



NOTRE  
DAME  
ACADEMY

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PreK and Young Scholars  
Parent Handbook  
2016-2017

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## **Notre Dame Academy Preschool Philosophy**

The Notre Dame Academy Preschool Program allows children to begin their journey in education with dedicated teachers who are here for the love of children and excellence in Catholic education.

At Notre Dame Academy Preschool, we believe in educating the whole child. Preschoolers will participate in hands-on learning to promote spiritual, social/emotional, language, and cognitive and physical development. Our Catholic learning environment encourages creativity, individuality and positive self-esteem.

### **Programs and Educational Methods**

The 2-day program is designed for children who will be experiencing their first preschool classroom. The curriculum for this class is designed to provide children with social opportunities that allow children to experience peer and group relationships. Daily lessons include: expressive arts, dramatic play, religion, language arts, fine and large motor exercises. Children participate in the S.M.A.R.T. training to enhance their coordination, visual skills and balance. Children must be two by the start of school in order to attend the two-day program.

The 3-day program is designed for children who have had a previous preschool experience, although children new to preschool are welcome. This class builds on the children's social development with emphasis placed on cognitive development. Lessons include: language arts, writing, pre-math skills, pre-literacy, science, religion, character education, fine and large motor development. Children participate in the S.M.A.R.T. program. Children must be three by the September 1 in order to attend the three-day program.

The Young Scholars program, which meets five days a week, is specifically designed to prepare your child both socially and academically for Kindergarten. Children will continue to develop their social skills while practicing and learning new skills and continue S.M.A.R.T. training. This program is open to children who will have turned four years old by September 1. This program is designed for students who will be attending Kindergarten the following fall.

## **Admission**

Notre Dame Academy preschool is licensed for children age's two years old to five years old with no more than 24 children per class. All preschoolers must be toilet trained to attend the 3 and 5-day programs.

A student's enrollment is complete once the school has received the completed registration form accompanied by the non-refundable registration fee. In the case of waiting lists, the registration fee will be returned if NDA preschool does not have an opening for your child by September 1st.

## **School Year Calendar**

NDA operates Monday-Friday with classes in the AM and PM. NDA Preschool will follow the same break schedule as Notre Dame Academy School.

Classes for 2 and 3 year olds run from 9 – Noon or from 1:00 – 3:55 p.m.  
Full day classes for Young Scholars are from 9 – 3:55 p.m.

## **Attendance**

If your child will miss class, for illness or any other reason, please call or e-mail the school at 952-358-3500 or email [office@nda-mn.org](mailto:office@nda-mn.org). You are also encouraged to email your child's specific classroom teacher. If your child will miss three or more classes in a row, please notify your child's teacher.

## **Arrival**

Classes begin at 9:00 a.m. Parents may drop off children at the church entrance where the teachers will be waiting beginning at 8:45 a.m. Teachers will take the students in by 8:55 a.m. If you arrive after that time, please go to the school entrance, park in visitor parking and bring your child up to the classroom doors. Children are not to walk to class alone, each child must be accompanied into the building by an adult and supervised at all times.

## **Departure**

Classes end at noon and 3:55p.m. Noon pick up will take place at the school door. Please wait along the curb and wait for your child to be walked to the car. It is important that children are picked up promptly. If your child is not picked up by 12 noon, they will be brought to the NDA school office.

All children in the afternoon or 5-day program will be brought to carpool as a class at the end of each day, unless other arrangements are made prior. All preschoolers are dismissed to the Church doors. If you are late picking your child up from carpool, your child will be brought to the NDA school office.

**Authorized Persons:** At the beginning of the school year parents must have an authorized pick up form completed and returned the school. IT IS THE PARENT(S) OR GUARDIANS RESPONSIBILITY TO NOTIFY THE TEACHER OF ANY CHANGES IN THE NAMES OF PERSONS AUTHORIZED OR NOT AUTHORIZED TO PICK UP THEIR CHILD. WE WILL RELEASE CHILDREN TO AUTHORIZED PERSONS ONLY.

If necessary, photo identification may be requested by the school prior to the child being released.

\*A child will be held with a teacher if a parent(s), caregiver or pick up person is suspected of abuse, of being intoxicated, or under the influence of illegal substances.

**Copies of the most recent legal documentation (such as custody agreements) must be provided to the school PRINCIPAL before any staff person can actively prevent a child from being picked up by a non-custodial parent.**

### **Tuition**

The operation of NDA Preschool is dependent on maintaining current tuition accounts; therefore, timely tuition payment is required. Tuition will not be refunded for absences, illnesses, holidays or non-school days. All tuition will be collected through the TADS system. Should the tuition payments for a child become delinquent, the parents will be required to withdraw the child from the program until the tuition account is brought up to date.

