

**St. Benedict
Early Learning Center
Parent and Student Handbook
2025-2026**



SOAR

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www.stbenedictohio.org

Administration

Principal: Mrs. Lisa Oriti

Director: Mrs. Christine Malone

Updated July, 2025

Mission Statement

St. Benedict Early Learning Center provides an enriching Catholic education rooted in the Gospel message of peace, acceptance, understanding and service to others for all children in our community.

Vision

St. Benedict Early Learning Center strives to expand the mission of the Catholic parishes of our community and to serve the needs of an evolving society by instilling a spirit of Catholicity and providing an innovative, superior academic program that meets the needs of all children in a financially fit school that is affordable and accessible to all families who desire it.

Core Values

St. Benedict Early Learning Center is guided by the following bedrock principles:

- ❖ A commitment to become witnesses of Jesus in the world
- ❖ A commitment, rooted in Gospel values, to respect the dignity of each individual and to serve the changing needs of families
- ❖ A commitment to be academically excellent by providing a wide range of educational services to meet the needs of a student body that is diverse in its abilities

Educational Philosophy

We believe that a quality educational experience helps children develop a love of learning and a solid educational beginning.

We believe in an early childhood program that provides developmentally appropriate experiences. Our program is designed to provide a stimulating learning environment that supports the social, emotional, spiritual, cognitive and physical needs of children.

Our goal is to help children grow up confident in their faith and be respectful of others. The staff recognizes the significant relationship among teachers, students, parents and families and encourages continuous collaboration in a climate of mutual respect, cooperation and shared responsibility.

Program Objectives

Along with our educational philosophy, we will also help your child:

- ❖ Grow in the continued awareness that he/she is a child of God
- ❖ Develop a positive self-image and acknowledge his/her self-worth
- ❖ Foster development of early learning skills: auditory, fine motor, gross motor, language and visual
- ❖ Nurture a sense of discovery, wonder and a desire to learn
- ❖ Develop positive social skills
- ❖ Respect the rights of others and interact positively in group settings

Provisions

The administration of St. Benedict Early Learning Center reserves the right to amend this Parent Handbook at any time and will promptly notify parents in writing if changes are made.

Implementation and interpretation of the provisions in this handbook rests with the administration. The administration's interpretation of the provisions in this handbook shall be the final and authoritative interpretation.

All families of St. Benedict Early Learning Center are required to follow and support the policies contained in the Parent Handbook.

Parents are expected to sign and return the Handbook Acknowledgement Form.

General Information

Licensing Policy

St. Benedict Early Learning Center complies with the laws of the state of Ohio, the Federal government, and the guidelines of the Office of Catholic Education of the Cleveland Diocese.

St. Benedict Early Learning Center Preschool is licensed by the State of Ohio and licensing information is available in the office. Inspection reports are available for viewing and complaint/grievance files can be obtained through the Ohio Department of Education.

The State of Ohio Department of Education has the right to visit the Early Learning Center location and perform inspections of the classroom and programs, including interviewing the students and staff.

Parent Policies

Family Engagement: Parents as Partners

Parents are the primary educators of their children. Parents partner with the early learning center by:

- ◆ Promoting the religious development of their children
- ◆ Supporting the school and staff in word and action
- ◆ Providing a home atmosphere that promotes physical, mental, spiritual, emotional, and psychological growth and development
- ◆ Encouraging the development of interests and talents
- ◆ Paying tuition and other financial obligations promptly
- ◆ Parent volunteers who work consistently with students must complete the Diocesan Virtus program

Parent Visitation Policy

As part of the partnership between school and families we feel it is important for our parents to visit the early learning center. You are welcome to visit your child at any time. We do ask that you report to the main office upon arrival. We do ask that you do not interrupt the learning experiences. If you would like to conference with the Director or your child's teacher while at the early learning center, we ask that you give us prior notification of your visit, so we can arrange a mutually convenient time to discuss your concerns. For the protection and safety of your child, this policy is limited to custodial parents and guardians of the child enrolled in our program. Non-custodial parents and other relatives and friends will not be granted this open door visitation policy. Non-custodial parents will be allowed to visit the early learning center with a signed and dated written permission form from the custodial parent.

Parent Participation

Parents are encouraged to participate in our program as much as possible. It is our hope that you will have time to participate in events sponsored by the St. Benedict PTU. In order to have a healthy PTU it is important for parents to be involved in meetings and events. There are many opportunities available for all families to participate at various levels. PTU is an organization which promotes communication between the school administration, faculty, staff, and parents; to hold fundraisers to assist in the expense of education; and to sponsor special events to promote the spirit of St. Benedict Catholic School.

Staff

The St. Benedict Early Learning Center team is made up of classroom teachers and classroom assistants. Teachers and staff must meet the current State of Ohio standards and certification requirements. They are also required to meet all Cleveland Diocesan requirements including certification in the Virtus Program, FBI and BCI background checks, fingerprinting, and are also CPR and First Aid trained. Credentials are on file in the school office.

The director and staff shall be recruited, employed, assigned, evaluated, and provided in-service education in accordance with adopted board policies and without discrimination on the basis of age, color, national origin, race, sex, or handicap.

School Personnel

St. Benedict Early Learning Center is staffed by highly qualified and state certified administrators and teachers.

- ❖ The Administration, Faculty, and Staff will maintain and enhance the Catholic identity of the school.
- ❖ Professional secretaries, school nurse, health aide, maintenance team, and volunteers assist the educational staff.

St. Benedict Early Childhood Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees consists of laity, clergy, and professed religious persons who oversee the strategic planning, financial stability, facilities and policies of St. Benedict Catholic School and St. Benedict Early Learning Center in commitment to the school's mission.

Programs, Tuition, Fees

St. Benedict Early Learning Center provides a smooth transition from home to school for children six weeks through kindergarten. The program offers children an opportunity to interact with other children and adults in an atmosphere of Christian love and concern.

School Hours

SBELC opens its doors at 7:00 a.m. for our infant, toddler and preschool programs and remains open until 6:00 p.m. Any child picked up after 6:00 p.m. will be charged a \$5 late fee.

School Office Hours

The school office can be contacted at 216-475-3633 from 7:30 AM until 3:30 PM school days. All visitors need to report to the school office and sign in.

School Tours

Tours of the school are available throughout the year and are scheduled on an individual basis. Please contact the School Office at 216-475-3633 to make an appointment.

Tuition

There is a \$150.00 non-refundable registration fee. All tuition and fees must be paid when due. If you have any further questions please call (216) 662-9380.

Tuition for St. Benedict Early Learning Center is determined each year by the St. Benedict Catholic School Board of Trustees and is due on July 1st of the calendar year. Tuition can be paid at the St. Benedict Catholic School Early Learning Center (14600 Turney Road, Maple Heights, 44137) or St. Benedict Catholic School (13633 Rockside Road, Garfield Heights, 44125).

St. Benedict Early Learning Center accepts the Child Care Voucher provided through the Cuyahoga County Jobs and Family Services office for children in our infant, toddler, and preschool classes.

Tuition for students who enroll during the course of the school year will be calculated on a prorated monthly basis. Tuition will be calculated for the entire month a student enrolls in, no matter the date.

Tuition reimbursement for students who withdraw during the course of the school year will be calculated on a prorated monthly basis. Tuition will be calculated through the entire month a student withdraws from, no matter the date.

Returned Checks

Families will be charged \$35 for any returned checks processed.

Admission Policies

Admission Priorities

St. Benedict Early Learning Center is a Catholic school intended to provide quality education to our children. We provide the opportunity for entrance to our Early Learning Center using the following criteria as a guideline:

- ❖ Siblings of current students at St. Benedict Early Learning Center or St. Benedict Catholic School
- ❖ Members of St. Martin of Tours or St. Monica Parishes
- ❖ Members of neighboring parishes
- ❖ Non-active members and non-parishioners will be considered for admission as space and finances permit

Preschool Registration

St. Benedict Early Learning Center welcomes all children who are 3 years of age by August 1st and are **toilet trained**. Diapers or “pull-ups” are not permitted.

Formal registration begins in January for the coming school year and a \$150.00 non-refundable registration fee is required at that time. Prior to acceptance, we request a visit to the school.

Non-Discriminatory Policy

St. Benedict Early Learning Center admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the Early Learning Center. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin, in administration of its educational policies, admission policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic or other school-administered programs.

Children with special needs will be evaluated on an individual basis and welcomed into the program whenever appropriate. St. Benedict Early Learning Center will evaluate students' Individual Education Plan's (IEP) to determine their ability to meet each child's needs, and a service plan will be implemented where appropriate. ** See information regarding Children with Exceptional Needs

Children with Exceptional Needs

We are not equipped to serve children with severe exceptional learning needs or health conditions. Exceptions may be made by the Principal in accordance with a written medical/physical care plan for the care of the child. We are willing to work with the technical assistance programs for a child with exceptional needs.

