

faithful 
beginnings

at Divine Mercy
Catholic School

Preschool Parent Handbook
and Policies
2020-2021

Educating Children since 1986

Mother Samuel Building

104 Second Ave. S.W. Faribault, MN 55021

Phone: (507) 334-7706

DMCS Campus

15 Third Ave. S.W. Faribault, MN 55021

Phone: (507) 334-7706 Fax: (507) 332-2669

Department of Human Services Division of Licensing

Phone: (651) 431-6500

Mrs. Regina Ashley - Principal

Email: gashley@dmcs.cc

Mrs. Elodie Metro - Preschool Director/Teacher

Email: emetro@dmcs.cc



MISSION & PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

A community grounded in faith, dedicated to the development of the whole child: mind, body, and soul.

Illuminating Minds. Cultivating Faith

“Christ is the foundation of the whole education enterprise in a Catholic School” (The Catholic School #34)

In a faith filled atmosphere, the message of Christ takes priority and becomes integral in all areas of school activities. Our school emphasizes academic areas and provides a strong Catholic foundation for a child to continue his/her Christian life in society.

Divine Mercy Catholic School seeks to address the individual learning needs of its children, by providing sound Christian leadership, creative and competent teaching, a progressive curriculum, and innovative learning programs. Divine Mercy Catholic School encourages children to academic and moral excellence. We prepare them to assume their proper roles in Church and society and develop in them a respect for all peoples and cultures.

LICENSING

The Minnesota Department of Human Services has licensed Faithful Beginnings at DMCS Preschool. We are allowed by state regulations to care for twenty 36 months old by September 1st to five years-old children per classroom.

HOURS AND DAYS OF OPERATION

Our DMCS Preschool Program is in operation all year round, Monday through Friday, from 7:00am-5:30pm. We offer the following program options to fit your needs:

SESSIONS

Early Learners

5 Day Half Day (M-F) 7:00 am-11:00 am

5 Day All Day (M-F) 7:00 am-5:30 pm

3 Day Half Day (M, W, F) 7:00 am-11:00 am

3 Day All Day (M, W, F) 7:00 am-5:30 pm

Kindergarten Readiness

5 Day Half Day (M-F) 7:00 am-12:00 pm

5 Day All Day (M-F) 7:00 am-5:30 pm

3 Day Half Day (M, W, F) 7:00 am-12:00 pm

3 Day All Day (M, W, F) 7:00 am-5:30 pm

ATTENDANCE

All teachers will keep record of attendance through Power School. If your child is ill or will be absent, please contact your child's teacher or call DMCS at 507-334-7706.

SUMMER SCHOOL PROGRAM

DMCS Preschool Summer Program is in operation from June to August, Monday through Friday, from 7:00am - 5:30pm. This program is an extended year program option that starts when our regular preschool classes end. Weekly tuition will be billed separately through TADS.

BATHROOM HABITS

All children MUST be fully potty-trained before starting preschool. We understand that the occasional bathroom accident may occur, but due to staffing and facilities, all students must be fully potty-trained before starting classes.

SCHOOL CALENDAR AND EMERGENCY CLOSING

DMCS Preschool will follow the same calendar as DMCS grades K-6 except for conference dates. Parents will be notified of Holidays and Teacher Workdays in the weekly newsletter. This information may also be found online at www.dmcs.cc.

