



Ave Maria Catholic Preschool

**Preschool Parent Handbook
2026/2027**

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7:45 a.m.-3:30 p.m.**

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Mission

Mission of Ave Maria Academy Preschool

Rooted in the Catholic intellectual tradition, Ave Maria Academy Preschool forms young minds, hearts, and souls through a commitment to faith, reason, virtue, and academic readiness. In partnership with families as the primary educators of their children, our preschool provides a safe, nurturing, and developmentally appropriate environment where each child's unique, God-given gifts are recognized and supported.

We believe every child is created in the image and likeness of God and is deserving of dignity, respect, and love. Through intentional teaching, guided play, prayer, and meaningful relationships, we foster spiritual growth, curiosity, independence, compassion, and joy in learning.

As an integral part of Ave Maria Academy, the preschool shares in the school's commitment to strong Catholic identity, academic excellence, character formation, and community. Our youngest learners are welcomed into the life of the Academy and supported as they grow in confidence, faith, and readiness for continued education.

Philosophy

Ave Maria Academy Preschool embraces a faith-centered and developmentally appropriate approach to early childhood education.

Our program emphasizes:

- A nurturing, structured environment that promotes safety and trust
- Positive guidance strategies that support social-emotional development
- Learning through play, exploration, and hands-on experiences
- Respect for each child's unique developmental pace
- Formation in virtue through modeling, prayer, and community
- Active partnership and open communication with families

We recognize that early childhood is a critical period of growth and learning. Our preschool supports the whole child (spiritually, socially, emotionally, cognitively, and physically) while maintaining high standards of supervision, safety, and program quality.

Partnership Agreement Between Parents and School

Our school community is a special place, rich with opportunities for learning, growth, and belonging. It takes all members of our community, working together, to maintain our strong school environment. With this in mind, we expect all parents/guardians of our students to commit to do the following.

- Support the faith. In words and actions, support Catholic education and the teachings of the Catholic Church. For the good of their children, parents are asked to do their best to live up to the moral standards of the Catholic faith and to seek guidance from God.

- Support the school. Act in partnership with faculty and staff. Respect and follow decisions reached by the school, even if you disagree with them.
- Be respectful. Communicate respectfully, kindly, and truthfully with fellow members of the school community, including faculty, staff, students, and other families of students. Refrain from gossip. Address complaints or disagreements privately, without unnecessarily publicizing them or involving others.
- Be positive. Value and build up the reputation of the school and members of the school community, helping to create a positive academic and social environment.
- Follow school policies. Adhere to all school policies as outlined in the Ave Maria Academy Student and Parent Handbook.

Consequences for not upholding these commitments may include, without limitation, verbal or written warnings, removal or bans from school grounds, or mandatory withdrawal of children from enrollment.

Admissions

General Admission Policy

Ave Maria Academy Preschool welcomes families who desire a Catholic education rooted in faith, reason, and virtue. As an integral part of Ave Maria Academy, the preschool supports the mission and philosophy of the school and operates in partnership with parents as the primary educators of their children.

Ave Maria Academy admits students of any race, color, national origin, sex, or religious background to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school.

Enrollment in the preschool program is contingent upon:

- Available space within licensed capacity
- Staffing in compliance with Minnesota Rule 9503
- Completion of all required enrollment documentation
- The preschool's ability to meet the developmental and safety needs of the child within the structure of the program

Enrollment Priorities

As a Catholic school community, enrollment priority may be given to:

- Currently enrolled Ave Maria Academy families
- Siblings of current students
- Families actively engaged in the Ave Maria Academy community
- Other interested families, as space allows

Admission During the School Year

Ave Maria Academy Preschool may accept new students during the school year provided:

- Licensed capacity allows
- Staffing ratios remain compliant with Minnesota Rule 9503
- All required enrollment documentation is completed
- The preschool determines it can meet the child's developmental and safety needs

Families enrolling mid-year must complete all required documentation prior to the child's first day of attendance, including health records, immunization documentation, physical examination verification, and completion of the Individual Child Care Program Plan (ICCPP).

Tuition Agreement

Enrollment in Ave Maria Academy Preschool constitutes an agreement between the family and the school to meet all financial and program obligations.

Tuition rates, payment schedules, and billing procedures are communicated separately to families prior to enrollment. Specific tuition amounts are not required to be published within this handbook.

Families are responsible for reviewing and agreeing to tuition terms at the time of registration. Questions regarding tuition or payment arrangements should be directed to the school administration.

Licensing Capacity

Ave Maria Academy Preschool is licensed by the Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families (MNDCYF) under Minnesota Rule 9503.

The preschool operates within the licensed capacity assigned by the state. Classroom size, group composition, and staffing ratios are maintained in full compliance with state licensing requirements at all times.

Enrollment will not exceed the licensed capacity.

Parents or guardians may contact MNDCYF regarding the preschool's licensing status or to express concerns about care.

Required Enrollment Documentation

Before a child may begin attending preschool, the following documentation must be completed and on file:

- Completed enrollment forms
- Emergency contact information
- Authorized pick-up list
- Health care summary
- Immunization documentation or legal exemption form

- Completed Individual Child Care Program Plan (ICCPP)
- Any applicable medical action plans

Children may not attend preschool until all required documentation is received and reviewed.

Classroom Age Groups

Age Groups Served

Ave Maria Academy Preschool serves children during the early childhood years by providing a developmentally appropriate learning environment that supports the growth of the whole child, spiritually, socially, emotionally, physically, and academically.

Children are placed in classrooms based on their age, developmental readiness, and available space within the preschool program.

Ages Served

Ave Maria Academy Preschool serves children who are three and four years of age by September 1 of the current school year, unless otherwise approved by preschool administration.

Ave Maria Academy Preschool is licensed to serve preschool-age children ages 3 to 5, with a total licensed capacity of 60 children.

Children enrolled in the preschool program are expected to be fully toilet trained prior to the start of the school year unless a specific plan has been approved by the preschool administration.

Program Structure

The preschool program offers learning experiences designed to support school readiness and the development of social, emotional, physical, and cognitive skills.

Program options may include:

- Half-day preschool
- Full-day preschool
- School-day preschool

Specific schedule options and program availability may vary from year to year based on enrollment and program needs. The preschool offers the following program options: Half-day preschool and school day options.

The Child Care Program Plan is available to parents upon request at any time.

Licensing Capacity

Ave Maria Academy Preschool is licensed by the Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families (MNDCYF) and operates in compliance with Minnesota Rule 9503 governing licensed child care centers.

The preschool maintains enrollment and staffing levels in compliance with MNDCYF licensing requirements, including:

- required teacher-to-child ratios
- maximum group size
- licensed classroom capacity

Classroom enrollment will not exceed the capacity approved through the preschool's state license. Ave Maria Academy Preschool is licensed to serve preschool-age children ages 3 to 5, with a total licensed capacity of 60 children.

Classroom Environment

Each preschool classroom provides a safe, nurturing, and engaging environment where children learn through:

- play-based learning experiences
- hands-on exploration
- social interaction with peers
- guided instruction from teachers
- faith-based experiences that support Catholic values

Teachers design classroom activities that support the developmental needs of young children while helping children build the foundational skills necessary for kindergarten readiness.