Infants and Toddlers -- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part C Assessments and Screenings In Ohio, the County Board is the primary contact for an individual and their family. In Cuyahoga County the phone number is 216.241.8230. The County Board serves two primary functions:

1. Determining Eligibility: Your County Board will work with you to determine eligibility for services. Eligibility criteria varies by age:
 - a. Ages 0-2: The eligibility report completed by or for Help Me Grow is used to determine eligibility. The phone number is 216.698.7500.
 - b. Ages 3-5: Each County Board sets eligibility requirements, which may include the evaluation completed by or for the school district for preschool education.
2. Service Coordination: Once you are eligible for services, your County Board will link you to needed services and supports. A Services and Support Administrator (SSA) will work with you to develop an Individual Service Plan that outlines what types of supports are needed.

Required Forms/Documents

After the student's application and application fee are submitted, the Principal/Director will conduct a pre-admission interview with the parent or guardian and meet the child prior to the child's admission to the program. At that time curriculum, philosophy, and all St. Benedict Early Learning Center policies will be discussed. St. Benedict Early Learning Center will maintain detailed records on each child, containing information mandated by the State of Ohio. The parent or guardian is given all forms to be completed and a starting date is decided upon. The required forms are as follows:

- Copy of Birth Certificate
- Copy of Baptismal Certificate (If applicable)
- Permanent Record
- Family and Approved Pick-Up Form -- Identification will be required of the person picking up your child. Your child will not be released to anyone whose name does not appear on this form. Please advise the Principal/Director in advance if a person who is not listed will be picking up your child.
- Tuition Worksheet
- Child Medical Statement -- (ODJFS 01305) Verifies the date of exam within the past 12 months and must be on file prior to the child's first date of enrollment. It must be updated yearly. Medical exam statement contains the child's name, date of birth, date of exam., signature of doctor/nurse practitioner, business address, phone number, immunization records, and statement that the child is suitable to participate in group care.
- Immunization Records
- Child's Medication Form (if applicable)
- Parent Handbook Acknowledgement Form
- Custody Agreements (if applicable)
- Family Information Form (ODJFS 01511)
- Media Release Form
- Directory Consent Form
- Infant Information Form (ODJFS 01218) (if applicable)
- Acknowledgement and Assumption of Risk
- Medical Authorization Form

Directory (Rosters)

A directory of the names, telephone numbers and email addresses of the parents/guardians of the children attending St. Benedict Early Learning Center are available upon request. The directory is only available to custodial parents/guardians. The parent directory will not include the name or telephone number of any parent who requests that his/her name or telephone number not be included.

Academic Program**Staff**

All staff members are licensed by the Ohio Department of Education. They are specifically trained in Early Childhood/Preschool Education. Further training is required in First Aid, Communicable Disease Control, Child Abuse Recognition and Prevention, Hand-Washing and Disinfecting Procedures, and Infant-Child CPR. Well-qualified teachers are a priority so that your child will be enriched by their influence as well as by their instruction. Professional development is provided and required for staff in order for them to remain on the cutting edge of early childhood education.

Classroom Observations

To ensure that developmentally appropriate learning experiences are provided to the children in our care, we observe each teacher in assigned classrooms at least twice annually. To help teachers grow in their teaching skills, observation notes are shared with the teacher after each visit and goals for enhancing teaching practice are agreed upon.

Faith Formation

As a Catholic Early Childhood Center, faith formation is the foundation of our program. Children participate in Daily Prayer, Daily Lessons, and periodic Prayer Services.

Academics

Our daily schedule includes learning experiences appropriate to each child in each classroom. Our curriculum emphasizes development in motor, social, language, and cognitive-thinking skills. The children participate in activities involving play, stories, songs, games, manipulatives, and art activities. Lesson subjects include science, social studies, math, religion, reading/phonics/language arts, music, and creative movement. Much learning takes place through play, and play activities are planned with learning potential in mind. A daily classroom/curriculum schedule and a list of learning centers is given to parents at the beginning of each school year.

Curriculum

Lessons in our infant and toddler programs that address the general areas of development -- social-emotional, physical, language, and cognitive -- The Creative Curriculum will be used. This research-based curriculum is aligned to the Ohio Department of Education's Early Childhood Standards and will guide the teachers in providing age appropriate routines and experiences.

Lessons in our preschool program are developed in a holistic manner using developmentally appropriate practices and a "hands on" approach to learning. The curriculum that is used in our preschool program is developed by the Diocese of Cleveland and is aligned to the Ohio Department of Education's Early Childhood Standards.

Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism is vital for all children because it sets social goals and promotes respect for all people and the environment we inhabit. We utilize books, music, games, and a wide range of activities to teach our children respect for our world and the diversity of life upon it.

Screening

Within 60 days of enrollment, all children in the St. Benedict Early Learning Center program will receive a comprehensive developmental screening. SBELC uses the Brigance screening tool. If warranted, referrals are made within 90 days.

State Assessments

Children enrolled in the Academic Program are administered the Ohio Department of Education's Early Learning Assessment (ELA). Data is gathered on 28 of the 32 Learning Progressions established by the Ohio Department of Education. This assessment is conducted in the fall and spring each year.

Classroom Assessments

Classroom Assessments consist of observations, demonstrations, explanations, one-on-one sessions, small group activities, whole group discussions, and paper/pencil worksheets. Documentation is in the form of tracking inventories, skill checklists, anecdotal notes, and photos/videos. Assessments may be formal or informal. All assessments fall into two categories: Formative or Summative.

Materials

The toys and learning materials which are housed in the classroom will be selected with the developmental needs of the children in the classroom. A variety of playthings will be available and the children will have choice in the selection of toys, manipulatives, and materials. Playthings will be arranged so that the children may select, remove, and replace them with minimum assistance. Toys, materials, and manipulatives will be kept clean and in good condition. Damaged or broken items will be repaired, replaced, or thrown away if needed. Care will be taken to avoid sharp edges or other parts which may be dangerous to young children.

Conferences

SBELC staff values communication with parents. The following are the different ways to communicate and conference with our staff:

- Brightwheel is used daily to share learning in the form of pictures and notes.
- Informal Conferences are conducted on a regular basis during arrival and dismissal times.
- Formal Conferences are scheduled in the fall and spring.
- In consultation with parents based on the results of assessments, Educational Goals are set for each child in the academic programs.
- Three times each year, Progress Reports are distributed to the parents in our preschool program.

Please feel free to contact the Director or teacher to discuss your child's needs and progress at any time.

Classroom Management Policy

One of our goals is to provide a routine that will help produce a child's self-discipline. We believe that children can learn through positive reinforcement and redirection. Staff members for each group are responsible for the behavior management of the children that are assigned to them directly. The staff must be consistent in their manner of behavior management so that the child will be able to predict responses for their behavior, whether acceptable or unacceptable. There are consequences for inappropriate behaviors. The staff will speak to children in a normal tone of voice, showing respect, kindness, and love. We want our children to learn to make correct choices. We want to be clear, consistent, and appropriate in our expectations. When a child's behavior is disruptive, we feel that the child is seeking attention. We will give that child the appropriate attention by having that child sit next to a staff member or perhaps ask the child to help in a constructive project. If this fails and the child's behavior escalates, the staff member will remove the child to a quiet area of the room, explain why the child's behavior is not acceptable, and talk about what the child must do to behave properly in the group. We want the child to express his/her feelings and how he/she can make a better choice. We want children to get in touch with their feelings. We want to work with our children to make conscious and appropriate choices. Choices are being taught along with consequences.

Types of Discipline

- Redirection
- Separation (time-out) in the classroom with a teacher (or, if necessary, in the office of the director) using soft, firm respectful voice
 - Inform child of inappropriate behavior
 - Inform child of appropriate behavior
 - Have child acknowledge he/she understands and repeat what he/she would do differently the next time
 - Find solutions to problems and resolve them immediately
 - Return child to group as soon as he/she understands responsibility for appropriate behavior
- Encouragement rather than criticism
- Helping the child understand rather than causing shame
- Individual attention to fulfill individual needs
- Frequent praise of good conduct
- Firm and fair limits
- Review of rules, safety, and discipline policies on daily basis
- Developmentally appropriate techniques suitable to the children's ages and the circumstances

- Communication and consultation with parents or guardians in implementing any specific behavior management plan

Therefore, when the child's behavior is unacceptable and methods of management are not successful, the staff member shall:

- Immediately conference with the child's parents to discuss the handling of the situation
- Come to an agreement with the parents about a solution to the problem, involving a consistent disciplinary action to be taken
- If the child does not respond to any method being taken, temporary or permanent termination of service may be necessary.

SBELC will NOT permit:

- There shall be no cruel, harsh, corporal punishment or any unusual punishments such as, but not limited to punching, pinching, shaking, spanking, or biting.
 - No discipline shall be delegated to any other child.
 - No physical restraints shall be used to confine a child by any means other than holding a child for a short period of time, such as in a protective hug, so that the child may regain control.
 - No child shall be placed in a locked room or confined in an enclosed area such as a closet, a box, or a similar cubicle. ●
- No child shall be subjected to profane language, threats, derogatory comments about him/herself or his/her family or other verbal abuse.

- Discipline shall not be imposed on a child for failure to eat, failure to sleep, or for toileting accidents. ●

Techniques of discipline shall not humiliate, shame, or frighten a child.