If weather conditions cause Faribault Public Schools to close, DMCS will also be closed. The radio does not specify DMCS Preschool. KDHL (920 AM) radio will carry any school closing announcements. 2 hour late starts will be announced in the same manner. On a 2-hour late start day, children can be dropped off in their classroom starting at 9:00am. **There will be no half day classes on late start days.**

OPTIONAL-CARE DAYS

Throughout the school year, there will be several non-school days that optional-care will be open. For these days, there will be a sign-up posted in the preschool building for parents to sign their child up. Optional care is offered to **full day students only and must fall on a day that the child would regularly be in class**. For example, if a child attends school only on Tuesdays and Thursdays, he could NOT sign up for Optional care on a Monday, Wednesday, or Friday. Or if a child only attends school on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, he could NOT sign up for Optional care offered on a Tuesday or Thursday. In order to attend Optional care on a specific day, your child must be signed up. If your child is signed up to attend optional care on a specific day, and care is no longer needed, you must contact your child's teacher by 3:00pm on the business day prior to the Optional Care day. If your child is signed up and doesn't attend (and the teacher is not contacted), a fee of \$10 will be billed to your TADS account.

PRESCHOOL DROP-OFF PROCEDURES

Parents please enter the BA parking lot from the 3rd Avenue entrance. Turn right towards 1st Street SW and proceed to the designated parking area. You may also park on 1st Street SW and exit onto 2nd Avenue. Please note that all designated parking spots are for 5 minutes only, as we discourage idling vehicles for extended periods of time while in proximity to our school. Also, due to limited space, please be as expedient as possible.

Please escort your child to his/her preschool classroom in the Mother Samuel building. You may only enter through Entrance 10, as all other doors will remain locked. Entrance 10 will be unlocked and monitored by staff at 7:00am each morning and then will be promptly locked at 8:05am. If your child will be dropped off after 8:05am, please notify your child's teacher.

PRESCHOOL PICK-UP PROCEDURES

Please enter the parking lot at BA from 3rd Avenue SW. Proceed to the designated drop-off/pick-up area in front of the Mother Samuel Building or on 1st Street SW. Come into the building to pick up your child. Due to limited parking space, please be as expedient as possible. You may only enter through Entrance 10. There is a doorbell at entrance 10 to use when picking up your child. Please ring the doorbell and a staff member will let you in. If your child will be picked up before 3:00pm, please notify your child's teacher. On days when there is an all-school event, pick up procedures may change. Parents will be notified via email on those days. To contact the after-care classroom, please call **507-334-7706 ext. 2219**.

DMCS operates a preschool program for children aged 36 months-5 years who are one and two years away from Kindergarten. Each day in our preschool, we focus on God’s love and the love of our families, friends, and neighbors. Since we are a Catholic school, we will integrate the love God has for us in each area of our curriculum.

We will also:

- ✚ Pray together
- ✚ Discover the joy of learning to work, play, and share with others
- ✚ Take field trips and welcome visitors to our classrooms
- ✚ Learn to follow simple directions through project making
- ✚ Learn to take turns
- ✚ Increase our vocabulary
- ✚ Work on letter and number recognition
- ✚ Learn to express ourselves through art mediums, music, and dramatic play
- ✚ Participate in programs that promote good health habits
- ✚ Best of all – HAVE FUN!!!
- ✚ A copy of our childcare program plan, which explains our educational procedures in more detail, will be kept on file and is available for parents to review upon request.

DAILY SCHEDULES

All classrooms are utilized each day, all preschool children have daily access to all the appropriate materials.

Example of the Half Day Program Schedule

Early Learners

7:00-8:10	Drop off
8:10-8:40	Large Group/Calendar
8:40-9:15	Project Time
9:15-9:40	Large Muscle Time
9:40-10:05	Bathroom/Snack/Sharing
10:05-10:20	Religion Time
10:20-10:50	Choice Time
10:50-11:00	Pack-up/Dismissal

Kindergarten Readiness

7:00-7:45	Drop Off
7:45-8:05	Choice
8:05-8:40	Morning Meeting
8:40-9:20	Group Work/Restroom
9:20-9:50	Outside
9:50-10:20	Specials
10:20-10:45	Restroom/Snack
10:45-11:00	P2/Religion
11:00-11:30	Choice
11:30-11:50	STEM/Group Work
11:50-12:00	Pack-up/Dismissal