Arrival and Pick-Up Procedures

The safety and well-being of all children is a top priority at Ave Maria Academy Preschool. Arrival and departure procedures are designed to ensure that every child is safely accounted for throughout the preschool day.

Arrival Procedures

Children must be signed in by a parent, authorized adult or teacher upon arrival each day. At arrival:

- The child must be signed in according to the preschool's attendance procedures.
- A preschool staff member will greet the child and assist with the transition into the classroom.

Preschool staff maintain accurate daily attendance records. Attendance is used to ensure that all children are accounted for throughout the preschool day.

Families are encouraged to arrive on time so children can fully participate in classroom routines and activities.

Pick-Up Procedures

Children must be signed out by a parent, authorized adult or teacher at the end of the preschool day.

- A parent, authorized adult or teacher must sign the child out.

- A preschool staff member will ensure the child is safely released.
- Children will only be released directly to a parent or authorized adult listed on the child's emergency contact form.

For safety reasons, children will not be released to anyone who is not listed as an authorized pick-up person.

Parents are asked to notify the preschool teacher or school office if there will be any change to their child's normal pick-up arrangements.

Authorized Pick-Up

For the safety of all children, only individuals authorized by the child's parent or legal guardian may pick up a child from preschool.

At enrollment, parents must provide a list of individuals who are authorized to pick up their child. This list must include contact information for each authorized person.

Individuals unfamiliar to staff may be asked to provide valid photo identification before a child is released to them.

Changes to the authorized pick-up list must be made in writing by the parent or guardian. If custody agreements or court orders affect who may pick up a child, families must provide the preschool with a copy of the appropriate legal documentation.

Late Pick-Up

Children should be picked up promptly at the end of their scheduled preschool program. If an unexpected delay occurs, parents should notify the preschool teacher or school office as soon as possible.

If a child is not picked up within a reasonable time after dismissal and staff have not been able to reach a parent or authorized adult, the preschool will follow its emergency contact procedures. Repeated late pick-ups may require a meeting with preschool administration and may result in additional fees as determined by school policy.

Attendance

Regular attendance supports children in developing consistent routines and fully participating in the preschool program. Families are encouraged to ensure that children arrive on time and attend regularly whenever possible.

Reporting an Absence

If a child will be absent from preschool, parents or guardians are required to notify the preschool as soon as possible. Absences should be reported according to the communication procedures shared with families at the start of the school year.

Attendance Records

Ave Maria Academy Preschool staff maintain accurate attendance records each day. Children must be signed in by a parent or authorized adult upon arrival and signed out at departure.

Children must be signed in by a parent or authorized adult upon arrival and signed out at departure in accordance with preschool procedures.

Throughout the preschool day, staff conduct name-to-face checks during transitions and activities to ensure that all children are accounted for at all times.

Missing Child Procedure

If a child is discovered to be missing while in attendance at preschool, staff will immediately take the following steps:

1. Staff notify administration immediately
2. Staff search the building and playground
3. Parents are contacted immediately
4. Emergency services are contacted if the child cannot be located quickly

Birthdays

Birthdays are a special time for young children, Ave Maria Academy Preschool enjoys celebrating this important milestone with each child.

Families who wish to celebrate their child's birthday at preschool may bring a small treat or item to share with the class. In support of healthy classroom practices and the well-being of all students, families are encouraged to consider non-food treats, such as:

- a favorite book to read to the class
- stickers or small art items
- pencils or other small classroom-friendly items

If food treats are brought to school, they should be store-bought and packaged in consideration of food safety and possible allergies. Families should consult with the classroom teacher before bringing food items to ensure that all classroom health and allergy considerations are respected.

Children with summer birthdays may celebrate a half-birthday or another designated day during the school year.

Birthday party invitations may be distributed at school only if every child in the class is invited. Otherwise, families should distribute invitations outside of the school setting.

Emergency Preparedness

Ave Maria Academy Preschool maintains emergency procedures to protect the safety and well-being of all children, staff, and visitors. Staff are trained in emergency preparedness and follow established procedures in the event of an emergency.

Fire Drills

Fire drills are conducted regularly throughout the year in accordance with Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families (MNDCYF) licensing requirements and local fire marshal regulations.

During a fire drill:

- Teachers calmly guide children to the designated evacuation exit.
- Children are escorted to the designated safe evacuation area outside the building.
- Staff bring attendance records and emergency contact information.
- A name-to-face attendance check is conducted to ensure that all children are accounted for.

Staff remain with children until it is safe to return to the building.

Fire evacuation routes and exit maps are posted in each classroom and reviewed regularly with staff.

Fire drills are practiced in a developmentally appropriate manner to help children learn safe evacuation procedures without causing unnecessary stress.

Fire drills are conducted monthly and a log of dates and times is maintained showing that the fire drills were held.

Staff persons responsible for the evacuation of children in all areas of the center are identified and trained in their roles.

Tornado drills are conducted monthly from April through September and a log of dates and times is maintained showing that drills were held.

Bomb Threats

In the event of a bomb threat or similar emergency situation, Ave Maria Academy Preschool follows the emergency procedures established by Ave Maria Academy and local emergency authorities.

If a bomb threat is received:

- School administration will notify emergency authorities immediately.
- Staff will follow evacuation procedures if directed to do so.
- Teachers will escort children to the designated safe relocation area.
- Staff will conduct attendance checks to ensure that all children are accounted for.

Children will remain under the direct supervision of staff at all times during the evacuation process.

Parents or guardians will be notified according to school communication procedures if an emergency situation requires relocation or early dismissal.

Emergency Preparedness

Ave Maria Academy Preschool maintains a written Emergency Preparedness Plan in accordance with MNDCYF licensing requirements.

Staff are trained in emergency procedures, including:

- fire evacuation
- severe weather sheltering
- lockdown procedures
- relocation procedures
- missing child procedures

Emergency procedures are practiced periodically to ensure staff preparedness and the safety of all children.

Emergency and Accident Prevention

Staff follow safety rules to avoid injuries and poisoning. This includes active supervision, daily safety checks, and secure storage of hazardous materials, cleaning supplies, and potentially dangerous items out of reach of children at all times.

Building Code for Facility

Ave Maria Academy Preschool operates in a facility that meets all applicable health and safety requirements as established by the Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families (MNDCYF), local fire marshal, and applicable building and safety regulations.

The preschool facility complies with applicable local building, fire, and safety codes. The building is inspected as required to ensure the safety and well-being of all children in care.

Classroom Space and Safety

Preschool classrooms provide a minimum of 35 square feet of usable space per child, as required by MNDCYF. Classrooms and adjacent areas are arranged to support safe movement, active supervision, and age-appropriate learning.

The preschool environment is designed to ensure:

- No accessible hot surfaces
- Covered electrical outlets when not in use
- Secure storage of hazardous materials
- Clear and accessible exits

Fire Safety and Equipment

Fire extinguishers are located in accordance with state and local fire code requirements and are easily accessible to staff. Emergency exit routes and evacuation maps are posted in each classroom.

