



BRIGHT BEGINNINGS PRE-KINDERGARTEN

Immaculate Heart of Mary School

HANDBOOK

2859 Lillis Drive
Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio 44223

330.923.1220
www.ihmgradeschool.org

Dear Parents/Guardians,

We are privileged to be able to start your child on their educational journey here at Immaculate Heart of Mary's Bright Beginnings Pre-Kindergarten. We will do all we can to ensure it is a bright, joyful and Christ centered environment each and every day.

This handbook contains procedures, policies and other vital information about our Pre-kindergarten. Please feel free to let us know if you have any questions as you review it.

Together with you, we will nurture, guide and inspire your child.

Thank you for entrusting us with them. It is something we take very seriously.

It's going to be an exciting, fun-filled school year. We promise to do all we can to give your child a bright beginning!

Sincerely,

Sherry Foss
Director and Lead Teacher
Immaculate Heart of Mary School
Bright Beginnings Pre-Kindergarten

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PHILOSOPHY OF IHM BRIGHT BEGINNINGS

It is our philosophy that every child deserves a chance to begin learning in an environment that is encouraging, enlightening, safe and filled with joy. Christ will be the center of learning, keeping in mind that each child is a gift from God. Every child will learn and grow in their unique way.

Children will grow spiritually in their faith, develop emotionally and socially, and make great strides physically and intellectually.

Bright Beginnings Pre-Kindergarten will aim to give each child the bright beginning they deserve on their educational journey.

GOAL

- Children will grow in their faith and know they are a gift from God.
- Develop fine and gross motor skills.
- Inspire creativity in early learners.
- Achieve learning through purposeful play.
- Early literacy, beginning math skills, science, engaging in the world around them, and critical problem solving skills are taught in an engaging, dynamic and thoughtful manner.
- Exploration and celebration of Fine Arts.
- Spiritual, emotional, physical, intellectual and social growth.
- Fostering independence and confidence to provide a smooth transition to Kindergarten.

CURRICULUM

Our Pre-Kindergarten follows the Diocesan Graded course of Study aligned with the Ohio Department of Education Content Standards. Creativity, hands-on learning, daily activities and interesting themes will engage the child and allow for development in all areas of early learning.

EARLY LEARNING AREAS OF FOCUS

- Religion
- Early Literacy/Reading Readiness Beginning Math skills
- Science
- Social Studies
- Art
- Music
- Movement
- Spanish

DAILY SCHEDULE

The following is an example of our daily schedule. It is important to note that the needs of our students are primary, therefore flexibility will occur.

8:00-8:10	Arrival
8:10-8:30	Daily Brain Warm Up
8:30-9:00	Circle Time (calendar, music, stories, Jesus time, and themes)
9:00-9:20	Academic Focus, Reading/Math/Science/Social Studies
9:20-9:35	Snack
9:35-10:15	Arts and Crafts, Gross/Fine Motor and Movement Skills
10:15-10:45	Recess/Dramatic Play
10:45-11:00	Clean Up
11:00	Half Day Dismissal

11:00-11:30	Lunch
11:30-11:45	Clean Up/Restroom Break
11:45-12:30	Quiet Time
12:30-1:00	STEM
1:00-1:45	Academic Focus, Reading/Math/Science/Social Studies
1:45-2:00	Snack
2:00-2:15	Wrap Up
2:15	Dismissal

* Specials throughout the week include: Library, Spanish, Story Time, Toepke Time (Occupational Therapy), Music, Tech Time, and Gym.

HOURS OF PRE-KINDERGARTEN

The school year will begin the day after Labor Day. The Pre-Kindergarten will follow the Immaculate Heart of Mary day school calendar for vacations and other scheduled days off .

Half day hours: 8:00 A.M.-11:00 A.M. Monday-Wednesday (11:15 on Thursday)

Full day hours: 8:00 A.M.-2:15 P.M. Monday-Thursday

If your child will be absent please notify the school office at 330.923.1220.

EXPLORATION FRIDAY

This class will be offered each Friday as a half and full day option excluding any scheduled days off on the Immaculate Heart of Mary day school calendar. The hours are the same as the regular Pre-Kindergarten program. This class is an additional tuition fee for the year.

Exploration Fridays will be an extension of our regular Pre-Kindergarten program.