### **Withdrawing Your Child**

If a parent should select to remove their child from Notre Dame Academy Preschool, a one-month notification is required. You will be charged for tuition through the month; regardless of the day your child finishes attending.

### **Communication**

Parent-Teacher Conferences are scheduled twice during the school year. The first conference is held in the fall and the second is held in the spring. The cognitive, social/ emotional, language, and motor development of each child will be discussed during conferences and kept as documentation in their file.

We invite daily communication between the parents and teacher. However, if you have a concern or issue you would like to discuss which would require in depth discussion, please schedule a time to meet with the teacher. Please feel free to e-mail or call the teacher with any urgent concerns during non-

class times. Calls will returned when the children have left the room or at then beginning or end of the day.

## **Discipline**

Children attending Notre Dame Academy Preschool are expected to behave in a considerate manner towards both children and adults. As part of classroom management, the staff encourages positive behavior and redirects inappropriate behavior. Children will not be allowed to strike, hit, bite or verbally assault another child or teacher.

The procedures listed below will be followed as necessary:

- The child is redirected
  
- The teacher takes the child aside or directs them to a quiet activity
  
- The child is placed in a time out for 2-3 minutes. We refer to this area as the "watching chair." The watching chair gives the student the opportunity to observe the expected behavior and have a little space.

We use the time out technique is used as a last resort. If the inappropriate behavior is a consistent challenge, a teacher-parent conference will be scheduled.

A child may be removed from the program if one or all of the following behaviors exist:

- The child poses a threat to self, staff or other children.
  
- The child behaves in a manner that is difficult to manage in a large group.
  
- The child or parent(s) use abusive or threatening language towards other children or the staff.
  
- The teacher and principal's professional judgment is that the child cannot function effectively in the program.

It is the policy of NDA preschool to hold a conference with the parent(s) to discuss the infraction before the child is removed from the program. However, if a situation occurs that jeopardizes the immediate welfare of the children and/or staff, NDA reserves the right to dismiss the child immediately.

A parent may appeal the decision made by the teacher/director by filing a grievance with the school Principal and following the due process policy.

## **Grievance Procedure**

If a parent has a concern, he or she is to contact the Teacher/Director immediately. Action will be taken promptly to correct the situation. If the grievance is against a teacher, the Principal will promptly counsel with the teacher and develop a plan for correcting the situation. All parents are encouraged to openly communicate with the staff. The parent will be notified of the action plan within 24 hours.

## **Health and Safety**

\*\* Since NDA preschool staff will not administer medication to children in the half-day program. In rare cases, medication is necessary and will doctor and signed instructions and permission prescribe administered only if from parent(s). If a child is in the full day program, and needs medication, please contact the school nurse or office staff.

Children should not be brought to school if they are not feeling well. The preschool staff will not let a child attend if they show the following signs/symptoms:

- Temperature of or exceeding 100 degrees in the last 24 hours
- Vomiting within the last 24 hours
- Diarrhea within 24 hours
- Rash of unknown origin or Chicken Pox
- Contagious conjunctivitis
- Unexplained lethargy
- Excessive coughing, nasal discharge, etc.... if the child has a bacterial infection such as strep throat or impetigo and has not completed 24 hours of antibiotics.
- Lice, Ringworm, or Scabies that is unrelated and contagious to others.
- Cannot participate in all program activities including outdoor play.

If a child should become ill during the school day:

- The parents will be called.
- They will be sent to the school nurse
- If the school nurse is unavailable then the child will remain with the office staff in a comfortable location until the parent or authorized person(s) picks them up.

In the case of an emergency or serious injury, the staff will immediately call 911. The staff will then contact the parent(s). If the parent cannot be reached, the emergency contacts indicated on the emergency card will be contacted. The preschool staff is certified in CPR and First Aid and will administer when necessary.

## **Child Records**

All children must have a completed paperwork in a file in the child's

classroom. NO CHILD WILL BE ALLOWED TO ATTEND WITH INCOMPLETE RECORDS FILES. Files are kept Confidential. State required forms are given to the parents after registration is received. Please note a MD must sign the health care summary and all forms including immunization record must be received within 30 days of enrollment.

### **Pets**

Due to allergies and health concerns, NDA does not have pets in their classroom. Parents wishing to bring animals in for show and tell must clear it through the Principal first.

### **Snack and Sharing**

Each child will have designated snack and sharing weeks throughout the school year. A monthly snack and sharing schedule will be distributed to parents. Please provide a healthy snack for the number of children in your child's class and the teacher(s). All snacks must be purchased, not homemade. The teacher will provide you with a list of any food allergies in your child's class, please be aware and keep these in mind when selecting snack items. Along with snack, please provide beverage to drink. The beverage must be milk or a juice product that is 100% juice. We do have a small refrigerator in the classroom if an item must be kept chilled.