Bathrooms and Handwashing

Bathroom facilities are readily accessible to preschool classrooms and are designed to meet the needs of young children. Toilets, sinks, and handwashing stations are appropriately sized or adapted for children's use. Handwashing procedures are supervised by staff to promote hygiene and safety.

Water temperature does not exceed 120 degrees Fahrenheit, in accordance with licensing requirements.

Temperature and Ventilation

Classroom temperatures are maintained at a minimum of 68 degrees Fahrenheit. Heating, ventilation, and lighting are monitored to ensure a comfortable and safe environment for children and staff.

Daily Safety Checks

Preschool staff conduct daily safety checks of classroom and play areas prior to children's arrival. Any identified hazards are addressed immediately or reported to appropriate personnel for resolution before children enter the space.

Calendar

Ave Maria Academy Preschool generally follows the Ave Maria Academy school calendar, including holidays, school breaks, and scheduled days off.

At the beginning of each school year, families will receive a preschool calendar outlining important dates such as:

- the first and last day of preschool
- holidays and school breaks
- conference days
- special school events
- early dismissal days (if applicable)

Families will be notified of any updates or changes to the calendar through school communication channels.

School Closures

Ave Maria Academy Preschool will follow school closure decisions made by Ave Maria Academy administration due to:

- severe weather
- emergency situations
- building or safety concerns
- other circumstances affecting the safe operation of the school

Families will be notified of school closures or schedule changes through the school's communication system.

Communication of Calendar Information

Calendar updates and important announcements may be shared with families through:

- school email communications
- parent newsletters
- the school website

Families are encouraged to review communications regularly to remain informed about upcoming preschool events and schedule changes.

Class Schedules

Daily schedules at Ave Maria Academy Preschool are designed to provide children with a balance of structured learning experiences, creative play, social interaction, and quiet activities. Consistent routines help children feel secure and support their social, emotional, and academic development.

Teachers plan daily schedules that include opportunities for children to grow in faith, build relationships, and develop foundational skills for future learning.

Daily schedules may include the following components:

- Morning welcome and classroom routines
- Prayer and faith-based experiences
- Circle time and group learning activities
- Hands-on learning centers and play-based exploration
- Small group instruction
- Snack or meal time
- Outdoor play and large motor activities
- Story time and language development activities
- Creative expression through art, music, and movement
- Rest or quiet time (if applicable)

Children participate in both active and quiet learning experiences throughout the day in order to support healthy development and engagement.

Outdoor play is incorporated into the daily schedule whenever weather conditions allow. Outdoor activities support physical development and provide children with opportunities for exploration and social interaction.

Families will be informed of their child's classroom schedule at the beginning of the school year.

Hours and Days of Operation

The preschool operates Monday through Friday from 7:45am to 3:30pm

Program options include:

- Half-Day AM: 7:45am to 11:45pm
- Full School-Day: 7:45 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Preschool Chain of Command

1. Classroom Teacher

The classroom teacher is the primary point of contact for questions related to daily routines, classroom experiences, and child-specific information.

2. Head of School - Ericka Walz and Pre-School and Pre-Kindergarten Director Katie Gooley

- The Head of School provides leadership and oversight for preschool programming within the broader school structure.
- The Preschool Director is responsible for ensuring excellence and compliance with MNDCYF licensing requirements for Ave Maria's preschool/prekindergarten program and for the overall planning, management, coordination, and evaluation of the admissions process along with implementing and overseeing activities necessary to grow the school.

Families are encouraged to address concerns at the appropriate level to support timely resolution and clear communication.

Closing of School Due to Weather Conditions

The safety of children, families, and staff is the primary consideration when determining whether Ave Maria Academy Preschool will close due to severe weather or other emergency conditions.

Weather-Related Closures

In most situations, Ave Maria Academy Preschool will follow the Ave Maria Academy school closure and delay decisions. These decisions are made by school administration based on weather forecasts, road conditions, and the safety of students, families, and staff.

If Ave Maria Academy closes due to severe weather, the preschool program will also be closed.

Communication of Closures

School closures, delayed openings, or early dismissals will be communicated to families through the school's established communication channels, which may include:

- school email notifications
- the school communication platform
- the school website
- local media announcements - WCCO School Closure

Families are encouraged to monitor school communications closely during periods of severe weather.

Parent Discretion

Families are encouraged to use their own judgment when determining whether it is safe to travel during inclement weather. If a family chooses to keep their child home due to weather conditions, the absence will be respected.

Clothing

Children at Ave Maria Academy Preschool should be dressed in the required school uniform which supports active play, comfort, and independence throughout the preschool day.

Clothing Expectations

- Children should be able to manage their uniform independently whenever possible (e.g., elastic waistbands, easy fasteners).
- Closed-toe shoes with secure soles are required for safety.
- Clothing on an out of uniform day should allow for participation in art, sensory activities, and outdoor play.

Outdoor Clothing

Preschool children participate in outdoor play daily, weather permitting. Families are responsible for providing appropriate seasonal outdoor clothing, which may include:

- Coats or jackets
- Hats and mittens
- Boots and snow pants (during winter months)
- Rain gear, as needed

All items should be clearly labeled with the child's name.

Extra Clothing

Families are asked to provide a complete change of clothing for their child, which will be kept at school in case of spills, accidents, or weather-related needs. Extra clothing should be labeled and replaced as needed.

Families are encouraged to keep an extra set of clothing at school.

Communication

Open and consistent communication between families and Ave Maria Academy Preschool supports positive relationships and promotes the well-being of each child.

Communication with Teachers

Families are encouraged to communicate regularly with their child's classroom teacher regarding questions, concerns, or updates that may affect their child's day. Teachers will communicate their availability to respond to messages outside of instructional time.

For urgent messages, families should contact the Ave Maria Academy main phone line, as teachers are not able to check messages while supervising children.

Program Communication

Ave Maria Academy Preschool communicates important information to families through established communication channels, which may include:

- Email
- Newsletters

- Classroom or program notices

Families are encouraged to read all communications carefully and respond promptly when information or action is requested.

Confidentiality and Respectful Communication

All communication between families and staff is expected to be respectful and professional.

Matters related to individual children are handled confidentially and shared only with appropriate staff.

Parent Access to the Program

Parents or legal guardians of enrolled children may visit the preschool at any time during the hours of operation.

Visits are expected to support a positive and respectful classroom environment and may not interfere with supervision or daily routines.

Parent Access to Program Information

The preschool's Child Care Program Plan, licensing information, and program policies are available to families upon request at any time.

Media, Research, and Publicity Participation

Written parental permission will be obtained before each occasion of research, experimental procedure, or public relations activity involving a child.

Before a child participates, Ave Maria Academy Preschool will provide the child's parent or legal guardian with information regarding the specific activity and obtain the parent's or legal guardian's written permission. A separate written permission will be obtained for each occasion.

This includes, but is not limited to, photographs, videos, or other media used for school communication, marketing, or public relations purposes.

A child will not participate in the research, experimental procedure, or public relations activity unless the required written parental permission has been obtained.

Conferences

Conferences and ongoing assessment practices are an important part of supporting each child's development at Ave Maria Academy Preschool. These practices help ensure open communication between families and staff and guide instructional planning.

Parent Conferences

Parent teacher conferences are offered at least twice per year, typically in the fall and spring.