- Discipline shall not include withholding food, rest, or toilet use.
- Separation, when used as discipline, shall be brief in duration and appropriate to the child's age and developmental ability and the child shall be within sight and hearing of a preschool staff member in a safe, lightened, and well-ventilated space.
- The center shall not abuse or neglect children and shall protect children from abuse and neglect while in attendance in the preschool program.

Withdrawal Procedures

A child will be asked to withdraw from SBELC only if the child exhibits continual discipline problems after the discipline policy has been followed or if developmentally unable to cope with the preschool environment and curriculum.

Withdrawal

In the case of withdrawal, parents are asked to put in writing the request to withdraw the child or children and the name(s) of the school(s) to which records will be forwarded. Records are sent upon receipt of the request from the accepting school(s). It is recommended that records/ requests be made promptly and records be sent in a timely manner upon receipt of a request. The school will release records after all financial obligations are met.

The school may request students to withdraw because of serious disciplinary reasons or financial considerations. Admission and re-admission to school are on an annual basis, with the final decision being made by the President/Principal/Director.

Re-Registration

Re-registration of current students takes place in January and a non-refundable registration fee is required at this time. The administration reserves the right not to invite a student to return to St. Benedict Early Learning Center for the following school year.

Classrooms

State Staff/Child Ratios

SBELC is licensed to serve infants, toddlers, and preschoolers.

When age groups are combined, the maximum number of children per preschool staff member shall be determined by the age of the youngest child in the group.

State Staff/Child Ratios Group Sizes

Infants less than 12 months (1:5)	2:10
Infants 12 months - 18 months (1:6)	2:12
Toddlers 18 months - 3 years (1:7)	2:14
Toddlers 30 months - 36 months (1:8)	2:16
Preschoolers 3 Years (1:12)	2:24
Preschoolers 4 and 5 (1:14)	2:28

Infants: 6 Weeks - 18 Months

Our infant/baby curriculum provides developmentally appropriate activities to foster growth in the following areas:

- Gross and fine motor, music, dramatic play, language, literacy, social, emotional, and cognitive skills.

Infant Hygiene

- Parents Provide: disposable diapers, gloves, wipes, creams
- All babies have their own schedule. Diapers are checked and changed as needed throughout the day.
- Each child needs at least three (3) complete changes of clothes on his/her shelf.
- Please be sure to restock supplies as they are needed.

Infant Nutrition

- Parents Provide: prepared bottles of formula/breast milk and baby food. Opened jars of food and bottles are to be taken home or discarded after 24 hours.
- These items are to be labeled with the child's name and date.
- Parents must update the infant information form (ODJFS 01218) as the baby transitions from milk to food.
- Parents who wish to come in during the day to breastfeed may make arrangements with the Lead Teacher.
- Please be sure to restock supplies as they are needed.

Infant Napping

- Children will be positioned on their backs for napping/rest unless Sleep Position Waiver Statement (ODJFS 01235) is completed.

We know babies are hard to resist, but we ask that no one pick up an infant other than their own child. Staff members' hands are washed with soap and water upon entering the building, after each diaper change, before meals, and before and after attending the needs of the children.

Toddlers:

18 months - 36 months

Our toddler program provides developmentally appropriate activities to foster growth in the following areas:

- Gross and fine motor skills, music, dramatic play, language, social, emotional, and cognitive skills.
- Language development and literacy by speaking in 2-3 word sentences, talking to other children using a child's name, following simple instructions, and reading stories and poems.
 - Socio-emotional development by sharing, taking care of toys, and solving problems using words instead of actions.
 - Self-esteem and independence to be able to separate from parents and express feelings.
 - Physical development by walking up and down stairs, catching balls, using a regular cup and spoon, and learning proper table manners.
 - Thinking process and readiness skills of reading, math and phonics by teaching the children to identify colors, shapes, numbers and letters.
 - Number sense by learning to count from 1-10.
 - Language acquisition by practicing the alphabet and using picture cards to expand vocabulary and literacy development.
 - Assisting with toilet training and bathroom procedures.
 - Improving attention span and self-help skills.
 - Improving eye-hand coordination.

Toddler Hygiene

- Parents Provide: disposable diapers, gloves, wipes, creams
- All toddlers have their own schedule. Diapers are checked and changed as needed throughout the day.
- Each child needs at least three (3) complete changes of clothes on his/her shelf.
- Please be sure to restock supplies as they are needed.

Toilet Training Policy

- The most important factor in making the toilet training experience successful and as low-stress as possible is a family/teacher partnership that supports the child. Research shows that children cannot successfully learn how to use the toilet until they are physically, psychologically, and emotionally ready. Many pediatricians say that most children under 24 months of age are not physically capable of regulating bladder and bowel muscles. Most positive toilet training occurs only after children show signs of physical control or awareness of their bodily functions and when they demonstrate an interest in the process. We are committed to working with you to make sure that toilet training is carried out in a manner that is consistent with your child's physical and emotional abilities and your family's concerns.
- The staff will work with the parent in the process of toilet training. If you feel your child is ready for this experience, you should first talk to your child's teacher. If the teacher agrees that your child is ready, she will explain the SBELC's toilet training program. Please keep your child in diapers during this training stage. Toilet training should first be successful at home before your child is placed in underwear. You begin the process at home and we will make sure we keep the child successful during the day. Please keep added changes of clothing available in your child's cubby and restock as needed.

Toddler Nutrition

For children still on baby food parents provide:

- Parents Provide: prepared bottles of formula/breast milk and baby food. Opened jars of food and bottles are to be taken home or discarded after 24 hours. These items are to be labeled with the child's name and date.

For children eating table food, parents provide the following appropriate food group servings:

- Breakfast -- 2 different food groups (for example 1 starch and 1 fruit).
- Lunch -- 1 protein, 1 starch, 1 fruit*, 1 vegetable*, 1 dairy.
- 2 Snacks (AM and PM) -- 2 different food groups (for example 1 starch and 1 fruit).

Please send your child's lunch in a container/lunch box labeled with his/her name. Parents may be given notice to avoid certain food items brought in for snack to which a child in the class may be allergic.

*** may have 2 fruits or 2 vegetables instead of one of each**

We know babies are hard to resist, but we ask that no one pick up a child other than their own child. Staff members' hands are washed with soap and water upon entering the building, after each diaper change, before meals, and before and after attending the needs of the children.

Food allergies: If your child has a food allergy, please inform the office. We are not an allergy-free campus but will do our best to meet the needs of children with allergies.

Microwaving: With the exception of the infant room, none of our classrooms have microwaves. Please send in items that do not need to be heated.

Preschool

Ages 3, 4, and 5

Our preschool program provides developmentally appropriate activities to foster growth in the following areas:

- Gross and fine motor skills, music, dramatic play, language, social, emotional, and cognitive skills with an emphasis on math, reading, phonics, social studies, science, and religion.
- Developing respect for each other and cooperating with others.
- Expressing feelings and developing the ability to do things more independently.
- Developing self-help skills and following directions.
- Participating in hands-on activities that promote gross and fine motor coordination.
- Increasing problem solving skills and following directions.
- Working well in groups and playing with two or more children while being empathetic.

- Using manners on a daily basis.

Preschool Hygiene

- Students enrolling in our preschool program must be potty trained. No pull ups allowed.
- Each child needs at least two (2) complete changes of clothes to be kept at school.

Preschool Nutrition

If your child is arriving before 7:30 a.m., he/she may eat breakfast here.

If your child is in the ½ day program, he/she will need a morning snack.

If your child is staying all day, please provide your child with the appropriate food group servings.

- Breakfast -- 2 different food groups (for example 1 starch and 1 fruit).
- AM Snack -- 2 different food groups (for example 1 starch and 1 fruit).
- Lunch -- 1 protein, 1 starch, 1 fruit*, 1 vegetable*, 1 dairy.
- PM Snack -- 2 different food groups (for example 1 starch and 1 fruit).

Please send your child's lunch in a container/lunch box labeled with his/her name. Parents may be given notice to avoid certain food items brought in for snack to which a child in the class may be allergic.

*** may have 2 fruits or 2 vegetables instead of one of each**

Food allergies: If your child has a food allergy, please inform the office. We are not an allergy-free campus but will do our best to meet the needs of children with allergies.

Microwaving: With the exception of the infant room, none of our classrooms have microwaves. Please send in items that do not need to be heated.

Clothing for All Classrooms

Clothing should be marked with the child's name for positive and exact identification.

- Infants and toddlers should have three (3) complete changes of clothing including socks and underwear (if applicable). Please provide one extra pair of shoes to leave at school.
- Preschool should have two (2) complete changes of clothing including socks and underwear. Please provide an extra pair of shoes to leave at school. In the winter months, hats, mittens, scarves, snow pants, and boots should be worn to school so children are able to play outside if the temperature permits.

Please re-stock as needed. Dress children appropriately according to the season and daily weather forecast. Comfortable play clothing is best for SBELC. Please consider clothing that the child can easily manage independently for bathroom use. Belts and overalls are too difficult at this age. No open-toed sandals or jewelry except for post earrings are permitted. Do not send your child in his/her "Sunday-best" since we do not always stay clean when we are learning. Learning activities can be inhibited by the child concerned about getting messy/dirty. Girls should wear pants/shorts or when wearing skirts/dresses, they should wear tights/leggings in order to promote modesty.