Hands on learning, weekly themes, enrichment activities and special events will be highlighted on these fun days.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

- Please arrive at the drop off lane no earlier than 7:55 A.M.
- Dismissal for half day students will be at 11:00 A.M. outside the main entrance.
- Parents wishing to drop off students with other siblings may arrive beginning at 7:40 A.M. The older sibling will need to walk them to the Pre-K classroom before going to their classroom.
- Dismissal for full day students will be at 2:15 P.M. at the main school doors.
- Please send a note to school if someone other than a parent/guardian or individual listed on your transportation form will be picking up your child. Your child's safety is our utmost priority.

LUNCH AND SNACKS

Full day students may pack a lunch and drink or they may purchase a lunch. Hot lunch and/or milk may be purchased through the school on a monthly basis and billed through FACTS. A lunch menu will be available each month online with the order form. In addition, you may send in money to purchase lunch and snacks for that specific day. Soft drinks in cans or bottles are not permitted at lunchtime.

Parents will provide half day children with one snack and parents with full day children will provide two snacks. Please provide nutritional snacks and either small juice boxes or small water bottles for your child.

Your child's birthday (or half birthday for children with summer birthdays) will be celebrated at school. You are welcome to come in at snack on this special day to help us celebrate.

AFTERCARE-LINX

The LINX Program is provided for Immaculate Heart of Mary Students in our Pre-K program from 2:15 P.M.– 6:00 P.M. each school day. Please visit the school website for additional information.

DRESS CODE

Students should dress appropriately and comfortably. They will be moving, playing and creating! Please send in a complete change of clothes in a Ziploc labeled with your child's name.

Tote bags or backpacks are acceptable for transporting projects, books etc.

FIELD TRIPS

Throughout the year we will expand our normal curriculum and visit some interesting places. This will enhance our curriculum and give your child an opportunity to investigate the community around them. Signed permission slips are required for your child to attend. Parents/guardians will provide all transportation.

All vehicles shall be insured, and operated in accordance with State of Ohio laws.

Drivers must be licensed. Child restraint requirements shall be used and all children shall ride in the rear seat(s).

ADMISSION

Children may be enrolled if they are 4 by August 30th and must be restroom trained. Enrollment for the Pre-Kindergarten begins in January of the upcoming academic year. Spaces are limited.

Bright Beginnings Pre-Kindergarten will accept students of any race, color, or ethnic origin. Priority will be given to siblings of students currently enrolled in Immaculate Heart of Mary School.

CLASSROOM ROSTER

A class roster will be provided by request to parents/guardians only. This will include names, addresses, phone numbers, emails and parent/guardian names.

This roster will list only those wishing to be included. Signed statements indicating this desire will be provided.

LICENSING ACCREDITATION

Bright Beginnings is licensed by the Ohio Department of Education (ODE). License and inspection forms are posted on the Bright Beginnings bulletin board outside the classroom. The ODE can be reached at 1.877.644.6338 should you have any questions.

SCHOOL CLOSING

Due to the weather in Northeast Ohio, there are days when it is not safe to transport students to school. As always, listen to your local T.V. or radio stations for the status of our school.

The following scenarios are possible:

- If Cuyahoga Falls or Woodridge is closed; then Immaculate Heart of Mary School is closed.
- If one of the area school districts (Cuyahoga Falls or Woodridge) has a delayed start and the other school district (Cuyahoga Falls or Woodridge) is open; then Immaculate Heart of Mary School is open at our regular school starting time.
- If both school districts (Cuyahoga Falls and Woodridge) have a delayed start; then Immaculate Heart of Mary will be closed.
- Immaculate Heart of Mary School reserves the right to adjust the above Calamity Day decision.

SAFETY

Children will be supervised at all times, and all school doors are kept locked. Please enter the school at the main entrance by buzzing in. You will then sign in at the school's main office if you are planning to visit the pre-kindergarten room. You will be given a visitor's badge, and always have unlimited access to your child.

If you need an early dismissal, please report to the school's main office to sign your child out. We will be notified and escort your child to you.

HEALTH

Medical and Emergency release forms will be kept on file for each child. No child shall be permitted to start school until these necessary forms are submitted. Current emergency contact information sheets will also be kept on file. Please let us know of any changes.