Example of the All-Day Program Schedule

7:00-8:10	Drop off
8:10-8:40	Large Group/Calendar
8:40-9:15	Bathroom/Snack/Sharing
9:15-9:40	Large Muscle Time/Specials
9:40-10:05	Stations
10:05-10:20	Outside
10:20-10:50	Project Time
10:50-11:00	Bathroom
11:00-11:30	Specialist/Religion
11:30-12:00	Story Time
12:00-12:30	Lunch
12:30-1:00	Recess
1:00-1:30	Bathroom/Story Time
1:30-2	Rest Time
2:00-2:30	Bathroom/Snack
2:30-3:00	Story Time and Prep to Go Home or Aftercare

Aftercare and Pick-up Schedule

*****Pick-up time is flexible during this time period. Our center closes at 5:30 pm. Doorbell at Entrance 10 must be used.**

3:00-3:30	Outside Play
3:30-3:40	Bathroom Break
3:40-4:00	Story/Art Activity
4:00-5:30	Independent Play/Center Time

BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE

At DMCS, discipline will be handled in a Christ-like manner by:

- ❖ Praising good behavior
- ❖ Re-directing inappropriate behavior
- ❖ Quietly taking the child aside to discuss the problem and how to solve it
- ❖ Immediate/Related consequences for behavior that is unacceptable

No child at DMCS will be:

- ❖ Subject to any form of verbal abuse or corporal punishment
- ❖ Humiliated, shamed or labeled
- ❖ Denied snack as a form of punishment
- ❖ Separated from group with exception of provision in Subpart 4 of Rule Three guidelines
- ❖ DMCS has a complete Behavior Guidance Plan available for review at any time

DISCIPLINE

The primary goal is to help children gain self-control, self-esteem, respect, responsibility and cooperation with others.

Discipline Procedure:

1. A discussion will be held with the child immediately following the unacceptable behavior (i.e. hitting, teasing, destruction of property)
2. The child will be given time to explain his/her action and why they were inappropriate. Staff will help explain why his/her behavior is unacceptable if the child cannot.
3. The staff will use re-direction, use positive affirmations for behavior and as a last resort, a 3-minute "TAKE A BREAK" time from a situation to regain self-control.
4. Communication between students will be facilitated to aid in conflict resolution.

SNACKS

A snack is served each morning and afternoon during the preschool day. To keep tuition down, we are asking each child to furnish a snack about once every month. At the beginning of each month, you will receive a calendar that will show the snack helpers. When your child's name is on the snack calendar, this will be his/her day to bring snack. There should be enough snacks to serve the number of children in your child's class. Foods must be commercially prepared or prepared at school. (Not baked or cooked food at home.) We ask that snacks be something healthy, nutritious and low sugar. **Please no candy and no grapes.**

Suggestions/ideas for snacks:

Muffins, Animal Crackers, Squeeze Cheese & Crackers, Popcorn, Cereal, Pretzels, Cheese & Crackers, Applesauce Cups, Granola Bars, Fresh Vegetables and Dip, Fresh Fruit, Fruit Cups, Chex Mix, String Cheese, Graham Crackers, Yogurt, Cereal Bars, Pudding Cups...

Milk will also be provided each day. The State milk program subsidizes the milk and you are asked to pay a nominal yearly fee. If your child has a milk allergy, juice will be provided at the same price.

LUNCH

If your child is enrolled in one of our full day program options, the DMCS food service program will provide lunch each day. If your child does not like the lunch choice for the day, you may also send a cold lunch. Lunches sent from home will not be heated up at school.

REST TIME

Children participating in the full day program option will be resting each day. Children will be expected to rest quietly for 30 minutes. Cots will be provided, but we ask that you send a blanket/pillow for your child in a reusable bag. These items can be sent on Mondays and they will be returned to you on Fridays for laundering over the weekend. Please label all of your child's belongings clearly.