Communication

SBELC primarily uses the app Brightwheel to communicate with parents. All families will receive login information upon acceptance. We encourage families to check the app frequently for information from the administration and staff. It is IMPERATIVE that we have current contact information for parents/guardians/emergency contacts. Please notify us of any changes in order to keep our data accurate.

Each teacher's primary responsibility during the day is the education and supervision of the children in her care. Teachers do not have extra time during the day to respond to emails/messages. Our policy is that teachers and administration have 24-hours to answer email and Brightwheel messages. Our workday ends at 6:00 PM, so messages sent after that time will be answered during the next business day.

School Records

Permanent Record Forms

Accurate and complete permanent cumulative records are maintained for each student. Parents have the right to inspect and review the educational records of their children (FERPA). Access to education records shall be made within 45 days of receiving a written request from the parents.

Emergency Cards

Emergency cards issued to and completed by the parents are to be up-to-date. Changes of home address, and/or telephone number, place of employment, etc. are to be reported to the school office and updated on Rediker. These cards are kept on file in the school office for emergency use.

Transcripts

Final report cards and student records are the property of St. Benedict Catholic School. The school will release student records after all financial obligations have been settled. When a student withdraws from St. Benedict Catholic School, a copy of the cumulative record card and health records will be sent directly to the receiving school after a signed request by the parent is received and all payments are complete.

Attendance Policy**Reporting Absence--216-475-3633**

Parents must notify the office if a student is absent by 9:00 AM. A message may be placed on voicemail; this should include identification of who is calling and the reason for the absence. If a parent fails to call, the school will confirm the student's absence by a telephone call.

The regulations of the health department will be followed for students who have a communicable disease.

Calendar

Classes begin in September. St. Benedict Early Learning Center will follow the schedule of St. Benedict Catholic School for teachers in service days, holidays, vacation times and free days. Exceptions may arise and families will be notified in advance.

Emergency Closing Procedures

In case of inclement weather, St. Benedict Early Learning Center follows the decision of the Maple Heights and Garfield Heights School District. Information regarding school closings will be broadcast through local TV station and include any of the following announcements:

- ❖ Garfield Heights/Maple Heights City Schools
- ❖ All Catholic schools in Cuyahoga County
- ❖ St. Benedict Catholic School in Garfield Heights
- ❖ St. Benedict Early Learning Center

Every effort will be made to list St. Benedict Early Learning Center individually. We ask that you do not call the school or Parish Offices for school closing information.

If Garfield Heights or Maple Heights City Schools are not open and St. Benedict Early Learning Center is in session, parents make the decision about bringing students to school. Students not in attendance on these days will be marked absent.

Note: If school is closed, all scheduled activities are also canceled.

Family Custodial Agreements

In cases of custodial agreements, a copy of the page of the court decision bearing the case numbers, the sections referring to visitation rights and school contact, as well as the page bearing the judge's signature and court seal must be on file in the school office.

The custodial parent must inform the Principal/Director of any modifications made to the court order. Ordinarily, communications regarding the child will be sent to the custodial parent only.

In cases of "joint custody" one copy of communications and information will be sent home with the child and the information will be shared by and between the parents.

Parent/Teacher conferences will be scheduled jointly if both parents wish to have a conference. Every effort will be made to keep communications open with both parents while at the same time avoiding duplication of services and excessive demands on the teacher's time.

In the case of family difficulties (lawsuits, divorces) the student will be released to the parent who is the legal guardian.

Home and School Communication

Parental Responsibilities

The primary responsibility for the education of children belongs to the parents. This responsibility is shared with the school as a matter of practical necessity. The greatest single factor in building a child's intellectual, cultural, moral and spiritual attitude is the example you provide in your home.

Parents are responsible for:

- ❖ Supporting school policy and the authority of the administration and teachers
- ❖ Modeling and supporting your children's practice of the Catholic faith
- ❖ Encouraging your child to complete all assignments
- ❖ Insisting that your child obey the regulations and principles of good behavior
- ❖ Discussing problems with the persons concerned and avoiding any criticism of the teachers and school policy
- ❖ Following the policies and procedures stated in this handbook
- ❖ Paying all fees (tuition, education etc.) on time
- ❖ Reimbursing any property destroyed (accidentally or intentionally)

With this spirit of cooperation, parents will ease their child's entrance into school life now, as well as ensure their success in the future.

Prior to the opening of school, a morning is designated for Student Orientation. Parent(s) and child come to the school to meet the staff. This gives the child an opportunity to see other children and the school before coming on the first day.

Wednesday Folder

The Wednesday Folder containing school information will be posted on the school's website every week.

St. Benedict Catholic School Website (www.stbenedictohio.org)

Parents can view general school information and news, the school calendar, and important events. Parents can receive updated information regarding their child's classroom, homework, and grades on the link on the website.

Drop In Orientation Day

An orientation time is scheduled before school starts each year to provide an opportunity for students and their families to visit the classroom and meet the teachers and discuss the upcoming school year.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Scheduled conferences are arranged for each child in November and February/March. If a parent wishes to meet with a teacher prior to these dates, an appointment may be made.

Contacting the Teacher

For Preschool, parents will provide a labeled 2-pocket folder to be used as a daily communication home/school folder. Work that students complete will be sent home along with any classroom notes and a monthly calendar outlining that month's activities, subjects covered and any special events.

Teachers may be contacted via phone, voice mail, written note in the home/school folder or e-mail. Preference on how to best contact individual teachers will be given at orientation. Expect a response within 24 hours. The home phone numbers of teachers, school personnel or students will not be given through the school office.

Procedure for Addressing Concerns

If a concern arises with a teacher and/or staff member, the procedure for addressing the concern is as follows: 1. Contact the teacher or staff member directly to discuss the concern. If the problem is not resolved... 2. Contact the Director of the Early Learning Center and then Principal of St. Benedict Catholic School to discuss the concern

Parent Travel

When traveling and unable to be contacted, please inform the office in writing who is responsible for your child(ren) in case of an emergency.

Addresses, Phone Numbers, and Employment Changes

If there is a change of address, phone numbers at home or work, or a change in place of employment, this information should be sent in writing to the office and the teacher as soon as possible.

Parent Volunteers

Any parent volunteering in the classroom must sign a Non-Guilty/Non-Conviction Statement, as required by the State of Ohio. Parents volunteering in the classroom more than four hours a month must complete the VIRTUS training, as required by the Diocese of Cleveland.

PTU

All parents of St. Benedict Early Learning Center are invited to join the St. Benedict Catholic School Parent and Teacher Unit (PTU). You may contact the president of the PTU for by-laws and activities.

Discipline Information and Policy

Students of St. Benedict Early Learning Center are expected to act in a manner that reflects their dignity as children of God. Students and parents are expected to comply with and support the discipline policy of St. Benedict Early Learning Center at school and at school related events. A student is expected to represent St. Benedict Early Learning Center in a positive manner at all times.

Goals

The goals of the Code of Conduct for St. Benedict Early Learning Center are to develop self-control and promote mutual respect.

To achieve these goals the students will

- ❖ Follow the teachings of Christ
- ❖ Learn and help others to learn
- ❖ Show respect for all people and property

Practices

The goal of discipline is for each child to achieve self-control. Good discipline is founded on a loving and caring relationship between adults and children. Setting clear and fair behavioral limits that are enforced consistently and regularly are key elements in good disciplinary practice. The following developmentally appropriate practices will be used:

- ❖ Children will be guided to appropriate behavior by setting clear and consistent limits
- ❖ Positive reinforcements will be used to encourage appropriate behavior
- ❖ Mistakes will be used as learning opportunities
- ❖ Children will be taught strategies for resolving conflicts
- ❖ Children will be redirected to another activity

Consequences of Behavior

When a student fails to make a correct choice, he/she must accept the consequences of their actions.

A conference with parents is required for the following behaviors:

- ❖ Interfering with the teacher's conducting of a lesson
- ❖ Defying a reasonable request by a person in authority
- ❖ Using vulgar and/or obscene language
- ❖ Physical or verbal abuse toward another child or teacher
- ❖ Defacing or destroying school property or the property of another person. Restitution is also required.

The following are discipline methods that will NOT be used at St. Benedict Early Learning Center:

- ❖ There shall not be cruel, harsh or corporal punishment of any unusual punishments such as, but not limited to, punching, pinching, shaking, spanking, or biting.
 - ❖ No discipline shall be delegated to any other child.
 - ❖ No physical restraints shall be used to confine a child by any means other than holding a child for a short period of time, such as in a protective hug, so the child may regain control.
 - ❖ No child shall be placed in a locked room or confined in an enclosed area such as a closet, a box or a similar cubicle.
 - ❖ No child shall be subjected to profane language, threats, and derogatory remarks about himself or his family, or other verbal abuse.
 - ❖ Discipline shall not be imposed on a child for failure to eat, failure to sleep, or for toileting accidents.

- ❖ Techniques of discipline shall not humiliate, shame, or frighten a child.
- ❖ Discipline shall not include withholding food, rest, or toilet use.
- ❖ Separation, when used as discipline, shall be brief in duration and appropriate to the child's age and developmental ability, and the child shall be within sight and hearing of a preschool staff member in a safe, lighted, and well – ventilated space.
- ❖ The center shall not abuse or neglect children and shall protect children from abuse and neglect while in attendance at the Early Learning Center.