Conferences provide an opportunity to discuss each child's growth and development in the following areas:

- Social and emotional development
- Academic and Language development
- Spiritual development

If additional conferences are needed, families may request a meeting with the classroom teacher or preschool administrator.

Assessment Practices

Ave Maria Academy Preschool uses developmentally appropriate assessment methods to observe and document children's progress. Assessment practices may include:

- Ongoing observation during play and daily activities
- Individual or small-group interactions
- Collection of work samples

Assessments are used to:

- Inform lesson planning and classroom activities
- Support individual children's needs
- Guide communication with families

Formal preschool screening, when applicable, occurs outside of the preschool program through local school districts or community agencies.

Confidentiality of Assessment Information

All assessment information is kept confidential and shared only with parents or guardians and appropriate preschool staff. Records are maintained in accordance with MNDCYF requirements and data privacy standards.

Confidentiality of Records

Ave Maria Academy Preschool is committed to protecting the privacy and confidentiality of children and families. All records are maintained in accordance with MNDCYF licensing requirements and applicable state and federal data privacy laws.

Children's Records

Each child enrolled in Ave Maria Academy Preschool has an individual file that may include:

- Enrollment and emergency contact information
- Health and immunization records
- Assessment and developmental documentation
- Incident and accident reports, when applicable

Parent and Guardian Access

Parents or legal guardians have the right to review their child's records upon request. Requests to review records should be directed to the preschool administrator and will be accommodated within a reasonable timeframe.

Access by Authorized Individuals

Access to children's records is limited to:

- Parents or legal guardians
- Preschool teaching staff, as necessary for care and supervision
- Preschool administration
- MNDCYF licensing representatives or other regulatory authorities, as required

Information will not be released to outside parties without written parental consent, except as permitted or required by law.

Confidentiality Expectations

All staff members are trained in confidentiality practices and are expected to maintain discretion regarding information related to children, families, and staff. Confidential information is shared only when necessary to support the health, safety, and well-being of children in care.

Behavior Guidance Policies

Behavior Guidance Statement of Practice

In accordance with Minnesota Rules, part 9503.0055, subpart 1, this preschool program ensures that each child is provided with a positive model of acceptable behavior. Behavior guidance practices are tailored to the developmental level of the children the center is licensed to serve. Staff redirect children and groups away from problems toward constructive activity in order to reduce conflict. Children are taught how to use acceptable alternatives to problem behavior in order to reduce conflict. Behavior guidance practices protect the safety of children and staff persons and provide immediate and directly related consequences for a child's unacceptable behavior.

Commitment to Positive Guidance

Staff are committed to providing a safe, supportive, and nurturing learning environment for all children. Behavior guidance is based on the principles of respect, dignity, developmental appropriateness, and positive reinforcement. Children are supported in learning to manage their behavior in ways that promote emotional regulation, cooperation, and responsibility.

Behavior expectations are clearly communicated, modeled, and reinforced daily. Children are taught to:

- Use words to express needs and feelings
- Show kindness and respect for others
- Solve problems constructively
- Ask for adult help when needed

Guidance Techniques Used by Staff

Staff use the following age-appropriate, non-punitive strategies:

- Modeling appropriate behavior
- Verbal reminders and redirection
- Offering acceptable choices
- Problem-solving instruction
- Natural and logical consequences
- Removal from the activity or environment (when appropriate)

Persistent Unacceptable Behavior

Examples of unacceptable behavior include, but are not limited to: biting, hitting, kicking, pinching, spitting, choking, cursing, and any behavior that endangers the child or others.

To comply with Minnesota Rules, part 9503.0055, subpart 2, the following procedures are followed:

1. Observation and Documentation

- Staff will observe and record the child's persistent unacceptable behavior and the staff's response over a two-week period.
- Documentation includes:
 - Date, time, and description of the behavior
 - Context in which the behavior occurred
 - Interventions attempted
 - Outcome of the intervention
- Observations are maintained in a behavior log reviewed by the program director.

2. Family Communication

- Parents will be contacted to review documentation and collaborate on understanding the child's behavior.
- An additional conference will be scheduled to share observations and determine next steps.

3. Development of a Behavior Support Plan

- If concerning behavior continues, a Behavior Support Plan will be developed in consultation with:
- The child's parent/guardian
 - Program staff
 - The director
 - Professionals (when appropriate)
- The plan will outline:
 - Target behaviors
 - Interventions and strategies
 - Consistency across environments
 - Follow-up timeline

4. Plan Implementation and Monitoring

- The plan will be implemented for two weeks or what is agreed upon.
- Staff will document continued observations and progress.
- Parents and staff will review and revise the plan if needed.

5. Referral and Evaluation (if needed)

- If behaviors persist, the program may request an evaluation by a qualified professional.

- Families and staff will collaborate to implement recommendations. 6. Enrollment Decisions
- If significant progress is not made, or if families are unwilling to participate in the plan, the program reserves the right to terminate enrollment.

Separation from the Group

A child may only be separated if:

- Less intrusive strategies have been tried and were unsuccessful
- The child's behavior threatens their own safety or the safety of others

When a child is separated:

- Remain within an unenclosed part of the classroom . They remain within sight and sound of staff in an enclosed part of the classroom.
- The child returns to the group as soon as the behavior stops
- The separation is documented in the daily log, including:
 - Child and staff names
 - Time and date
 - Behavior and attempted strategies
 - Risk to child or others

If a child is separated:

- 3 or more times in one day, or
- 5 or more times in one week, or
- 8 or more times in two weeks, then the Persistent Behavior process is activated.

Parents are notified of each separation. A written incident report is provided and retained in the child's file.

Sending a Child Home

If a child's behavior escalates to a point where de-escalation is not possible and their behavior continues to pose a risk to themselves or others, they may be sent home for the remainder of the day. This decision:

- Is made by the program director or designated lead
- Is documented in the behavior log and incident report
- An additional conference and a follow-up with the family

If a child is sent home more than twice due to behavior, the child's continued enrollment will be evaluated as part of the persistent behavior process.

Prohibited Practices

In compliance with MND CYF requirements, staff must not:

- Use corporal punishment, including but not limited to: Rough handling, shoving, hair pulling, ear pulling, shaking, spanking, slapping, kicking, biting, pinching, or hitting
- Use emotional abuse, including but not limited to: name-calling, ostracism, shaming, making derogatory remarks about a child or the child's family, or using language that threatens, humiliates, or frightens the child.

- Withhold food, warmth, clothing, light, or medical care as punishment
- Use mechanical, prone, or contraindicated restraints
- Punish children for lapses in toilet training

Physical Restraint Policy

Physical restraint is only used in emergency situations to prevent harm and must follow these guidelines:

- This preschool program must not use a prone restraint on any person receiving services in a program, except in the instances allowed by law.
- If a person rolls into a prone position during the use of a restraint, the person must be restored to a non prone position as quickly as possible.

Contraindicated Restraints Policy

In accordance with MN Statutes the following policy applies:

- This preschool program must not implement a restraint on a person in a way that is contraindicated for any of the person's known medical or psychological conditions.
- Prior to using restraint, the program will:
 - Assess the child for any contraindications
 - Document the assessment
 - Determine the types of restraints not to be used based on this assessment

Mechanical and prone restraints are never permitted.