During his/her snack week, each child is given the opportunity to bring two sharing items. Please help your child pick out a favorite book to share with the class and one special toy or stuffed animal that the child can speak about.

Snack weeks have been scheduled to align with your child's birthday celebration. Half birthdays will be celebrated for summer birthdays. Please feel free to bring a treat on your child's birthday celebration day!

### **Lunch Program**

Children in the full day program may participate in school lunch or bring their lunch from home. Milk may be purchased separately. Should you wish to purchase a hot lunch or milk, your child will be given a lunch account and you will be required to deposit funds into the account to cover the costs. If you are in the half day program and wish to have your child eat a school lunch, please see the teacher.

### **Lunch Room Policy**

**\*Children are supervised at all times by qualified staff.**

- Leave seat only for tray clean up and for dismissal.
- Speak in conversational tone.

- Clean up your eating area.
- Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself.
- Treat cafeteria property and the property of others with respect.
- Listen and follow instructions the first time to teachers and supervisors.
- Do not trade food (allergy concerns).

### **Nap and Rest Time**

Rest or naptime is required by the state. Children are supplied with their own individual cot. Parents are to please bring a blanket, towel or sheet to put on their child's cot. If the parents choose to bring a pillow it must be a travel size pillow as sanitation rules state that a child's belongings must not touch each other's cots. Parents may also bring a cuddle toy that is soft if it makes the child feel secure. A child is not required to sleep, but are asked to rest quietly. A child will be given the option after 30 to 45 minutes of rest to read, draw or do a clam or quite activity. This applies to children who are at NDA for a full day program.

### **School Closings**

In the event of a severe weather or emergency, NDA Preschool will follow any NDA school closings or delays. Any such closing will be announced on local radio and television stations. There will be no morning preschool in the event of a delayed school starting time due to weather or emergency.

### **Clothing**

Since preschool is an active learning environment with many hands-on activities, the children's clothing should be comfortable and washable. Shorts or leggings must be worn under skirts and dresses.

An extra set of clothing should always be kept in a zip lock bag in your child's backpack. Clothing and the bag should be labeled with your child's name. We will keep the clothing in your child's locker or cubby.

### **Personal Belongings**

Please do not allow your child to bring toys to school other than on sharing days. This includes jewelry and distracting items of clothing. NDA is not responsible for lost or broken toys/ objects brought from home.

### **Field Trips**

Three and five day preschoolers will go on field trips occasionally throughout the school year. A signed permission slip and payment of any field trip fee will be required before a child can participate. The teacher will ask for chaperones as needed for additional field trips supervision. Parents who wish to volunteer must first complete a background check, a code of conduct,

and VIRTUS training as required by the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis. Please contact the business manager if you have questions on these matters or to confirm that your Essential 3 are current.

We try to give parents one opportunity to attend a field trip during the year. So if you are not chosen for the first one, you may be contacted for a trip later in the year.

### **Classroom Involvement**

All parents that would like to volunteer or participate in preschool activities must complete a background check and attend a VIRTUS training session. Please request the necessary forms from the Preschool Director. To summarize, no parent may volunteer with the students in any capacity without submitting a background check and attending VIRTUS training. Parents may visit the classroom during the hours of operation by contacting the director.

### **Family Projects**

Each month there will be a family project sent home with your child. These projects give families an opportunity to engage with their preschooler to create a home and school connection that focuses on a particular unit of study or tradition. These projects will also give families an opportunity to come together and practice creativity and fine motor skills. Directions, due dates and some materials will be sent home at the beginning of each month.

### **Take Home Folders**

Each child will be given a folder at the beginning of the school year that will be used to bring papers, projects and information back and forth to school. Please make sure to check your child's folder each night and keep your child's folder in their backpack. Any notes to the teacher can be placed in the folder, as we check folders at the start of each day.

School communication folders are sent home on Thursdays. These should be gone through and returned on Friday.

### **Visitors**

Parents are welcome to visit the class at any time. If relatives or friends would like to visit our classroom they are also welcome anytime. However, the parents of the child must accompany them.

### **Licensing**

NDA preschool is licensed by the State of Minnesota. If there are questions or concerns about NDA preschool and their licensing, contact the department of Human Services, Division of Licensing

at 651-431-6500

**Amendment**

NDA preschool retains the right to amend the parent handbook at any time. Parents will be notified in writing if changes are made.

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I have read the Notre Dame Academy preschool parent handbook and understand the policies and procedures.

Parent/Guardian\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name\_\_\_\_\_ PK 3 Young Scholars