Standards of Behavior

Administrators and teachers have the authority to issue an immediate detention when their authority and dignity have not been respected or when they feel a circumstance warrants a stronger reaction but less than suspension. An accumulation of five behavioral detentions will result in a parent conference with all teachers involved and the director. Any further infraction, may result in the child being placed on a behavior plan and possible suspension.

Transportation and Safety

Safety Policy

We are dedicated to putting forth a great effort to provide your child a safe and wholesome atmosphere in which to learn. A child may not leave the school grounds until he/she has been released to the adults authorized on the registration form. There are signs posted on all the entrance doors, stating that only authorized visitors can enter the premises, and that they must go to the office upon entering the building. Parents are visitors and must follow all procedures.

Emergency Procedures

Emergency procedures are posted covering fire, weather, accidental or medical emergencies. A telephone is always available for such emergencies. Fire drills and seasonal weather drills are conducted once a month.

For your child's welfare and your peace of mind, all staff members are trained in basic first aid, communicable diseases and child abuse.

St. Benedict Early Learning Center is inspected on a regular basis by the Department of Education. This includes facility health and safety procedures as well as student health forms.

Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

A licensed school psychologist, teacher or school authority, having reason to believe that a child less than 18 years of age has suffered any wound, injury, disability, or condition of such a nature as to reasonably indicate abuse or neglect of the child, will immediately report to the proper authorities. Reports will be made to the children services board or the county department of human services.

Arrival and Dismissal Routines

SBELC is open Monday through Friday, 7:00 am - 6:00 pm.

- If your child is absent, please notify the office by 9:00 am either by phone or by Brightwheel.

Arrival

Traffic Pattern

- ❖ Enter and exit Turney Road using the driveway between the church and parish office.
- ❖ Maintain a speed of 5 mph while driving on school property.
- ❖ For safety reasons, students are not to be dropped off or picked up on Turney Road.
- ❖ We ask that you do not park in the circle or the driveway between the church and rectory when dropping off your child.
Please park your vehicle in the parking lot and walk your child in.

Infant/Toddler

- ❖ Enter the building through the main entrance. Parents must park and walk children to the door. Walk through the school building towards the mobile unit. Preschool Full Time Care
- ❖ Enter the building through the main entrance. Parents must park and walk children to the door.

Preschool Academic Program

- ❖ Beginning at 7:45 a.m. students can be dropped off at the designated preschool door. Parents must park and walk children to the door.

All students should arrive at school by 8:15 a.m.

Dismissal

Please be prompt at dismissal time. In case of emergencies that delay you, please be sure to phone so that we may explain this to the child.

Only the parent or the designated person on the pick-up authorization form will be allowed to take children home.

Traffic Pattern

- ❖ Enter and exit Turney Road using the driveway between the church and parish office.
- ❖ Maintain a speed of 5 mph while driving on school property.
- ❖ For safety reasons, students are not to be dropped off or picked up on Turney Road.
- ❖ We ask that you do not park in the circle or the driveway between the church and rectory when picking up your child.
Please park your vehicle in the parking lot and walk your child in.

Infant/Toddler

- ❖ Enter the building through the main entrance. Parents must park and walk children to the door. Walk through the school building towards the mobile unit.

Preschool Full Time Care

- ❖ Enter the building through the main entrance. Parents must park and walk children to the door.

Preschool Academic Program

- ❖ Dismissal of students enrolled in our half day program will be at 11:30 a.m. Students can be picked up at the designated preschool door. Parents must park and walk children to the door.
- ❖ Dismissal of students enrolled in our full day program will be at 2:20 p.m. Students can be picked up at the designated preschool door. Parents must park and walk children to the door.

Right to Refuse Child Release

We may refuse to release children if we have reasonable cause to suspect that any person picking up a child is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or is physically or emotionally impaired in any way that may endanger the child. To protect your child, we may request that another adult listed as an Emergency and Release Contact pick-up the child or we may call the police to prevent potential harm to your child. Recurring situations may result in the release of your child from the program.

In addition, children must be in properly secured in a child restraint system, following Ohio Revised Code 4511.81:

- Children less than 4 years old or 40 pounds must use a child safety seating meeting federal motor vehicle safety standards.
- Children less than 8 years old, unless they are at least 4 feet, 9 inches tall, must use a booster seat.

Lastly, your child will not be released to anyone whose name does not appear on the release form. Any person picking up a child must carry identification for safety purposes.

Medical Policies

Medical Statement

Health screening is a key part of children's overall health care. It can help identify concerns early. When concerns go unidentified, they can lead to bigger problems. Children develop rapidly during the first three years of life, so keeping a watchful eye on health and development is critical. The American Academy Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that children receive screening for development at 9, 18, and 24 or 30 months and for autism at 18 and 24 months. Screening also can be done whenever a parent or provider has a concern. If you are not sure if your child had a developmental screening, ask your pediatrician to screen your child or to share results with you from the most recent screening.

Physicals

To ensure that children receive comprehensive health screenings, including vision, dental health, height, weight, hearing, blood levels and hemoglobin levels, SBELC requires students seeking enrollment in SBELC to submit a **Child Medical Statement for Child Care** prior to enrollment. The statement will verify the date of exam within the past 12 months and will be updated yearly. The medical exam statement contains the child's name, date of birth, date of exam, signature of doctor/nurse practitioner, business address, phone number, immunization records, and statement that the child is suitable to participate in group care.

Helpful community resources that support families and children can be found at the end of this handbook.

Immunizations

Immunizations are required according to the current schedule recommended by the U.S. Public Health Services and the American Academy of Pediatrics, www.aap.org. Every August, we check with the public health department or the American Academy of Pediatrics for updates of the recommended immunization schedule. Our state regulations regarding attendance of children who are not immunized due to religious or medical reasons are followed. Unimmunized children are excluded during outbreaks of vaccine preventable illness as directed by the state health department.

Daily Health Check

We conduct a health check, as soon as possible, when each child enters the center each day. We look for skin rashes, elevated temperatures, itchy scalps, lethargy and changes from usual behavior. These are quick checks to protect the well-being of all children in the program. Please understand these are not physicals and do not substitute for proper routine pediatric care.

Administration of Medication, Vitamins, Modified Diets and Creams

All lead teachers and administration have been trained in the Administration of Medication. Parents are to complete the "Request for Administration of Medication Form" before medication will be administered to the child. This form is good for the amount of time designated by the prescription or 12 months, whichever comes first. Parents may request administration of topical creams but all other prescriptions or over the counter medications require a doctor's order. All medications are to be kept in the original container with the original label left on the bottle or box. Medications will be kept in the clinic in a locked cabinet, with the exception of an epi-pen or inhaler which will be kept in the classroom out of the reach of children. Forms are to be filled out for the use of non-prescription products such as fever reducing medicines which do not contain aspirin, cough or cold medicines which do not contain codeine, and topical ointments, creams and lotions. A modified diet also needs to be documented with a form. The Principal, Director, and staff members reserve the right to refuse to administer any creams, medications, vitamins, or modified diets at their discretion.

Parents must inform the Learning Center of all medications administered, even those taken at home. Also, no medications should be added to infant formula.

Management of Illness Policy

We understand that it is difficult for a family member to leave or miss work, but to protect other children; you may not bring a sick child to SBELC. We reserve the right to refuse a child who appears ill.

Absence: If your child will be out of school, please notify the school office (216-475-3633). Also, please report all cases of communicable diseases. When your child returns to school after an absence due to an illness, you must send a note explaining the reason for the absence.

Mild Illness: For the mildly ill child, he/she may participate in the classroom setting upon the child's own discretion and watched carefully by the staff.

Health

St. Benedict Early Learning Center shall immediately notify the parent or guardian of the child's condition when a child has been observed with signs or symptoms of illness. A child who becomes ill during the day will be discharged to the care of his or her parents or guardians as promptly as possible. If the parent or guardian is not available to come to the school to pick up the sick child, the school may release the child to the person who has been approved by the parent or guardian on the registration form.

Hand Washing Procedures

As per Ohio Revised Code 3301-37-07 Policies and Procedures:

All preschool staff members shall wash their hands with soap and running water after assisting a child with toileting; after cleaning; after toileting; before preparing or eating food; before feeding any child; and when hands have been in contact with nasal or mucous secretions.

Management of Communicable Diseases

Children should not come to school if they are ill. Please following these guidelines in case of illness:

- Please keep the child home 24-hours after the break of a fever.
- Please keep the child home in the case of illness during the previous night or before school.
- If strep throat is suspected, do not send the child to school until the results of the strep throat culture has been obtained

from the doctor.

- If your child is being treated with an antibiotic for an illness, they may not return to SBELC until 24 hours of treatment with the antibiotic and 24 hours fever free.

