field trips provide a learning experience for students. Teachers will inform parents in writing about field trips.

Parent drivers are required to complete the volunteer driver's process, which includes signing a volunteer driver form, on-line safe environment training, and a background check if volunteering more than once.



Drivers are asked not to bring drinks or treats for students on field trips or to stop anywhere to pick up “treats” during field trips unless permission has been prearranged with the principal. Drivers should not make unauthorized stops and movies and radio stations in vehicles should be “G-rated” and appropriate.

## Health/Medical Procedures

In the event a child becomes ill or seriously injured during school, an immediate effort will be made to contact the parent and/or person indicated on the emergency file. In the event of serious injury or illness, and failure to reach a responsible party, the principal or adult supervisor will exercise reasonable judgment with reference to contacting emergency service (per the student's emergency/medical form information). **It is critical that each student's emergency information be kept current.**

The health program at Bishop O’Gorman Catholic Schools is serviced by the University of Sioux Falls or Augustana University student nurses, under the supervision of their nursing instructors and includes various health screenings. If health concerns are detected, a referral form will be sent home to the parent/guardian. This form should be signed and returned to the school. Parents/guardians of students with ongoing health conditions should complete and keep current a Health Services Request Form/Student Medical Care Plan, which will be kept on file in the school office. A Health Services Request Form must be on file for any student requiring medication. The school office and teachers should be made aware of any unusual or serious health conditions that a child possesses (as noted on a Health Services Request Form/Student Medical Care Plan).

**Dispensing of Medication:**

Prescription and non-prescription medication should, whenever possible, be dispensed by a parent or guardian. However, Bishop O’Gorman Catholic Schools will permit the dispensing of only FDA-approved prescription and non-prescription medication by school designated personnel and sports medicine personnel who have successfully completed medication administration training by a licensed health care professional and when the medication is administered in accordance with this policy/administrative regulation. **Bishop O’Gorman Catholic Schools acknowledges that its personnel have limited knowledge of administering medication to students and reserves the right to refuse to administer medication at its full discretion.** Students with food allergies, asthma, diabetes or other medical conditions that may require a medical care plan or who depend on medication in order to stay in school, and whose parents/guardians cannot be present to dispense it, must follow the procedures as deemed appropriate.

**Conditions Requiring a Medical Care Plan and/or Prescription Drugs/Over the Counter Medications:**

1. Parents/guardians requesting that staff be aware of a specialized medical care plan for their child that does not require staff to administer medication, complete the ***Health Services Request Form A – Student Medical Care Plan***.
2. Parents/guardians requesting that staff administer medication during the school day for their child need to fill out ***Health Services Request Form B – Administration of Medication during the School Day***. Parents/guardians must bring the medication in to the office.
  - a. Prescribed medication must be FDA-approved and in a container provided by the pharmacy with a label which includes date, student name, doctor name and dosage. Prescription medication must be brought to the Administration Office in the morning, and the student should return when it is time to take the medication.
  - b. Non-aspirin products (ex. acetaminophen/ibuprofen) will be administered to students upon parent/guardian or student request, provided parental/guardian consent has been granted as indicated on the online re-enrollment platform. Any other medications should be brought to school only when they are accompanied by a parent’s/guardian’s written orders and should be submitted in its original container.
  - c. No medication shall be administered by any school personnel except on the written orders of the parent/guardian. All medications shall be kept in the office in a locked cabinet/drawer and managed by school personnel trained in medication administration.

- d. Any student with asthma or anaphylaxis may possess and self-administer prescription medication while on school property or at a school-related event or activity if:
  - o The prescription medication has been prescribed for that student as indicated by the prescription label on the medication; and
  - o The self-administration is done in compliance with the prescription or written instructions from the student's physician or other licensed health care provider.
3. If a food intolerance and/or food allergy is involved, the parent/guardian must also complete **Health Services Request Form C – Food Intolerance/Allergy Action Plan**, which will be shared with staff and food service personnel and followed as prescribed by physician.
4. All Health Services Request Forms are available in the school office.