Please do not send your child to school unless they have been fever free for a minimum of 24 hours. Additionally, any child with diarrhea, vomiting or other contagious disease needs to remain home until the illness has subsided.

Any child that becomes ill at school will be removed from the classroom activity. You will be notified if you are needed to pick up your child. They must be signed out with our school office.

In case of any emergency or serious accident, 911 will be called and your child will be taken to the nearest hospital accompanied by our Principal or Pre-kindergarten staff. You will be contacted and told where to meet us.

The Ohio Legislature has set up definite guidelines and policies concerning the dispensing of medicine to students. If it is necessary for your child to take medication during school hours, please request a medication authorization packet from the office. If a student's medication changes, please notify the health aid immediately at 330-923-1220 ext. 14.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES AND OTHER ILLNESSES

Per the State of Ohio's Administrative Code for Preschool Programs:

The following precautions shall be taken for children suspected of having a communicable disease:

(1) The program shall immediately notify the parent or guardian of the child's condition when a child has been observed with signs or symptoms of illness.

(2) A child with any of the following signs or symptoms of illness shall be immediately isolated and discharged to his parent or guardian:

- (a) Diarrhea (more than one abnormally loose stool within a 24 hour period);
- (b) Severe coughing, causing the child to become red or blue in the face or to make a whooping sound;
- (c) Difficult or rapid breathing;
- (d) Yellowish skin or eyes;
- (e) Conjunctivitis;
- (f) Temperature of one hundred degrees Fahrenheit taken by the auxiliary method when in combination with other signs of illness;
- (g) Untreated infected skin patches;
- (h) Unusually dark urine and/or grey or white stool; or
- (i) Stiff neck; or
- (j) Evidence of lice, scabies, or other parasitic infestation.

(3) A child with any of the following signs or symptoms of illness shall be immediately isolated from other children. Decisions regarding whether the child should be discharged immediately or at some other time during the day shall be determined by the director and the parent or guardian. The child, while isolated at the program, shall be carefully watched for symptoms listed in paragraph (B)(2) of this rule as well as the following:

- (a) Unusual spots or rashes;
- (b) Sore throat or difficulty in swallowing;
- (c) Elevated temperature; or
- (d) Vomiting.

(4) Programs shall follow the Ohio department of health “communicable disease chart” (September 2009, odjfs.state.oh.us/forms) for appropriate management of suspected illnesses.

(5) A child isolated due to suspected communicable disease shall be:

- (a) Cared for in a room or portion of a room not being used in the preschool program;
 - (b) Within sight and hearing of an adult at all times. No child shall ever be left alone or unsupervised;
 - (c) Made comfortable and provided with a cot. All linens and blankets used by the ill child shall be laundered before being used by another child.

After use, the cots shall be disinfected with an appropriate germicidal agent, or, if soiled with blood, feces, vomit, or other body fluids, the cots shall be cleaned with soap and water and then disinfected with an appropriate germicidal agent;
- (d) Observed carefully for worsening condition; and
- (e) Discharged to parents, guardian, or person designated by the parent or guardian as soon as practical.

Each program shall have a written policy concerning the management of communicable disease. The policy shall include, at a minimum:

- (1) The program’s means of training all preschool staff in signs and symptoms of illness and in hand-washing and disinfection procedures;
- (2) Procedures for isolating and discharging an ill child and policy for readmitting such child.
- (3) Procedures for notifying the parent or guardian immediately when a child is exhibiting signs or symptoms of illness or has been exposed to a communicable disease; and
- (4) Procedures regarding the care of a mildly ill child. “Mildly ill child” means a child who is experiencing minor common cold symptoms, but who is not exhibiting any of the symptoms specified in paragraph (B) of this rule or a child who does not feel well enough to participate in activities, but who is not exhibiting any of the symptoms specified in paragraph (B) of this rule.
- (5) Procedures for notifying all parents of enrolled children when children are exposed to a diagnosed communicable disease such as pink eye, ringworm, chicken pox, or lice.

HEALTHCHEK SERVICES

Healthchek services are available for families that are eligible for Medicaid. Healthchek is Ohio's Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT) Program. It is a service package for babies, kids, and young adults younger than 21 who are enrolled on 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 is covered by Medicaid.