All staff members receive instructions on the signs and symptoms of illnesses, proper hand washing, and disinfecting procedures. These are given to each employee and discussed periodically at staff meetings. A staff member observes all children upon entering a group/room. The Principal, Director, or staff member will notify the parent or guardian of a child's condition when a child has been observed with the signs/symptoms listed on the communicable disease chart. A child who exhibits symptoms of a communicable disease will be isolated in the director's office, placed on a cot, kept comfortable, and supervised. The communicable disease chart is posted on the wall of the office. Parents will be notified of exposure to communicable disease by a staff member or written posted notice on the class board or entrance board. Children sent home must be symptom-free for 48 hours before returning to SBELC. Sending a child back to school before they have fully recovered does not help them, nor the other students in the classroom.

● **Fever, Vomiting, Diarrhea** -- If fever, diarrhea, and/or vomiting occur at SBELC, the child will be discharged that day. Fevers, diarrhea, and/or vomiting must be cleared up for 24 hours before a child may return. This is to ensure that the child will not be contagious to others and/or to help the child recuperate adequately.

- **Skin Rash** -- All skin rashes must be diagnosed by a physician/nurse practitioner with a written diagnosis. The child may not return to SBELC until all evidence of the rash is gone. A doctor's note will be required.
- **Open Sores** -- No child may be present at SBELC with any open sores or skin irritations which are oozing or weeping. Open sores must be healed before the child returns -- clear/scab free for the exposed areas. At the discretion of the Principal, Director, or staff member, a doctor's written approval may be requested for any condition causing concern before a child may be readmitted.

When an enrolled child or an employee of the center has a (suspected) reportable disease, it is our legal responsibility to notify the local Board of Health or Department of Public Health. We will take care to notify families about exposure so children can receive preventive treatments. Included among the reportable illnesses are the following:

- Bacterial Meningitis
- Botulism
- Chicken Pox
- COVID-19
- Diphtheria
- H1N1 Virus
- Haemophilus Influenza (invasive)
- Measles (including suspect)
- Meningococcal Infection (invasive)
- Poliomyelitis (including suspect)
- Rabies (human only)
- Rubella Congenital and Non-congenital (including suspect)
- Tetanus (including suspect)
- Any cluster/outbreak of illness

Isolation and removal: You will be called and asked to retrieve your child if your child exhibits symptoms. This is not an all-inclusive list. We will try to keep your child comfortable but he/she will be excluded from all activities until you arrive.

- Illness that prevents your child from participating in activities.
 - Illness that results in greater need for care than we can provide.
 - Illness that poses a risk of spread of harmful diseases to others.
 - Fever of 100F or higher.
 - Diarrhea -- stools with blood or mucus, and/or uncontrolled, unformed stools that cannot be contained in a diaper/underwear or toilet.
 - Vomiting -- more than 2 times during the previous 24 hours.
 - Mouth sores caused by drooling.
 - Rash with fever, unless a physician has determined it is not a communicable disease.
 - Severe coughing, blue face, whooping
 - Sore throat or difficulty swallowing
 - Difficult or rapid breathing
 - Yellow skin or eyes
 - Complaints or severe stomach/headache, or other pain

- Infected skin patches, unusual spots or rashes, blister-like bumps
- Unusually dark urine and/or gray or white stool
- Stiff neck with an elevated temperature
- Pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge, until on antibiotics for 24 hours.
- Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Strep throat, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Head lice, until treatment and all nits are removed.
- Scabies, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Chickenpox, until all lesions have dried and crusted.
- Pertussis(Whooping Cough), until 5 days of antibiotics.
- Hepatitis A virus, until one week after immune globulin has been administered.
- Tuberculosis, until a health professional indicated that the child is not infectious.
- Rubella, until 6 days after the rash appears.
- Mumps, until 5 days after the onset of parotid gland swelling.
- Measles, until 4 days after the onset of rash.
- Has a physician or other health professionals written an order that a child be separated from other children.

Please have an emergency plan in place if your child should become ill at SBELC. You need an authorized person to come within one hour to care for your child. On your emergency contact list, a minimum of 4 (four) contacts must be listed. Children must remain home for an entire day with no symptoms before returning to SBELC. Please keep phone numbers up to date with the office.

The cot used to isolate sick children will be disinfected after each use.

Return to School

Children who have been ill may return when:

- They are free of fever, vomiting and diarrhea for 24 hours.
- They have been treated with an antibiotic for 24 hours.
- They are able to participate comfortably in all usual activities.
- They are free of open, oozing skin conditions and drooling (not related to teething) unless:
 - The child's physician signs a note stating that the child's condition is not contagious and;
 - The involved areas can be covered by a bandage without seepage or drainage through the bandage. If a child had

a reportable communicable disease, a physician's note stating that the child is no longer contagious and may return to our care is required.

Head Lice

- Children with head lice will not be allowed to return to the center until they have been treated and no further head lice or nits are detected during a health check.

Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment

Healthchek is Ohio's Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment Program. It is a service package for babies, children, and young adults younger than 21 who are enrolled in Ohio Medicaid. The purpose of Healthchek is to discover and treat health problems early. If a potential health problem is found, further diagnosis and treatment are covered by Medicaid. Healthchek covers 10 check-ups in the first 2 years of life and annual check-ups thereafter and offers a comprehensive physical examination that includes:

- Medical history
- Complete unclothed exam (with parent approval)
- Developmental screening (to assess if child's physical and mental abilities are age appropriate) •

Vision screening

- Dental screening
- Hearing assessment
- Immunization assessment (making sure child receives them)
- Lead screening
- Other services or screenings as needed

If your children are enrolled in Ohio Medicaid, Healthchek services are available to them. If you are younger than 21 years of age and are also enrolled, you can receive Healthchek services too.

Looking for more information? Go Online: <http://medicaid.ohio.gov/Healthchek>

Allergy Prevention

SBELC is committed to providing a school environment that promotes and protects children's health, well-being and ability to learn. Pursuant to the Ohio Revised Code 3313.719, the purpose of this policy is to:

- Provide a safe and healthy learning environment for children with food allergies
- Reduce the likelihood of severe or potentially life-threatening allergic reactions
- Ensure a rapid and effective response in the care of severe or potentially life-threatening allergic reactions

Families are expected to notify us regarding children's food and environmental allergies. Families of children with diagnosed allergies are required to provide us with a letter detailing the child's symptoms, reactions, treatments and care. A list of children's allergies will be posted in each classroom. We are trained to familiarize ourselves and consult the list to avoid the potential of exposing children to substances to which they have known allergies.

Incident, Behavior and Illness Reports

Major and minor incidents will be logged in Brightwheel. In the case of a serious incident, a staff member shall complete the Incident/Injury Report for Child Care form (ODJFS 01299) and give it to the parent on the same day. If the child has been transported to the hospital for an emergency, the incident/injury report form shall be available at SBELC for the parent or guardian within 24 hours following the incident/injury. These forms are signed and kept on file.

Administration of Medications

Any student who is required to take prescription or non-prescription medication during the school hours must:

1. Complete the medication permission form with physician and parent signatures or provide a written note from the prescribing physician which details the name of the drug, dosage, route of administration, and time of administration, possible side effects, reason for use, and expiration date of order with physician, parent signatures and release of liability. Under no circumstances will the school faculty administer the first dose of any medication to a student.
2. Bring the medication in the original container.
3. Bring all medication to the office upon arrival at school.
4. It is the responsibility of the parent(s) to notify the school of any change in medication.

NOTE: Cough suppressants, throat lozenges, and antacids are over-the-counter non-prescription medications, which require completion of the medication permission form.

Parents of students who use an inhaler or an Epi-pen must submit the necessary forms for a child to carry this medication.

Medication will be stored in a designated locked storage place.

Wellness, Food, and Beverage Policy

The schools of the Diocese of Cleveland are committed to providing school environments that promote and protect children's health and well-being.

In the interest of good health and in order not to disrupt the educational program, parties and treats are kept to a minimum. Certain store bought treats for children are permitted, however parents must obey the following policies:

- Food and beverages served will meet, at a minimum, nutrition requirements established by local, state and federal statutes and regulations as well as to the maximum extent possible, incorporate the Dietary Guidelines for Americans
- **Foods needing refrigeration, freezing or microwaved are not acceptable.**
- Food containing nuts/peanuts or peanut oil should not be sent as treats because of students with allergies to nuts/peanuts
- Chewing gum or candy is not acceptable

All snacks and treats that are not in compliance with this Policy will not be served in school

Birthday Treats

If a special occasion calls for some type of celebration, permission must be obtained from the teacher. Collections may not be taken up for additional parties, gifts, or for any other reason. Handing out invitations for private parties is not acceptable in class or on school grounds.

Dietary restrictions are becoming more and more common, not just due to the specific food allergies with peanuts and tree nuts, but with other types of food allergies (egg, soy, wheat, etc.). **Therefore foods baked at home will not be served at school.) See St. Benedict Early Learning Center Allergy Policy.**

There are many alternatives to the “standard” classroom food treats for birthdays and holidays. Here are a few suggestions for “non-food” celebration treats: bookmarks, bubbles, crazy straws, erasers, glow sticks, fun pads, key chains, notepads, pencils, stencils, and stickers.

Healthy Food Choices

We Can! GO, SLOW, and WHOA Foods

Use this chart as a guide to help you and your family make smart food choices. Post it on your refrigerator at home or take it with you to the store when you shop. Refer to the *Estimated Calorie Requirements* to determine how much of these foods to eat to maintain energy balance.