**Conditions Requiring Staff Administration of an Epinephrine Auto-Injector to a Student:**

1. Prior to administering an epinephrine auto-injector made available by the school, each qualified staff member (and sports medicine personnel) shall be trained by a licensed health care professional to:
  - a. To recognize the symptoms of a severe allergy or anaphylactic reaction;
  - b. To know the procedure for the administration of an epinephrine auto-injector;
  - c. To know the procedure for storage of an epinephrine auto-injector; and
  - d. To know the emergency care and aftercare for a student who has an allergic or anaphylactic reaction. Emergency medical services will be activated for any student who receives Epinephrine.
2. Qualified staff members (and sports medicine personnel) may administer an epinephrine auto-injector to a student in accordance with a prescription specific to that student.
3. Qualified staff members (and sports medicine personnel) may administer an epinephrine auto-injector to any student during school hours or at a school event if they believe that the student is experiencing anaphylaxis.

**Misuse of All Medication:**

1. A student is prohibited from transferring, delivering or receiving any medication to or from another student.
2. If any student uses the medication in a manner other than prescribed, the medication will be confiscated, and the student may be subject to disciplinary action by the school and will no longer be allowed to carry and self-administer medication.

### **Conditions Involving an Illness or Accident:**

1. No student will be allowed to go home from school because of illness without first notifying the parents and principal or his/her designee.
2. Parents/guardians are asked NOT to request that teachers keep a child indoors at recess. If a child is not well enough to play outside, he/she should be kept home. In special cases, permission will be granted, with written request from a physician.
3. Students will only be excused from a gym class with a written note given to the physical education instructor, stating the timeframe and reason why the student is unable to participate.
4. Every accident or injury that occurs on Bishop O’Gorman Catholic Schools property and causes bodily harm must be reported to the principal and parent/guardian. If treatment is needed other than what can be provided at school, a copy of the report will also be sent to the president’s office (e.g. stitches, concussion, broken bone).
5. Children occasionally contract communicable diseases or conditions, which require that they be excluded from school. In the event a child contracts a communicable disease or condition (chicken pox, impetigo, head lice, scabies, strep infections, ring worm, etc.), the parent/guardian should notify their child’s school. In order for students to return to school, please refer to the SD Department of Health website regarding infectious disease facts: <http://doh.sd.gov/diseases/infectious/diseasefacts>. In the event a child has pink eye (conjunctivitis), the child may be excluded from school or asked to see their physician based on circumstances (e.g. weeping, mattery eye if the child is in close proximity to others, early childhood classrooms where children may not wash hands well, etc.).
6. If your child contracts a contagious disease, please inform school personnel so they can take preventative measures at school. If a “pandemic” situation arises, school officials will work closely with officials from the South Dakota Department of Health, City of Sioux Falls. and the Diocese of Sioux Falls to keep parents updated, advised and informed.

**Parents are asked NOT to request that teachers keep a child indoors at recess. If a child is not well enough to play outside, he/she should be kept home. In special cases, permission will be granted, with written request from a physician.**

### **Insurance/Liability Waiver**

Parents are advised that students are not covered and/or provided with insurance through Bishop O’Gorman Catholic Schools for injuries (including dental) caused by accidents while at school or attending a school activity. If they wish, parents may seek private accident insurance, through an insurance company of their choosing. Parents are responsible for all medical expenses for their child (including

ambulance calls during the school day). Prior to their child's participation in a field trip or special activity, parents will be required to sign a consent/liability waiver form (agreeing to hold harmless Bishop O'Gorman Catholic Schools with regard to any claim in connection with any illness or injury or cost of medical treatment arising from or as a result of their child's participation or attendance at the event).

## Items From Home

Students should not bring items of value (toys, electronics, etc.) to school and Bishop O'Gorman Catholic Schools will not be responsible for damage or loss.

## Parent Involvement

Parents are welcome to visit school. Please contact the teacher at least one day in advance of the time you would like to visit. Remember, all visitors (including parents) must check in at the school office. It is recommended that visits to preschool be deferred for several weeks at the start of the school year. This allows preschool students time to make a smooth adjustment to school.

Parents will have two scheduled conferences throughout the school year. This is a great opportunity to set aside time to ask questions or share concerns. If you have questions or concerns or would like to check on your child's involvement our teachers will be available to visit with you.



Student report cards will be provided in October, February, and the end of the school year.

## Pictures

A professional photographer will be available to all students providing an opportunity for parents to purchase school pictures.

## School Safety

The school environment, including the buildings, playground, and parking lot must be safe and secure for everyone and for that reason exterior doors are locked at all schools throughout the school day. Parents and visitors need to drive slowly, watch for children in school zones, and follow designated parking lot safety routes.

Safety drills are practiced each school year so that students are aware of proper procedures. Fire, tornado, evacuation and lockdown drills are practiced at various times throughout the year.