BIRTHDAYS

Birthdays are so special! Feel free to send a special birthday treat such as cookies, cupcakes, or cake if you would like. We will incorporate birthday celebrations into our snack calendar. We will also celebrate half-birthdays. These are birthdays that fall in June, July and August.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are a part of the DMCS preschool program. Permission slips will be sent home which will indicate the date, time and place of the field trip. Each child will be required to have a signed permission slip to participate. We welcome parent chaperones!

Background Checks - In an effort to protect and ensure a safe environment for all our children, the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis has mandated that any parent/guardian or person wishing to accompany children on a school sponsored field trip/event or volunteering within the school must complete a background check. There is also an additional driver's license check for people who will be a driver for children on a field trip.

Parent Volunteer VIRTUS Training - As a parent volunteer, the Catholic Church and Archdiocese of Minneapolis and St. Paul require all parents to attend a training session that helps to protect our young. Whether you're volunteering on the playground or simply attending a field trip with your child's class, this training is a required component for all parent volunteers.

Hot liquids will not be allowed in our school building or on the playground. This includes hot drinks in a closed container or in a cup with a lid.

PETS

DMCS Preschool has an open policy dealing with pets. Visits from pets are welcomed when arranged with the DMCS preschool staff beforehand. If there are any questions or problems, contact us immediately.

NEWSLETTERS

Newsletters will be emailed and posted in the hallway. If you do not have access to email we will send a copy of the newsletter home with your child. These newsletters are meant to keep parents up-to-date on what is happening at school. Please take the time to read them. Fliers and other communications from the main office may be sent home with your oldest child.

PARENT VISITS

All parents are welcome to visit DMCS Preschool. We welcome visits Monday through Friday from 7:30am-5pm. **Please stop by the main school Business Office to sign in before going into the classroom.**

PARENT CONFERENCES

Conferences will be held twice a year, in the fall and the spring. At these times, parents will be notified of their child's intellectual, physical, social, and emotional development using a progress report that will be kept in the child's file.

HEALTH CARE SUMMARY & IMMUNIZATION RECORD

Each child enrolled in DMCS Preschool is required to submit a Health Care Summary and Immunization record that has been signed by their doctor, or a notarized statement of parental objection to the immunizations, or a medical exemption. These will be required at the time of enrollment.

CHILD ILLNESS AND INJURY

Parents are asked to complete a PRESCHOOL EMERGENCY FORM for their child at the beginning of the school year. This form contains information for the school on what action should be taken in case of accident or illness. If there is any indication that the situation is serious, every attempt will be made to contact the parents immediately. If this is unsuccessful, 911 will be called and the child will be transported by ambulance to District One Hospital if necessary.

In case of non-threatening illness or injury, the child will be kept under supervision and separated from classmates until transportation can be arranged. The staff will handle minor first aid.

Each parent will receive a listing of reportable contagious communicable diseases at orientation. If their child contracts any of these diseases, they must notify the school within 24 hours. After we receive notification, we will notify the other parents by an email or a letter sent home with the children.

If your child will be absent for any reason, please inform the staff by calling the school at (507) 334-7706. Please do not send a sick child to school. Taking the day off to get well is in everyone's best interest.

FIRST AID

All of our staff are certified in First Aid/CPR and will handle minor illness and injuries according to standard First Aid procedures. If any illness or injury appears serious, 911 will be called and the child will be transported to District One Hospital.

ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION

If a child requires oral or surface medication, a doctor or dentist must provide written permission and instructions. We must also have written permission from a parent to administer the medication. Medications must be in their original containers and have the original label. All medications will be kept under lock and/or out of the reach of children.

PARENTAL PERMISSION

DMCS Preschool will obtain written permission before allowing any research, experimental procedure, or public relations activity involving a child to take place.

DRESS CODE

This school year 2020-2021, we will apply our school dress code policy for **ALL our preschoolers**. (please see the complete description **in our school handbook policy #5325**)

Boy's pants - Black or Khaki/Tan, full-length dress pants or walking shorts of knee length.