- **GO Foods**—Eat almost anytime.
- **SLOW Foods**—Eat sometimes, or less often.
- **WHOA Foods**—Eat only once in a while or on special occasions.

Food Group GO (Almost Anytime Foods) SLOW (Sometimes Foods)

Nutrient- and Calorie-Dense

WHOA (Once in a While Foods) Nutrient-Dense Calorie-Dense

Vegetables Almost all fresh, frozen, and canned vegetables without added fat and sauces

All vegetables with added fat and sauces; oven-baked French fries; avocado

Fried potatoes, like French fries or hash browns; other deep-fried vegetables

Fruits All fresh, frozen, canned in juice 100 percent fruit juice; fruits canned in light syrup; dried fruits

Fruits canned in heavy syrup

Breads and Cereals Whole-grain breads, including pita bread; tortillas and whole-grain pasta; brown rice; hot and cold unsweetened whole-grain breakfast cereals

White refined flour bread, rice, and pasta. French toast; taco shells; cornbread; biscuits; granola; waffles and pancakes

Croissants; muffins; doughnuts; sweet rolls; crackers made with *trans* fats; sweetened breakfast cereals

Milk and Milk Products

Fat-free or 1 percent low-fat milk; fat-free or low-fat yogurt; part-skim, reduced fat, and fat-free cheese; low-fat or fat-free cottage cheese

2 percent low-fat milk; processed cheese spread

Whole milk; full-fat American, cheddar, Colby, Swiss, cream cheese; whole-milk yogurt

Meats, Poultry, Fish, Eggs, Beans, and Nuts

Trimmed beef and pork; extra lean ground beef; chicken and turkey without skin; tuna canned in water; baked, broiled, steamed, grilled fish and shellfish; beans, split peas, lentils, tofu; egg whites and egg substitutes

Lean ground beef, broiled hamburgers; ham, Canadian bacon; chicken and turkey with skin; low-fat hot dogs; tuna canned in oil; peanut butter; nuts; whole eggs cooked without added fat

Untrimmed beef and pork; regular ground beef; fried hamburgers; ribs; bacon; fried chicken, chicken nuggets; hot dogs, lunch meats, pepperoni, sausage; fried fish and shellfish; whole eggs cooked with fat

Sweets and Snacks* Ice milk bars; frozen fruit juice bars; low-fat or fat-free frozen yogurt and ice cream; fig bars, ginger snaps, baked chips; low-fat microwave popcorn; pretzels

Cookies and cakes; pies; cheese cake; ice cream; chocolate; candy; chips; buttered microwave popcorn

Fats/Condiments Vinegar; ketchup; mustard; fat-free creamy salad dressing; fat-free mayonnaise; fat-free sour cream Vegetable oil, olive oil, and oil-based salad dressing; soft margarine; low-fat creamy salad dressing; low-fat mayonnaise; low-fat sour cream**

Butter, stick margarine; lard; salt pork; gravy; regular creamy salad dressing; mayonnaise; tartar sauce; sour cream; cheese sauce; cream sauce; cream cheese dips

Beverages Water, fat-free milk, or 1 percent low-fat milk; diet soda; unsweetened ice tea or diet iced tea and lemonade
2 percent low-fat milk; 100 percent fruit juice; sports drinks
Whole milk; regular soda; calorically sweetened iced teas and lemonade; fruit drinks with less than 100 percent fruit juice

*Though some of the foods in this row are lower in fat and calories, all sweets and snacks need to be limited so as not to exceed one's daily calorie requirements. **Vegetable and olive oils contain no saturated *or trans* fats and can be consumed daily, but in limited portions, to meet daily calorie needs. (See Sample USDA Food Guide and DASH Eating Plan at the 2,000-calorie level handout)

***Source:** Adapted from CATCH: Coordinated Approach to Child Health, 4th Grade Curriculum, University of California and Flaghouse, Inc., 2002*

Transition Policy

Purpose

The Transition Policy of St. Benedict Early Learning Center (SBELC) is designed to ensure continuity for children during periods of transition, whether from class to class in the Preschool to Kindergarten. We believe that smooth transitions support the personal, social, and emotional development, learning, and future success of every child. We want children to feel safe, stimulated, and happy in a school setting and to feel secure and comfortable with the staff. We also want parents/guardians to have confidence in both their children's well-being and their role as active partners.

Welcoming Incoming Students/Families

The first step in the transition process involves the parents/guardians making the decision of which school or program is best for their child. At SBELC, we want to aid the parents in this process by providing information about our school offerings as well as experience them first hand:

- **Open Houses** -- Advertised and held several times a year. Families are invited to tour the school, meet the teachers and administrators, and receive information packets regarding the different programs offered.
- **School Website:** www.stbenedictohio.org
- **Individual Tours** -- Available by appointment.
- **Beginning of the Year** -- At the start of each new school year, parents and students are invited to an Orientation Day to meet the teacher, explore the learning environment, and tour the building. Parents are also invited to a Back to School meeting in which teachers explain policies, procedures, curriculum, and answer any/all questions.

Child Care Transitions (Infants and Toddlers)

On the child's 1st birthday, SBELC will send a letter home. This letter explains that some time between 12 and 18 months, the child will transition to the toddler room. The letter contains milestones that must be reached in order for the transition to occur.

On the child's 2nd birthday, SBELC will send a letter home. The letter contains milestones to look for and encourage during age 2. Transition to the preschool program will occur in the fall after the child's third birthday.

When a child reaches a point of development and readiness in which the lead teacher and/or the leadership team feels the child is ready to participate in activities within the next classroom then he/she will transition. The child will visit the next classroom and eat meals with them for transitioning purposes. Infants and Toddlers approaching transition age will spend time in the next child care room, participating in activities such as storytime, painting, singing, and dancing. During this time, a staff member from the current program will escort the child to the new program. Parents will be included in the creation of the Transition Plan. A written plan for each student will be sent to parents once dates and details have been determined.

Academic Transitions

Teachers use ongoing assessments throughout the school year to track student progress. Conferences are held twice a year (fall and spring) to share the results and discuss the achievements of goals, both academic and social. Parents and teachers evaluate the data to determine goals and the next steps in education for their child. Parents and teachers discuss and outline the students strengths as well as areas of concern (Transition Conference Sheet). Options for transition are discussed and teachers make recommendations based on data and input from parents. Ultimately, the parents will make the decision regarding placement for the following for the following school year.

Since our program offers academic programming, the majority of transfers occur in the fall. To transfer into a new class level in the

fall, transitioning will begin in May. We believe that smooth transitions support social/emotional development, learning, and the future success of every child. We want children to feel safe, stimulated, and happy in the school setting and to feel comfortable with the staff. We also want parents/guardians to have confidence in both their children's well-being and their role as active partners.

Transition to Kindergarten

- Kindergarten Open House will take place during Catholic Schools Week.
- Preschool students will visit the kindergarten classroom and teachers.
- Kindergarten screening will take place at the ELC during a regular school day. Screening will take place during the month of May.
- The director will be available to assist families with the enrollment process.

Transition/Transfer to a School other than SBCS

Parents choosing to transfer a student from St. Benedict Catholic School to a different school will be assisted by the SBELC staff in exploring options.

- Contact future school to assist with application process
- Send a recommendation to new school
- Make records readily available

Once a new school is chosen, parents/guardians are required to sign and submit a Request for Records form. This form can be obtained in the school office. This form allows the release of records including academic, psychological, disciplinary, attendance, medical, and evaluation results.

When families leave our program prior to kindergarten, we will explain the readmission policy, should they choose to return.

Safety Policies

Supervision of Children

- Children are never left alone. Staff are aware of each child's arrival and departure.
- Daily schedules provide for both quiet and active play. Weather permitting, children go outside at least once a day. Children enrolled in full day programs will have two outdoor play times.
- Whenever children leave the SBELC building they will be supervised by staff members.
- During inclement weather, the Large Motor Skills room will be used for recess (rotunda).
- Toddlers and preschool students enrolled in our full day program will have a rest period each afternoon. Children will rest on a cot and use a towel from home as a blanket or cot over. The towels are kept in the child's individual cubby after each rest period. Towels will be sent home weekly to be laundered. Cots will be cleaned daily.
- Custody agreements must be in the child's file.
- During inclement weather our child care will remain open unless there is a Level 2 emergency declared.
- Preschool Academic Program when the K-8 building is closed.
 - If there is a need to close for weather or emergency situations this will be communicated through the Brightwheel app.

Safety Procedures

- The doors to SBELC are kept locked at all times.
- Visitors must ring a bell and buzz in to gain entrance to the school.
- All visitors must check in with the office before reporting to a classroom.
- Emergency phone numbers and Dental First Aid information are posted within SBELC.
- Drills are held monthly. Exit plans and procedures are posted in each classroom.
 - Fire Drills are held each month.
 - Tornado Drills are held each month from March through August.
 - Lockdown Drills are held three times each year.
- In case of an emergency, a SBELC staff member will 911/Fire Department. Staff members will exit the building and transport all children to St. Martin of Tours Church (Refer to Emergency Response in main office and classrooms).