Separation from the Group

A child may be separated from the group only when:

1. Less intrusive methods of guiding behavior have been tried and were ineffective; and
2. The child's behavior threatens the well-being or safety of the child or others.

When separation occurs:

- The child remains in an unenclosed part of the classroom.
- The child must be continuously seen and heard by a staff person at all times.
- The child is returned to the group as soon as the behavior that precipitated the separation abates or stops.
- Separation is never used as punishment.

Children between the ages of 6 weeks and 16 months are never separated from the group as a means of behavior guidance.

Family Concerns

Ave Maria Academy Preschool recognizes that children's development and well-being are influenced by changes and experiences within their family life. Open communication between families and preschool staff supports a positive and responsive learning environment.

Sharing Family Information

Families are encouraged to inform preschool staff of any significant changes or events that may affect their child, such as:

- Illness or hospitalization of a family member
- Death of a loved one
- Changes in family structure (e.g., separation, divorce, custody changes)
- Other circumstances that may impact a child's emotional well-being

This information allows staff to respond with appropriate care, understanding, and support.

Support and Resources

When concerns arise, Ave Maria Academy Preschool staff will work collaboratively with families to support the child. This may include:

- Additional communication between home and school
- Classroom strategies to support the child's needs
- Referrals to community or school-based resources when appropriate

Communication Expectations

Families are encouraged to communicate concerns in a timely and respectful manner, following the preschool's chain of command. All concerns are handled with discretion and confidentiality.

Field Trips

Ave Maria Academy Preschool may offer limited in house field trip experiences that enhance classroom learning and are developmentally appropriate for preschool-aged children.

All field trip experiences are conducted within the preschool and school building. The program does not conduct off-site field trips.

Children remain within the licensed facility at all times during field trip experiences.

All field trips are planned and conducted in accordance with MNDCYF licensing requirements to ensure the safety and supervision of all children.

Permission and Communication

Written parent or guardian permission is required prior to a child's participation in any field trip. Families will be notified in advance of:

- The location within the building
- The purpose of the experience
- Date and approximate time
- Confirmation that the field trip will take place within the school building (no off-site travel)
- Supervision details

Children who do not have written permission will not participate in the field trip.

Supervision and Safety

During all field trip experiences:

- MNDCYF required teacher-to-child ratios are maintained at all times
- Children remain under direct supervision
- Attendance is taken before leaving the classroom space, during transitions, and upon return
- Staff carry emergency contact information and follow established safety procedures

Transportation

Ave Maria Academy Preschool does not provide transportation and does not conduct off-site field trips.

Goals and Objectives of the Preschool Program

Ave Maria Academy Preschool provides a developmentally appropriate, faith-centered learning environment that supports the growth of the whole child. Our goals and objectives reflect best practices in early childhood education and are aligned with Ave Maria Academy School's educational philosophy.

Spiritual Development

Children are supported in developing an awareness of God's love and their role within a caring community. Through age-appropriate prayer, storytelling, music, and modeling, children are encouraged to:

- Recognize that each person is created and loved by God
- Practice kindness, respect, and compassion toward others
- Participate in simple faith experiences appropriate for their age

Social and Emotional Development

Ave Maria Academy Preschool fosters a nurturing environment that supports children in developing self-confidence, independence, and positive relationships. Objectives include helping children to:

- Develop a sense of belonging and trust
- Learn to express emotions appropriately
- Build friendships and practice cooperation
- Develop problem-solving and self-regulation skills

Academic and Language Development

The preschool program encourages curiosity, exploration, and a love of learning through play-based and inquiry-driven experiences. Children are supported in:

- Developing early language and communication skills
- Engaging in problem-solving and critical thinking
- Exploring concepts through hands-on learning experiences

Physical Development

Children are provided with opportunities to strengthen both fine and gross motor skills through:

- Active indoor and outdoor play
- Manipulative and sensory activities

- Developmentally appropriate movement experiences

Grievance Policy

Ave Maria Academy Preschool is committed to open communication and respectful resolution of concerns. Families are encouraged to share questions or concerns promptly so they may be addressed in a timely and appropriate manner.

Steps for Resolving Concerns

Parents or guardians who have concerns related to the preschool program, policies, or personnel are asked to follow the grievance process outlined below:

1. **Classroom Teacher**
Concerns should first be discussed with the child's classroom teacher, as many questions can be resolved through direct communication.
2. **Preschool Administrator - Katie Gooley**
If the concern is not resolved at the classroom level, parents or guardians should contact the preschool administrator.
3. **Head of School - Ericka Walz**
If further discussion is needed, the concern may be brought to the Head of School.

Documentation and Follow-Up

Concerns may be documented as appropriate to support clarity and follow-up. Ave Maria Academy Preschool will make reasonable efforts to address concerns promptly while maintaining confidentiality and professionalism.

Licensing Concerns

Families have the right to contact the Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families (MNDCYF) regarding licensing concerns. Contact information for MNDCYF is provided in the Licensing section of this handbook.

Hazardous Objects and Spills

Ave Maria Academy Preschool is committed to maintaining a safe and healthy environment for all children and staff. Procedures are in place to prevent children's access to hazardous materials and to respond appropriately to spills or unsafe conditions.

Hazardous Objects and Materials

Hazardous objects and materials, including sharp objects, medications, cleaning supplies, chemicals, plastic bags, and other potentially dangerous items, are:

- Stored in locked cabinets or secured areas
- Kept out of reach of children
- Used only by authorized staff

All art supplies and classroom materials used with children are age-appropriate and non-toxic whenever possible.

Spills and Cleanup Procedures

In the event of spills involving potentially hazardous materials:

- Children are immediately moved away from the area
- Staff follow established safety and cleanup procedures
- Appropriate protective equipment is used, as needed
- Spills are cleaned promptly and thoroughly

When necessary, custodial staff or appropriately licensed service providers are notified to assist with cleanup.

Ongoing Safety Monitoring

Preschool staff remain vigilant in monitoring classroom and play areas for potential hazards and take immediate action to address unsafe conditions. Safety concerns are reported promptly to preschool administration to ensure timely resolution.

Hazardous materials, cleaning supplies, and other potentially harmful objects are stored securely and kept out of reach of children at all times.

Health Procedures

Ave Maria Academy Preschool is committed to promoting the health, safety, and well-being of all children in care. Health procedures are implemented in accordance with MNDCYF licensing requirements and are reviewed regularly to ensure compliance.

Health Records

Before a child may attend Ave Maria Academy Preschool, families must submit all required health documentation, including:

- A completed child health information form
- A current immunization record or approved exemption
- A health care provider's signature, as required by state regulations

Health records are kept current and updated as needed throughout the school year. Each child's record includes required health information such as emergency contacts, immunization documentation, and other health records as required by Minnesota licensing regulations.

Allergy

The program will obtain documentation of any known allergy from a child's parent or legal guardian or the child's source of medical care before admitting the child for care. If a child has a known allergy, the program maintains current information about the allergy in the child's record.