Healthchek covers ten check-ups in the first two 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 on time)
- Lead screening; and
- Other services or screenings as needed

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

If you are interested in more information about this service, please visit:

<http://medicaid.ohio.gov/FOROHIOANS/Programs/Healthchek.aspx>

COMMUNICATION

Parents will be notified of upcoming events, field trips and weekly activities with a monthly calendar. Any communication from the school to you and conversely from

you to the school will be exchanged through the child's take home folder. We will communicate with you at times via email as well.

You are encouraged and invited to attend field trips, classroom parties and assist in the room as opportunities arise. Conferences will be held at the conclusion of the 1st and 3rd quarter to meet and discuss your child's development and achievements. These will be scheduled with advance notice.

DISCHARGE POLICY

Bright Beginnings reserves the right to withdraw a child from the program if there is nonpayment, abuse either verbal or physical, of a fellow child or staff by a parent or child and disregard for the rules of the class.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

Per the State of Ohio's Administrative Code for Preschool Programs:

(A) The center's actual methods of discipline shall apply to all persons on the premises and shall be restricted as follows:

- (1) There shall be no cruel, harsh, corporal punishment or any unusual punishments such as, but not limited to, punching, pinching, shaking, spanking, or biting.
- (2) No discipline shall be delegated to any other child.
- (3) 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.
- (4) 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.
- (5) No child shall be subjected to profane language, threats, and derogatory remarks about himself or his family, or other verbal abuse.
- (6) Discipline shall not be imposed on a child for failure to eat, failure to sleep, or for toileting accidents.

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

(8) Discipline shall not include withholding good, rest, or toilet use, and food shall not be used as a reward for behavior.

(9) 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.

(10) The center shall not neglect children and shall protect children from abuse and neglect while in attendance in the preschool program.

OHIO POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

A) The program shall be guided by written policies of the board of education or governing body which are consistent with applicable statutory requirements contained in the Revised Code and rules adopted by the state board of education.

B) Once a preschool program has been established by the board of education or governing body, the program is to develop policies and procedures for the operation of the program. Policies and procedures of the preschool program shall be in accordance with policies and procedures established and approved by the governing body or board of education.

(C) Each school district, educational service center, board of developmental disabilities, community school or eligible nonpublic school that operates a program shall assign responsibilities for implementing policies and procedures.

(D) Policies shall be appropriate for children enrolled in the program shall at a minimum include, but not be limited to the following:

(1) Staff, which at a minimum meets the requirements of rule [3301-37-04](#) of the Administrative Code; and

(a) Address staff awareness of each enrolled child's cumulative and health records required in rule [3301-37-08](#) of the Administrative Code; and

(b) Include procedures for checking references of potential employees.

(2) Cumulative records which at a minimum meets the requirements of rule [3301-37-08](#) of the Administrative Code;

(3) Developmentally appropriate program planning which at a minimum meets the requirements of rule [3301-37-03](#) of the Administrative Code; and

(a) Addresses developmentally appropriate materials and equipment;

(b) Addresses selection and use of developmentally appropriate materials, equipment, and resources that meet the intellectual, physical, social, and emotional needs of the preschool child.

(4) Health and safety procedures, in accordance with section [3301.56](#) of the Revised Code and, the following:

(a) Ensuring that the health and safety of the children are safeguarded by an organized program of school health services designed to identify child health problems and to coordinate school and community health resources for children, as evidenced by but not limited to:

(i) Requiring immunization records and compliance with emergency medical authorization requirements in accordance with rules adopted by the state board of education under section [3301.53](#) of the Revised Code;

(ii) Providing and posting procedures for emergency situations, including fire drills, rapid dismissals, and tornado drills in accordance with section [3737.73](#) of the Revised Code, and keeping records of such drills or dismissals;

(iii) Posting medical and dental emergency procedures in each preschool room and

by each telephone and making such available to school personnel, children, and parents;

(iv) Posting emergency numbers by each telephone;

(v) Supervising grounds, play areas, and other facilities when scheduled for use by children; and

(vi) Procedures for providing written notification to parents on the day of the injury/incident, when a child is injured or a serious health/safety incident occurs and maintaining a log of all injury/incident reports.

(b) Providing first-aid facilities and materials.