Emergency and Accident Policy

In case of an emergency, lockdowns and/or accident, SBELC will follow the emergency transportation authorization form and the posted medical and dental emergency plan. A staff member would complete an incident report form for the parent. SBELC will administer First Aid, summon emergency transportation and contact the parent(s). In the event that a child needs emergency transportation, a call to 911 will be made and the Maple Heights Fire Department will provide emergency transportation. When an

accident or injury occurs, the staff member completes an incident report and has the parent sign the form which will be kept on file.

If there is a general emergency (for example, threats to the safety of children due to environmental situations or threats of violence, natural disasters, loss of power, heat, water, etc.) and it would SBELC to evacuate, the Director, Staff Member, Local Police, and/or Fire would declare an emergency and institute the appropriate actions as listed in the Emergency Response Plan (posted in the main office and classrooms).

Dangerous Weapons/Verbal Threats

SBELC is to provide children with a safe environment which is free of the dangers of firearms, knives, and other dangerous weapons. No report of, or rumors of, verbal threats or weapons in SBELC shall be ignored. Action will be taken immediately by calling 911. Refer to the Emergency Response Plan. If need be, a lockdown procedure will be called. SBELC cameras are located throughout the building and campus.

Outdoor Play Policy

Decisions regarding outdoor play will be made in compliance with the chart below. If the weather is suitable for children to be outside, they will go out. If the weather is not suitable, we will provide an appropriate indoor large muscle activity. The weather policy chart/safety issues are posted in each classroom for quick reference. Suitable weather is at a minimum of 25 to 90 degrees Fahrenheit.

Temperature	Infants and Babies under 18 months old will go outside in spring, summer and fall. Toddlers and Preschool children may go outside at 25 degrees or above
Humidity	On days when the temperature reaches 90 degrees or above humidity will be factored into the decision to go outside. Caution will be used and drinking water will be encouraged.
Wind Chill	As long as the wind chill does not drop the temperature below 25 degrees, toddlers and preschool can go outside.
Ozone Levels	Students will stay inside if the UV index goes 10.
Pollen Count	Pollen count will be factored into the decision to go outside.
Lightning	No outside activity
Heavy Rain	No outside activity
Heavy Ice	No outside activity

Pandemic Policy

If/When the state or county board of health mandates school closure, the school will continue its academic offerings and support through a distance learning model. The school administration will continue to communicate updates through Digital Academy, SeeSaw, Class Dojo, and Google Classrooms

Pandemic Definition: A pandemic is an outbreak of disease that can spread easily from person to person. When people do not have natural immunity to a virus, serious illness or death is more likely to occur in any age group. This may be a local, regional, or global outbreak.

Pandemic Procedures:

- ❖ The school will decontaminate all surfaces when advised by the county health department.
- ❖ The school administration will close school when advised by the county health department or State of Ohio.
- ❖ Adjust school academic hours to ensure state academic hours are met for all students impacted.

Helpful Resources

Suggested medical resources/contacts:

- Medical:
 - MetroHealth -- Bedford: 216-524-7377

- UH Bedford Medical Center: 440-735-3701
- Cleveland Clinic -- Marymount: 216-581-0500
- Dental:
 - Hudec Dental -- Bedford: 440-232-4222
 - Rockside Dental -- Independence: 216-524-8481
- Vision:
 - Cleveland Sight Center: 216-791-8118
 - Cleveland Eye Clinic -- Bedford: 440-252-1295
- Vaccination/Immunization:
 - Cuyahoga County Board of Health: 216-201-2000

These are links to resources that may be helpful to families. This list is not comprehensive. If you have needs that are not met by these resources, please contact the school office for assistance. We are here to help you with any needs your child may have.

- ODE (Ohio Department of Education) -- <https://education.ohio.gov/>
- Cuyahoga County Board of Health Help Me Grow -- <https://www.ccbh.net/help-me-grow/>
- ODE Office for Exceptional Children (OEC) -- <https://education.ohio.gov/Topic/Special-Education/Office-of-Exceptional-Children-Contact-Information>
- Ohio Center for Autism & Low Incidence (OCALI) -- <https://www.ocali.org/>
- Ohio Department of Jobs & Family Services (ODJFS) -- <http://jfs.ohio.gov/>
- US Department of Education -- <https://www.ed.gov/>

Preschool Instructional Program

Classroom Schedule:

Full Day Schedule: 8:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. Monday – Friday

Half Day Schedule: 8:00 a.m. – 11:30 p.m. Monday – Friday

Full Time Care: 7:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. Monday - Friday

Typical Daily Schedule/Routine:

- Morning Circle
- Center Choice
- Large group/small group instruction time
- Motor activities
- Restroom break
- Snack
- Center choice/ story time

Children staying full days will also have lunch and nap/rest time in the afternoon. As stated in the Ohio Department of Education licensing guidelines: “A *full-day program serving preschool children shall have a nap/rest period reflected in the daily written program. Nap/rest periods shall not exceed one and one-half hours in the daily schedule for any child in a full day program. A quiet space for children who want to rest or nap shall be provided*”.

Certain times and activities will vary according to individual goals, special events or visitors.

St. Benedict Early Learning Center preschool is developed in a holistic manner using developmentally appropriate practices and a “hands on” approach to learning. The following are the various components included in daily activities: Religion, Language Arts, Math, Motor Skills, Music/Dance, Computer, Science, Social Studies and Social Skills.

Religion

Religious instruction and classroom prayer helps the child to develop a positive self-image in relation to a loving God. Parents have already set the foundation for a sense of God’s love. The child’s sense of God is further enhanced by the warm atmosphere of love and acceptance in the class where he/she learns about God’s wonderful world.

Language Arts

- Language development and beginning Literacy skills
- Letter recognition
- Introduction to letter sounds
- Creative expression

- Listening skills
- Oral communication
- Beginning Writing and drawing skills

Math

- Understanding numbers from 1-10
- Positional concepts and one-to-one correspondence
- Ordinal positions and patterning
- Graphing
- Basic measurement skills
- 2 dimensional shapes
- Comparing objects

Motor Skills

The Preschool child learns with his/her body. Motor skills are a vital part of the young child's development and are crucial to future skill development.

Gross Motor Skills

Includes large muscle activities such as walking, running, jumping, hopping, and skipping. Throwing a large ball or beanbag, catching and aiming at a target to strengthen hand-eye coordination. Rhythm and movement provide an outlet of creative expression and the joy of using the body in dance, games, and organized play.

Fine Motor Skills

Includes the development of dexterity and strength of small muscles which enhance the development of readiness for the reading and writing process. Eye-hand coordination is developed through such activities as manipulating clay, stringing beads, hammering, pasting, coloring, painting, pouring, lacing, and using scissors. Eye tracking is another fine motor activity that promotes the left-to-right progression skill required for reading readiness. The child is encouraged to observe his/her natural hand dominance; however, hand dominance is not necessarily achieved at this stage of a child's development.

Health/Safety/Nutrition

We will learn about the importance of healthy foods, hand washing and hygiene to promote good health, and practices in the classroom and home to ensure physical safety.

Music/Dance

The young child develops a love and appreciation of music through singing, listening to music, using rhythm instruments, making instruments, dancing and other rhythmic activities.

Computer

Computer instruction is integrated with Math and Reading readiness activities. The computer is another tool for children to use in discovering the world around them.

Science

Science activities help children learn to ask questions, explore various subjects and perform simple experiments. We will learn about:

- Weather
- The sun, moon and stars
- Rocks and soil
- The basic needs of living things
- Plants and animals
- Solids and Liquids

Social Studies/Social Skills

Learning about Social Studies helps children become a positive member of their community and understand direction and how to navigate our world. We will practice:

- Routines, turn taking, sharing, and personal responsibility
- How to be a member of a community outside of our homes
- Language of time
- Days of the weeks and months

- Needs vs. wants
- Relative location and position words
- Maps and globes

Special Event Days/Field Trips**Special Days**

Throughout the school year the preschool staff plans special event/activity days to enhance the weekly classroom themes.

Birthdays

Birthdays are very special occasions for children. Parents may bring in special birthday treats. Due to food allergies all treats that consist of food should be individually wrapped and will be sent home at the end of the day. Please consider non-food treats such as pencils, bubbles, or stickers as birthday treats.

Field Trips

In house field trips are an integral part of the preschool experience. Students will not travel outside of the St. Benedict Early Learning Center.

**St. Benedict Early Learning Center
Parent/Student Handbook
14600 Turney Road
Maple Heights, OH 44137**

Please sign and return this form.

Child's Name: _____ **Date of Birth:** _____

- ☐ **I have read the Student Policies and other necessary information found in the 2025/2026 Parent and Student Handbook. We will follow the guidelines and abide by the policies stated in this handbook.**
- ☐ **I consent to the enrollment of my child at SBELC and agree that SBELC is not responsible in case of illness or injury to my child while in attendance or in transition to and from SBELC.**
- ☐ **I give permission for my child to play on the riding toys.**
- ☐ **My child is a**
 - ☐ **Swimmer**
 - ☐ **Non- Swimmer**
- ☐ **I give permission for my child to play in water activities (water table/wading pool/sprinkler).**
- ☐ **I give permission for parent information (name and phone number) to be found in our school directory.**

Date signed: _____

Parent Signature

Parent Signature