For each child with a known allergy, the program develops an Individual Child Care Program Plan (ICCPP) that includes:

- a description of the allergy
- specific triggers
- avoidance techniques
- symptoms of an allergic reaction

- procedures for responding to an allergic reaction, including medication and dosages
- doctor's contact information

Daily Health Monitoring

Preschool staff observe children daily for signs of illness or injury. If a child appears unwell or is unable to participate comfortably in program activities, families will be contacted to arrange for pick-up.

Illness or Injury During the Preschool Day

If a child becomes ill or injured while at preschool:

- The child will be supervised and separated from the group as needed
- Parents or guardians will be notified promptly
- First aid will be administered by trained staff, when appropriate

In the event of a serious illness or injury, emergency services will be contacted immediately, and parents or guardians will be notified as soon as possible.

Confidentiality of Health Information

All health-related information is maintained confidentially and stored securely. Access to health records is limited to authorized staff, parents or guardians, and regulatory authorities, as required by law.

Illness of Child

To protect the health and well-being of all children and staff, Ave Maria Academy Preschool follows illness exclusion guidelines in accordance with MNDCYF licensing requirements.

Ave Maria Academy Preschool follows illness exclusion guidelines informed by the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) to reduce the spread of illness and support the health and well-being of all children and staff. Children who exhibit symptoms such as fever, vomiting, diarrhea, or other signs of illness may be required to stay home or be picked up from preschool to protect the health of the group.

Exclusion from Preschool

A child will be excluded from preschool when any of the following conditions are present:

- A reportable illness or condition determined by the Minnesota Department of Health to be contagious and not sufficiently treated
- Chickenpox, until the child is no longer infectious or lesions are crusted over
- Vomiting two or more times since admission that day
- Three or more abnormally loose stools since admission that day
- Contagious conjunctivitis or pus draining from the eye
- A bacterial infection (such as streptococcal pharyngitis or impetigo) without completion of at least 24 hours of antimicrobial therapy
- Unexplained lethargy or inability to participate comfortably in program activities
- Lice, ringworm, or scabies that is untreated and contagious

- A fever of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher of undiagnosed origin before fever-reducing medication is given
- An undiagnosed rash or a rash attributable to a contagious condition
- Significant respiratory distress

If a child becomes ill while at preschool, the child will be supervised and separated from the group as needed. Either the school nurse or front desk staff will assist and parents or guardians will be contacted to arrange for pick-up if needed.

Return to Preschool

A preschool student should remain home if he or she is experiencing a contagious disease, rash, vomit (more than once), diarrhea, or temperature of 100 degrees or greater in the last 24 hours. A student may return to school once symptom free (for 24 hours without temperature reducing medication) or cleared by a physician and the child is able to participate fully in program activities. Documentation from a healthcare provider may be required in certain circumstances.

Notification of Communicable Illness

Families will be notified when a communicable illness has been identified in the preschool, as required by MNDCYF, while maintaining confidentiality.

Insurance

Ave Maria Academy Preschool maintains appropriate insurance coverage as required for licensed child care programs.

Coverage

Insurance coverage is maintained to support the operation of Ave Maria Academy Preschool and to address incidents that may occur while children are in care. Coverage includes liability protection in accordance with state and local requirements.

Incident Reporting

In the event of an accident or injury involving a child, an incident report is completed and shared with the child's parent or guardian. Documentation is maintained in the child's file, as required.

Written incident or accident reports are completed on the day of the incident and shared with parents or guardians in a timely manner.

Families are encouraged to maintain their own health and accident insurance coverage for their child.

Medications

Ave Maria Academy Preschool administers medication to children only when necessary and in accordance with MNDCYF licensing requirements to ensure children's health and safety.

Authorization for Medication

Medication may be administered only with written authorization from a parent or legal guardian. Authorization forms are on a MNDCYF form and must include:

The child's name

- Name of the medication
- Dosage and method of administration
- Time(s) medication is to be given
- Dates for which authorization is valid

Prescription medications must be in the original labeled container with the child's name, prescribing provider, dosage instructions, and expiration date clearly visible.

Administration and Storage

- Medications are administered only by authorized preschool staff.
- All medications are stored securely and out of children's reach, in accordance with licensing requirements.
- Refrigerated medications are stored separately in a designated area.

Documentation

Each administration of medication is documented on the MNDCYF form and includes:

- Date and time
- Dosage given
- Name of the staff member administering the medication

Parents or guardians are informed of medication administration as required.

Non-Prescription Medication

Non-prescription medications are administered only with written parental authorization and according to MNDCYF guidelines. Parents are responsible for the administration at home.

Nap & Rest Program Policy

(MN Rules, part 9503.0050, Minnesota Statutes, sections 245A.1435, 245A.146)

Staff are positioned to ensure they can see and hear all children who are sleeping or resting, even when attending to other awake children.

Nap and Rest Equipment Placement

Naps and rest must be provided in a quiet area that is physically separated from children who are engaged in activity that will disrupt a napping or resting child. Cribs, cots, and beds must be placed so there are clear aisles and unimpeded access for both adults and children on at least one side of each piece of napping and resting equipment. Cribs, cots, and beds must be placed directly on the floor and must not be stacked when in use.

Quiet/Rest Time

Children who attend all day are provided with a 30-minute quiet/rest time after lunch. This time allows children who are not napping to rest before afternoon activities begin. (Parents may request that their child naps during this time.)

- During quiet/rest time, children who are not sleeping may choose from a variety of restful activities, including reading books, listening to stories, using a “quiet-time bag” with small manipulatives, puzzles, games, or watching an educational video.
- Lights or partial lights are maintained during this time; rooms will not be dark, and children are seated rather than lying down if not sleeping after 30 minutes.
- If a child chooses to nap or falls asleep during quiet/rest time, they will be provided with a cot. They may sleep beyond 30 minutes if they continue to rest, and they will be allowed to wake up naturally.
- Children who are not sleeping will not be required to remain on a cot for more than 30 minutes.
- Cots are arranged in designated quiet areas that are physically separated from children engaging in activities that could disrupt resting or napping children.
- Cots are placed directly on the floor and are never stacked while in use. Clear aisles and unimpeded access for both adults and children are maintained on at least one side of each cot.
- If bedding is used, each child’s bedding is kept separate, washed weekly, and immediately washed when soiled or wet. Blankets, if used, are also washed weekly and when soiled or wet.

This program does not currently serve infants. If infant care is added in the future, the program will fully comply with Minnesota Statutes, sections 245A.1435 and 245A.146, including safe sleep practices, appropriate crib use, and MNDCYF-approved documentation for alternative sleep positions or swaddling as required.

Non-Discrimination Policy

Ave Maria Academy Preschool admits children of any race, color, national or ethnic origin, gender, disability, religion, or family structure to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to children enrolled in the preschool.

Ave Maria Academy Preschool does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, disability, religion, or family status in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, or other preschool-administered programs.

As a faith-based preschool rooted in the Catholic tradition, Ave Maria Academy Preschool welcomes families of all backgrounds and is committed to fostering a respectful, inclusive, and supportive environment for all children and families.

Reasonable accommodations will be made for children with identified needs when feasible and within the scope of MNDCYF licensing requirements and available resources.