Girl's pants/skirt/jumper - Black, Khaki/Tan, or uniform plaid from Donald's full-length dress pants, capris, skorts, skirt, walking shorts, or jumper of knee length.

Shirts - Solid color red, white, or black shirt with or without DMCS logo. **Must have collar and be long enough to be tucked in.** Turtleneck shirts maybe worn.

School sweatshirt - embroidered with DMCS logo in Red or Black. Must be worn over a collared shirt. NO hooded sweatshirts.

Sweater or sweater vest - solid red, white, or black with or without DMCS embroidered logo. No belts, fringe, or hoods.

Footwear - White, red, black, or tan solid colored socks, tights or leggings must be worn at all times.

Accessories - No accessories that are distracting or a safety concern are allowed (ie hat, bandanas, jewelry)

Please dress your child in shoes that provides comfort and freedom of movement. Try to provide clothing that can be easily managed by small children, as they will be encouraged to help themselves. **Remember that preschool projects often get messy.**

Please follow these guidelines for attire:

- All clothes must be clean, neat, and in good repair
- Socks must be worn at all times. Shoes must be clean, safe, close-toed, and in good condition with a

heel strap.

- No sleeveless shirts or low necklines
- No midriffs
- No offensive words, phrases, or pictures
- It is vital that you dress your child for the weather, as they will play outside daily if the weather/wind chill is zero degrees or above.
- Children are also asked to bring an extra set of clothing. Please put them in a zip lock bag with their name and put in their backpack. Sometimes accidents happen and it is best to be prepared.
- Remember to clearly label any clothing or personal belonging that is sent to school.

DRESS DOWN DAY ATTIRE

Throughout the year different days will be designated as Care and Share Days or Reward Dress Down Days. On these days, students may wear attire of their choice provided it falls within the following guideline:

- No sleeveless shirts or low neckline
- No offensive words, phrases, or pictures
- No bare midriffs
- Knee length shorts, skirts, and dresses only
- All clothes must be clean, neat, and in good repair
- The same sock and shoe criteria apply

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation to and from preschool is the responsibility of the parent or guardian of the child. If your child is in a car pool, please let your child's teacher know the details in writing. If an alternate person is picking up your child, please notify the teacher in advance. This person needs to be listed on the Authorization to Pick-Up form. Anyone unknown to the teacher will be asked for identification before the child is allowed to leave with him or her.

TUITION

At the time of registration, a non-refundable deposit of \$100.00 is required to reserve your place over the summer. (This fee does not apply towards your tuition.) Tuition must be managed with TADS. If you have not done so already, you need to set up a payment plan with them. If you have any questions regarding the payment of tuition, please contact Ginger Van Hecke at (507) 334-7706.

TUITION POLICY

It is our intention and hope that all children will receive a Catholic Religious Education. We want no one to be denied entrance to our school because of financial need. To implement this, the Divine Mercy

School Advisory Council has approved the following policies related to Tuition:

Tuition and Fees

The Divine Mercy Finance Committee will recommend annual rates for tuition and fees to the School Advisory Council for their approval in conjunction with the annual budget development. The tuition and fees must be established yearly by January 31st. There is only one scale for both in and out of parish. (see Policy #3200)

Tuition Collection

Each family's account must be kept current according to the contractual arrangements between the parent/guardian and Divine Mercy Catholic School as established at the time of executing each student's Tuition Contract. All families are required to enroll in the tuition management program (TADS) at Divine Mercy Catholic School. All families must have their payment plan for the upcoming school year in place PRIOR to the start of the school year or their child will not be able to enroll for that school year.

If the tuition management company contacts the school regarding a family with overdue payments, the Principal will bring this information to the DMCS Tuition Committee for determination of appropriate action. Deviations from the specified payment plan may be considered at this time.