## School Supplies

Students should bring a large school bag/backpack every day which is labeled with their name. This promotes responsibility and organization.

## School Uniform

Bishop O’Gorman Catholic Schools has a uniform policy for all PK-6 students. Uniforms provide students with a sense of identity and membership. They help to eliminate class distinctions and affirms our belief that a student’s understanding of self should be based upon faith, character, and Christian dignity, not outward appearance. Students are required to wear uniforms on all days except those specified as dress up/down days by administration.



**Please mark uniform components to aid in the return of lost items.** All unclaimed items will be placed in the school’s lost and found. Unclaimed items are displayed for identification by parents at conference times and at the end of the school year. Items that have not been claimed are donated to charity.

**Pants (Boys/Girls):** Navy blue color (twill or ponte pants only), and worn at the natural waistline. **Pant guidelines: no decorations, prints, denim, royal blue color, jogging pants, or cargo/capri/carpenter styles.** Preschool - 2<sup>nd</sup> grade girls may wear navy blue stretch pants (ankle length). Pants following these guidelines may be purchased from local vendors or the Dennis Uniform Company.

**Shirts:** White shirts of any style and sleeve length with a collar or turtleneck. All shirts must be tucked in. No decorations, logos, contrasting colors, t-shirts, undershirts or tank tops. Preferred shirts: polo, collared, cotton, turtlenecks, or mock-turtlenecks. Shirts following these guidelines may be purchased through local vendors or the Dennis Uniform Company and with logo through SFO.

**Sweaters/Sweatshirts/Fleece:** Royal blue sweatshirts with logo are available for purchase through the school. Navy blue pull-over or cardigan sweaters may be ordered through Dennis Uniform Co. or local vendor. Collared shirts must be worn

under sweaters and sweatshirts. A navy blue fleece jacket with logo (optional) may be ordered purchased through the school.

**Shorts (Boys/Girls):** Navy blue walking shorts just above the knee may be worn from the start of school to October 31 and again beginning April 1 through the last day of school. Styles should be the same as uniform pant and worn at the natural waistline. Shorts following these guidelines may be purchased through local vendors or the Dennis Uniform Company.

**Skirts/Jumpers/Skorts:** Optional uniform plaid skirts or jumpers in royal blue plaid are available **only** through the Dennis Uniform Company. Navy blue skorts may be purchased through local vendors or the Dennis Uniform Company. Uniform skirts/jumpers/skorts must be no shorter in length than just above the knee. Solid colored black, white, and navy blue leggings and/or stretch pants (ankle length) may be worn with the skirt or jumper.

**Shoes:** Tennis shoes are recommended. Flat soled shoes that do not go above the ankle are acceptable. Clogs and fashion boots are not permitted.

**Socks:** Socks, with no color restrictions, must be worn with all types of shoes or sandals. Sandals must have backstraps.

**General:** Some clothing fringes on violating the intent of the uniform policy. Since we are unable to list all exceptions to the uniform policy, we ask for student and parent cooperation by wearing styles congruent with the intended code. Dress down attire must be appropriate and any exceptions to policy must be approved. Extreme hairstyles are not allowed (per administrative discretion). Students are to keep their natural hair color with only minimal tinting allowed. Boys' hair length must be above collar. As the uniform policy is scheduled for a full review in the 2023-24 school year, an exemption based on race, religion or national origin will be considered for hair length for the 2023-24 school year. Contact administration for the exemption process.

**Alternative Dress:** On specified occasions, students have the option of dressing down or dressing up from the regular dress code. These days will be announced in advance and must be pre-approved. The following regulations apply on these days:

- **Casual Dress Days**
  - No offensive writing on the shirts/blouses.
  - Shirts/blouses must cover the midriff and be long enough to be tucked in.
  - No tank tops or frayed, tattered or torn clothing.
  - Shorts must be no shorter in length than just above the knee

- Socks, stockings or tights must be worn. Pants should not be excessively tight. Leggings may not be worn as pants. Students in K-2<sup>nd</sup> grade may wear stretch pants. Administrator discretion will be applied to identify appropriate dress.
- **Dress Up Days**
  - Better than uniform policy attire.
  - Socks, stockings or nylons must be worn.
  - Dress attire must be appropriate for the occasion.
  - Skirts and dresses must be no shorter in length than just above the knee.

**Please send an extra change of clothes (labeled) to keep in school bag for “emergencies”.**