Outdoor Activity Areas

Ave Maria Academy Preschool recognizes the importance of outdoor play in supporting children’s physical development, social skills, and overall well-being. Children are provided opportunities for outdoor play on a regular basis, weather permitting.

Outdoor Play Areas

Outdoor play takes place in designated areas that are maintained to support safe and developmentally appropriate play. Outdoor environments are designed to allow for:

- Active movement and gross motor development
- Exploration and social interaction
- Supervised play experiences

Outdoor areas are inspected regularly to ensure they are free from hazards and suitable for preschool-aged children.

Weather Considerations

Children participate in outdoor play daily unless weather conditions pose a health or safety risk. Outdoor play may be limited or modified due to:

- Extreme temperatures
- Severe weather conditions
- Air quality concerns

When outdoor play is not possible, children are provided with opportunities for active indoor movement.

Supervision and Safety

Preschool staff provide continuous supervision during outdoor play. Attendance and name-to-face checks are conducted before transitioning outdoors and upon returning indoors.

Pets

To ensure the health and safety of all children, Ave Maria Academy Preschool maintains clear guidelines regarding animals in the preschool environment.

Animals in the Preschool

Pets are **not permitted** in preschool classrooms or play areas during program hours. This policy helps protect children from allergies, bites, scratches, and the spread of illness.

Exceptions

Animals may be present only under limited circumstances, such as:

- Service animals, as defined by law
- Pre-approved educational experiences that are planned in advance, developmentally appropriate, and conducted in accordance with MNDCYF requirements

When animals are part of an approved activity:

- Parents or guardians will be notified in advance
- Children are supervised at all times
- Proper hygiene practices are followed

Portfolio Assessment

Ave Maria Academy Preschool uses portfolio assessment as a developmentally appropriate way to document children's growth and learning over time. Portfolio assessment supports meaningful communication with families and informs instructional planning.

Assessment Approach

Portfolio assessment may include:

- Observations of children during daily activities and play
- Samples of children's work
- Anecdotal notes and documentation collected by teaching staff

These assessments reflect each child's progress across developmental areas, including social-emotional, cognitive, language, physical, and spiritual growth.

Use of Assessment Information

Portfolio assessments are used to:

- Guide lesson planning and classroom experiences
- Support individualized learning and development
- Share progress with families during conferences

Assessment practices are ongoing and embedded naturally within the preschool day.

Confidentiality

All portfolio materials are kept confidential and are shared only with parents or guardians and appropriate preschool staff. Records are maintained in accordance with MNDCYF requirements and data privacy standards.

Safety Precautions

Ave Maria Academy Preschool maintains comprehensive safety practices to protect the health and well-being of all children in care. Safety precautions are integrated into daily routines and program operations and are reviewed regularly with staff.

Daily Safety Practices

Preschool staff:

- Conduct daily safety checks of classrooms, rest areas, and play spaces
- Remove or address hazards immediately
- Ensure materials and equipment are age-appropriate and in good condition

Supervision

Children are supervised at all times while in care, including during:

- Classroom activities
- Transitions between spaces
- Outdoor play
- Rest periods

Staff maintain sight and sound supervision in accordance with MNDCYF licensing requirements.

Emergency Readiness

Staff are trained in emergency procedures and respond promptly to any situation that may affect children's safety. Emergency contact information and required supplies are readily accessible.

Separation and Transition

Ave Maria Academy Preschool recognizes that transitions, especially arrival and separation from caregivers, are significant experiences for young children. Staff work intentionally with families to support smooth, developmentally appropriate transitions into the preschool environment.

Arrival and Separation from caregivers

Preschool staff support children and families during arrival by:

- Greeting children warmly and consistently
- Helping children transition from caregiver to classroom routines
- Offering reassurance and age-appropriate comfort

Families are encouraged to establish consistent arrival routines and to communicate any concerns with staff.

Supporting Children During Transitions

Staff use developmentally appropriate strategies to support children who experience difficulty with separation or transitions, which may include:

- Providing predictable routines
- Offering comfort items from home, when appropriate
- Using positive redirection and encouragement
- Communicating with families to support consistency between home and school

Ongoing Communication

If a child continues to experience challenges with separation or transitions, staff will partner with families to develop supportive strategies that meet the child's needs while maintaining MNDCYF supervision and safety requirements.

Smoke-Free Facility

Ave Maria Academy Preschool maintains a smoke-free environment to protect the health and safety of all children, families, staff, and visitors.

Smoking, vaping, and the use of electronic nicotine delivery systems are prohibited at all times:

- Inside preschool classrooms and buildings
- On school grounds

This policy applies during all preschool program hours and during any preschool-sponsored activities.

Ave Maria Academy Preschool complies with all applicable state and local smoke-free regulations.

Ave Maria Academy Preschool supports children's health and development by recommending nutritious snacks from home that promotes healthy eating habits in accordance with MNDCYF requirements.

Snacks and Meals

Student health records are reviewed to ensure awareness of allergies and dietary needs within the classroom.

The program's policies on the provisions of meals and snacks are as follows:

The preschool provides: milk

Parents or guardians are required to provide: morning snack, lunch, and afternoon snack

Specific expectations regarding meals and food provided by families are communicated prior to enrollment.

Allergy Awareness

Ave Maria Academy Preschool takes food allergies seriously. Families are required to inform the preschool of any known food allergies or dietary restrictions. Reasonable precautions are taken to reduce exposure to allergens, and staff follow established procedures to support children with allergies.

Drinking Water

Safe drinking water is available to children throughout the preschool day. Children are encouraged to drink water regularly, especially during active play.

Supervision

Ave Maria Academy Preschool maintains continuous supervision of children at all times to ensure their safety, well-being, and appropriate care while in the program.

Supervision Requirements

Children are supervised by qualified preschool staff at all times, including during:

- Classroom activities
- Transitions between spaces
- Outdoor play
- Rest periods
- Arrival and pick-up

Staff maintain sight and sound supervision in accordance with MNDCYF licensing requirements. Children are never left unattended.

Transitions and Attendance Checks

Attendance and name-to-face checks are conducted:

- Upon arrival
- During transitions throughout the day
- Before and after outdoor play
- At dismissal

These procedures ensure accurate accountability for all children in care.

Staff Responsibility

Preschool staff are responsible for maintaining appropriate supervision at all times and responding immediately to any situation that may compromise child safety. Staffing levels and supervision practices are adjusted as needed to meet licensing requirements. Staff maintain active supervision and use name-to-face supervision to ensure awareness of each child's location and safety.

Teacher-Child Ratios

Ave Maria Academy Preschool maintains teacher-child ratios in accordance with MNDCYF licensing requirements at all times. Ratios are monitored continuously to ensure the safety, supervision, and well-being of all children in care.

Ratio Requirements

Teacher-child ratios are based on the age of the children in care and follow Minnesota Rule 9503. Staffing levels are adjusted as needed to remain in compliance during all parts of the preschool day, including:

- Arrival and dismissal
- Classroom activities
- Transitions
- Outdoor play
- Rest periods

Staffing Adjustments

If staffing changes occur due to illness, training, or other circumstances, Ave Maria Academy Preschool ensures that qualified staff are present and that ratios remain compliant. Enrollment and classroom groupings may be adjusted as necessary to maintain required ratios.