(c) Prior to administering a prescription or nonprescription medication, food supplement, or medical food, the program shall ensure that:

(i) The written instructions of a licensed physician or licensed dentist as appropriate are on file.

(ii) Each time medication, medical food, or a food supplement is administered, a written record or log including dosage, date, and time shall be made. That record or log shall be kept on file for one year.

(iii) Only employees who are health professionals or who have completed a drug administration training may administer medication pursuant to section [3313.713](#) of the Revised Code.

(iv) Medication shall be stored in a designated locked storage place, except drugs requiring refrigeration shall be kept in a refrigerator not accessible to children. Emergency medication may be kept in an unlocked storage place as long as it is out of reach of children.

(v) Parent permission is needed for the application of topical products and lotions and is to be applied according to the manufacturers instructions.

(d) All preschool staff members shall wash their hands with soap and running water after each diaper change, or 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. Disposable towels or an air hand dryer shall be available at all times.

(e) Preschool program with swimming and water play activities in bodies of water two or more feet in depth, shall:

(i) Have written permission from the parent or guardian of a child before the child shall be permitted to swim or otherwise participate in water play activities. the written permission shall be signed and dated, and shall include the following:

(a) The child's name;

(b) A statement indicating whether or not the child is a swimmer; and

(c) That the parent or guardian grants permission for the child to participate in water activities.

(ii) The program shall provide enough preschool staff members to meet the requirements of rule [3301-37-04](#) of the Administrative Code at all times during swimming and water play activities.

(f) Swimming activities at sites other than the preschool program location, shall:

(i) Have preschool staff members shall always accompany and supervise children at swimming sites, including, but not limited to, public or private swimming pools,.

(ii) Swimming sites removed from the program shall be approved and supervised by local authorities.

(iii) Activities in bodies of water eighteen inches in depth shall be supervised by persons who are currently certified as lifeguards or water safety instructors by the American red cross or an equivalent water safety program.

(iv) The program shall provide enough preschool staff members to meet the requirements of rule [3301-37-04](#) of the Administrative Code at all times during swimming and water play activities.

(5) Admission and attendance which at a minimum meets the requirements of:

(a) Supervising each child's admission, placement, transition, and withdrawal according to established procedures.

(b) Preparing at least once annually for each group of children in the program a roster of the name and telephone number of the child and of the child's parent and, on request, furnishing the roster for each parent.

(c) Preparing a similar roster of all children in the program and, on request, make it available to each parent with a child in the program.

(i) Securing from each parent a signed statement indicating whether such individual desires to be included in rosters prepared in accordance with this paragraph.

(ii) Ensuring that a roster is not furnished to any person other than a parent.

(6) Behavior management/discipline which at a minimum meets the requirements of rule [3301-37-10](#) of the Administrative Code;

(7) Management of communicable diseases which at a minimum meets the requirements of rule [3301-37-11](#) of the Administrative Code; and

(a) In each building in which a program is operated there shall be readily available at all times at least one preschool staff member who has completed a course approved by the state department of health (www.odh.ohio.gov):

- (i) Age appropriate first aid;
- (ii) Prevention, recognition, and management of communicable diseases; and
- (iii) Age appropriate CPR.

(b) In each building in which a program is operated, there shall be readily available at all times at least one preschool staff member who has completed a child abuse recognition and prevention course based on an approved curriculum or an approved certification granting entity. The curriculum used in the course may be consistent with requirements as established by section [3319.073](#) of the Revised Code or appear on the approved curriculum or organization list posted on the department's website.

(c) Diapering, which at a minimum meets the requirements of rule [3301-37-12](#) of the Administrative Code.

(8) Transportation and field trips.

(9) Infants under twelve months old are to be placed on their backs to sleep unless the parent provides written documentation signed by the child's physician, for an alternative position. Infants who are able to roll from back to front and front to back are to be placed initially on their back for sleeping but allowed to remain in a position they prefer. All preschool programs are to comply with the Ohio department of health safe sleep procedures.

(E) Any parent of a child enrolled in the program shall be permitted unlimited access to the school during its hours of operation to contact his or her child, evaluate the care provided by the program, the premises, or for other purposes approved by the director. Upon

entering the premises, the parent shall report to the school office.

(F) A preschool program serving a preschool child with a disability in a public school shall do so in accordance with Chapter 3301-51 of the Administrative Code.