The committee will review all past due accounts on a monthly basis. In the event that a family has continually not paid their required tuition payments and has not contacted the Principal to determine a solution, the DMCS Tuition Committee will evaluate whether that family will be allowed to remain in the DMCS system. A determination will be made on which accounts will be forwarded to a collection agency for repayment. Families, which have been forwarded to a collection agency, will not be allowed to remain at DMCS. (see Policy #3200.1)

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

The following local-conciliation procedure is established as policy to address a complaint, dispute or disagreement of any adult.

Stage 1: If at all possible, complaints, disputes, or disagreements should be resolved on a person-to-person level. If this cannot be accomplished, the person seeking relief should take the following steps:

1. Contact the respondent's immediate supervisor. If there is no relief, then...
2. Discuss the problem with the next level of administration. If no relief, then...
3. Request in writing to the school administrator to begin local conciliation.

Example:

1. Parent to teacher. If no resolution...
2. Parent to Principal. If no resolution...
3. Parent to canonical administrator. If no resolution...
4. Parent requests in writing to begin local conciliation.

● See DMCS policy 4119.4d for further details and a complete written policy. The complete policy manual for Divine Mercy Catholic School is available online at www.dmcs.cc

LIABILITY INSURANCE

The Divine Mercy Campus has liability insurance through the Archdiocese Insurance Program, Catholic Mutual. The level of coverage is \$100,000.00.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Who Should Report Child Abuse and Neglect?

- Any person may voluntarily report abuse or neglect.
- If you work with children in a licensed facility, you are legally required and mandated to report and cannot shift the responsibility of reporting to your supervisor or to anyone else at your licensed facility. If you know or have reason to believe a child is being or has been neglected physically or sexually abused within the preceding three years you must immediately (within 24 hours) make a report to an outside agency.

How to report

- If you know or suspect that a child is in immediate danger, call 9-1-1.
- All reports concerning suspected abuse or neglect of children occurring in a licensed facility should be made to the Department of Human Services, Licensing Division's Maltreatment Intake line at (651) 431-6600.
- Reports regarding incidents of suspected abuse or neglect of children occurring within a family or in the community should be made to the local county social services agency at the following numbers.

Rice County Social Services Child Protection:

Northfield 645-4723

Faribault 332-6115

Rice County Crisis Line (after 4:30 PM) 1-800-422-1286

Rice County Sheriff's Dept. 334-0633

Northfield Police Dept. 645-4475

Faribault Police Dept. 334-4305

If your report does not involve possible abuse or neglect but does involve possible violations of Minnesota Statute or Rules that govern the facility, you should call the Department of Human Services, Licensing Division at (651) 431-6500.

What to Report

- Definitions of maltreatment are contained in the Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act (Minnesota Statutes, section 626.556) and are available upon request.
- A report to any of the above agencies should contain enough information to identify the child involved, any persons responsible for the abuse or neglect (if known), and the nature and extent of the maltreatment and/or possible licensing violations. For reports concerning suspected abuse or neglect occurring within a licensed facility, the report should include any actions taken by the facility in response

to the incident. An oral report of suspected abuse or neglect made to one of the above agencies by a mandated reporter must be followed by a written report to the same agency within 72 hours, exclusive of weekends and holidays.

Retaliation Prohibited

An employer of any mandated reporter shall not retaliate against the mandated reporter for reports made in good faith or against a child with respect to whom the report is made. The Reporting of Maltreatment or Minors Act contains specific provisions regarding civil actions that can be initiated by mandated reporters who believe that retaliation has occurred.

Failure to Report

A mandated reporter who knows or has reason to believe a child has been neglected or physically or sexually abused and fails to report is guilty of a misdemeanor. In addition, a mandated reporter who fails to report maltreatment that is found to be serious or recurring maltreatment may be disqualified from employment in positions allowing direct contact with persons receiving services from programs licensed by the Department of Human Services and by the Minnesota Department of Health, and unlicensed Personal Care Provider Organizations.