Supervision and Accountability

Maintaining proper ratios supports effective supervision, safety, and responsive care. Preschool administration regularly reviews staffing plans to ensure compliance with licensing requirements.

Transportation

Transportation of preschool children is limited and provided only in accordance with MNDCYF licensing requirements.

Family Responsibility

Families are responsible for transporting their child to and from Ave Maria Academy Preschool unless otherwise communicated by the preschool.

Tuition

Ave Maria Academy Preschool is supported through tuition paid by enrolled families. Tuition structures are established to support program operations, staffing, and resources necessary to meet licensing and educational requirements.

Tuition Information

Tuition rates, payment schedules, and program options are communicated to families prior to enrollment. Families are responsible for reviewing and agreeing to the tuition terms at the time of registration.

Payment Expectations

Families are expected to make tuition payments according to the schedule provided. Questions regarding tuition or payment arrangements should be directed to the preschool administrator or designated school office.

Changes to Tuition

Tuition rates and payment schedules may be adjusted with appropriate notice. Families will be informed of any changes in a timely manner.

Volunteering

Ave Maria Academy Preschool values family involvement and recognizes that volunteers can support a positive preschool community. Volunteer participation is permitted only when it complies with MNDCYF licensing requirements and Archdiocesan policies and does not interfere with supervision or program operations.

Volunteer Requirements

All volunteers who have direct contact with children or are present in the preschool classroom on a regular basis must:

- Complete required MNDCYF background studies
- Complete Essential 3 (E3) Safe Environment training, as required by the Diocese and Catholic schools
- Receive appropriate orientation or training
- Follow all preschool policies and procedures

Volunteers are not counted in teacher–child ratios and are always supervised by preschool staff.

Supervision of Volunteers

Preschool staff maintain responsibility for supervision of children at all times. Volunteers support classroom activities under the direction of teaching staff and may not be left alone with children.

Confidentiality and Conduct

Volunteers are expected to:

- Respect the confidentiality of children and families
- Follow professional conduct expectations
- Adhere to all safety, supervision, and child protection guidelines

Handling and Disposal of Bodily Fluids

Ave Maria Academy Preschool follows established procedures for the safe handling and disposal of bodily fluids to protect the health of children and staff.

Universal Precautions

Preschool staff use universal precautions when handling bodily fluids, including blood, vomit, urine, feces, or other potentially infectious materials. This includes:

- Wearing appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), such as disposable gloves
- Proper handwashing before and after contact
- Using approved cleaning and disinfecting products

Cleanup and Disposal

When bodily fluids are present:

- Children are moved away from the affected area
- Contaminated surfaces and materials are cleaned and disinfected promptly
- Disposable materials are placed in sealed plastic bags and disposed of properly
- Soiled clothing is handled carefully and sent home with the child in a sealed bag

Staff Training

Preschool staff receive training on health and sanitation procedures, including the proper handling and disposal of bodily fluids, in accordance with MNDCYF requirements.

- Staff use disposable gloves when cleaning or handling bodily fluids.
- Materials used for cleaning, including gloves and paper products, are disposed of in a sealed container or designated waste receptacle.
- After cleaning and disposal procedures are completed, staff wash their hands thoroughly according to MNDCYF health and sanitation requirements.

Drinking Water Policy

Ave Maria Academy Preschool ensures that safe drinking water is available to children at all times throughout the preschool day, in accordance with MNDCYF licensing requirements.

Access to Drinking Water

Drinking water is readily accessible to children during the day, including during meals, snacks, and after active play.

Children are encouraged to drink water regularly to support hydration and overall health.

Drinking Water Sources

The preschool may utilize drinking fountains within the classroom or school building. Drinking fountain use is supervised to ensure sanitary and appropriate use by children.

Sanitation and Supervision

Drinking water sources are maintained in a clean and sanitary condition.

Preschool staff supervise children as appropriate to support safe and hygienic use of drinking water.

Reusable Water Bottles and Cups

If reusable water bottles or cups are used, the program ensures that:

- each day the water bottle or cup is used, the child care center cleans and sanitizes the water bottle or cup using procedures that comply with the Food Code under Minnesota Rules, chapter 4626, or allows the child's parent or legal guardian to bring the water bottle or cup home to be cleaned and sanitized each day the water bottle or cup is used.
- a water bottle or cup is assigned to a specific child and labeled with the child's first and last name
- water bottles and cups are stored in a manner that reduces the risk of a child using the wrong water bottle or cup
- a water bottle or cup is used only for water

Mandated Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors

Ave Maria Academy Preschool is committed to the safety and protection of all children in our care. In accordance with Minnesota law, all preschool staff are mandated reporters and are required to report suspected child maltreatment.

Reporting Suspected Maltreatment

Any staff member who knows or has reason to believe that a child is being neglected or physically or sexually abused must immediately report the information.

Where to Report

For suspected abuse occurring within a family or in the community:

- Local child protection agency, Hennepin County Child Protection Services: 612-348-3552
- Local law enforcement, Maple Grove Police Department: 763-494-6100

If suspected abuse involves a staff member or occurs within the program:

- MNDCYF Licensing Division
- Local law enforcement

Internal Reporting

Primary Designated Person: Katie Gooley, Preschool Director

Secondary Designated Person: Ericka Walz, Head of School

A primary and secondary person must be designated on the policy to ensure that internal reviews are completed when the facility has a reason to know that a report of alleged or suspected maltreatment has been made.

Parent Access

This mandated reporting policy is provided to all parents at the time of enrollment and is available upon request.

MNDCYF Licensing

Ave Maria Academy Preschool is a licensed child care program regulated by the Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families (MNDCYF) and operates in accordance with Minnesota Rule 9503.

Licensing Information

Ave Maria Academy Preschool maintains a current child care license and complies with all applicable licensing requirements related to:

- Health and safety
- Supervision and staffing
- Teacher–child ratios
- Program policies and procedures

A copy of the preschool's license is available for review upon request.

Parent Access to Licensing Information

Parents and guardians have the right to:

- Review the preschool's licensing records
- Receive information about licensing requirements
- Contact MNDCYF regarding questions or concerns about the preschool's licensed status

Reporting Concerns to MNDCYF

Parents or guardians who have concerns about licensing compliance may contact MNDCYF directly:

Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families (MNDCYF)

Child Care Licensing Division

- 651-431-6015 : This is the main Child Care Center Licensing phone number. A licensor is available Monday–Friday (excluding holidays) from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. to answer questions and assist providers
- [MN Dept of Children & Families](#) is the website

Ave Maria Academy Preschool encourages families to first communicate concerns through the preschool's grievance process whenever possible, while fully respecting families' rights to contact MNDCYF at any time.

Appendix: Maltreatment of Minors Reporting Policy

Ave Maria Academy provides all enrolled families with the complete Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families (MNDCYF) Commissioner-Approved Maltreatment of Minors Reporting Policy at the time of enrollment.

The commissioner-approved policy is provided as a separate six-page document and is considered an accompanying appendix to this Parent Handbook. The policy is provided in its original format and is not edited or modified by Ave Maria Academy.

See attached: MNDCYF Maltreatment of Minors Reporting Policy