



# Student Handbook 2023-2024

Good Beginnings Preschool & Kindergarten  
Living Hope Community Church  
311 W. State Street  
Doylestown, PA 18901  
215-345-4210  
[gboffice@livinghopepa.org](mailto:gboffice@livinghopepa.org)

Dear Parents,

Welcome to Good Beginnings! We are so glad that you have chosen us to take on the important task of providing your child with a warm and loving environment in which to learn and grow. We celebrate children at Good Beginnings and look forward to a fun year of working with you and your child!

This handbook has been prepared to help you get acquainted with the program and policies of our school. Please read through the handbook entirely, as it contains important information we'd like you to be familiar with before your child starts the school year.

We ask that you sign the Enrollment Agreement Form indicating that you have read the entire contents of the handbook and return your signed form to the office with your first tuition payment.

We are so privileged to partner with you, and we are praying for you, as we hope you'll pray for us, as we lead your little one! If you ever have any questions, concerns, or suggestions, please feel free to reach out to us, as we partner together for the success of your child. Thank you for choosing Good Beginnings for your child's educational experience.

In His service,

Cathy Muscara & Danielle Dunn  
Good Beginnings Leadership Team

"We will not hide God's truth from their children; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, His power and the wonders He has done .... Teach the children so the next generation would know...even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children. Then they would put their trust in God and not forget His deeds."

Psalm 78: 4-7

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

Good Beginnings is dedicated to promoting the emotional, physical, mental, social and spiritual growth of its students in a warm, loving and supportive environment. The staff of Good Beginnings is dedicated to teaching God's Word and ministering with the love of Christ to the families we have the privilege of serving.

### **GOALS FOR OUR SCHOOL**

1. To provide a warm, loving, and understanding atmosphere for the growth and development of each child
2. To provide the materials and equipment necessary to facilitate each child's mental, physical, social, emotional, and spiritual growth and development
3. To provide a regular, structured daily program that prepares students for a variety of school environments
4. To uphold the truths found in God's Word

### **GOALS FOR STUDENTS**

1. To learn to love God and obey His Word
2. To gain self-control, initiative, self-confidence, and independence
3. To develop social awareness through sensitivity towards others
4. To develop and increase motor control
5. To accept and follow directions, discipline, and delegated responsibilities

### **LEADERSHIP TEAM & CONTACT INFORMATION**

Children's Ministry Director: Cathy Muscara (childrensministry@livinghopepa.org)

Children's Ministry Coordinator: Danielle Dunn (danielle.dunn@livinghopepa.org)

Telephone: 215-345-4210

School Website: [www.goodbeginningspreschool.org](http://www.goodbeginningspreschool.org)

#### **School Hours:**

<b>Office Hours:</b>	8:30 am - 2:30 pm
<b>Summer Hours:</b>	Please call before as hours may vary during the summer
<b>Class Hours:</b>	8:30-9:00 Early Care 9:00-11:30 AM Learning 11:30-2:00 PM Kids Center 2:00-2:30 After Care

## **AGE OF CHILD AND POTTY TRAINING**

- Children must be three years old by Dec. 31<sup>st</sup> and potty-trained before starting the school year.

## **ATTENDANCE**

It is important that your child attends regularly in order to fully benefit from the program. Please make every effort, with the exceptions of illness and family emergencies, to ensure that your child is on time for school.

## **ATTENDANCE DETAILS**

- Parents will use our ProCare app to Check In and Check Out each child every day. This process will enhance communication and safety. Parents can Check In/Out from their car using the GPS feature at the Car Line. Parents utilizing Early/Late Care must Check In/Out by scanning the QR code at the counter in the lobby.
- Kindergarten program differs from our preschool program as absences and tardiness is tracked on the student's official report card, which is sent to the school district. Students are expected to be in the classroom by 9am and will be marked tardy after 9:15. Kindergarten students who miss more than fifteen days of school should submit a note from a physician.
- Parents dropping off their children in the morning should do so promptly. Only parents who are volunteering should be staying in the classroom past 9:00.

## **BIRTHDAYS**

Parents are welcome to send in special treats for the class such as cookies, soft pretzels, or mini cupcakes for birthdays. When supplying treats for class, keep in mind that we are a nut-free school. Healthy options are preferred, especially for morning classes. Please send snacks that allow for easy clean-up. Please check with your child's teacher for specific instructions regarding birthday celebrations. If your child has a summer birthday and would still like to celebrate, please set up a date with the teacher.

## **CALENDAR**

Our school distributes a calendar for the current year in mid-late summer. The calendar can also be downloaded from our website at any time. Please refer to this throughout the year for any changes, special events and days off. We follow the Central Bucks policy for weather related closings. Please look at the SNOW DAY section below for further explanation of this policy.

## **CLOTHES**

Please be mindful when dressing children for playground safety and for classroom activities involving paint, markers, glue, etc. We continue to play outside until it starts getting very cold. Please dress your child warmly and send a coat, mittens, and hat.

## **EXTRA SET OF CLOTHES**

All students must provide the school with an extra set of clothing, which includes a shirt, pair of pants, underpants, and socks. Place the clothes in a large Ziploc bag and label the outside with your child's name. Please change clothing as weather and growth dictate.

## **CONFERENCES**

Kindergarten conferences are an opportunity to meet with your child's teacher to discuss his/her progress. If you have a concern about your child's progress, please do not hesitate to request a meeting with your child's teacher at any time during the school year.

## **DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES**

The following behaviors of students are to be promoted and encouraged by staff:

- Obey God, parents, and teachers
- Respect people and property
- Keep safety first for all people in all places
- Share kindness, time, and ideas

The following outlines a ladder of solutions up to a dismissal from the school:

1. Teacher observes student struggling to comply with procedures
2. Teacher contacts parents to provide an update with a relational and caring approach

If the issue persists:

3. Teacher arranges a conference with parents and when needed, invites leadership staff for support
4. Teacher, parents, and leadership staff create a behavioral plan for the child
5. Observation by the leadership staff, and follow-up conference with teacher, parents, and leadership staff
6. The Children's Ministry Director decides on suspension or dismissal. If dismissal is necessary, tuition will be refunded effective the day of the student's dismissal.

## **DROP OFF/PICK UP POLICY**

Drop Off

- Car Line from 9:00-9:15a.m. at the sidewalk just outside the front door
- After 9:15a.m. You are welcome to drop off and walk your child in to the lobby and wait at the "Children's Check In" door to be welcomed by a staff member.

Pick Up

- Park in the parking lot and wait for your child at the lobby doors under the awning or at the playground.

Check In/Out

- Parents must Check In/Out each child every day using the ProCare app

Additional Authorized PickUp

- On the ProCare app, please add adults authorized to pick up your child
- Notify the teacher on the app (Message bubble) if there are daily changes

Please drive slowly through the parking lot and park only in designated spots, and please do not, at any time, park in the fire lane. Children are not permitted to enter the building for school without an adult.

Good Beginnings will charge a late fee every time a child is picked up late due to staffing needs. The cost is \$10 for the first 15 minutes, \$1 per minute thereafter. Late fee bills are distributed promptly and should be paid upon receipt. Please notify the office if you will be late picking up your child so we can inform the teacher.

## **EMERGENCY EVACUATION**

The school is required to practice an emergency evacuation at least once every 30 days. This can cause stress for some children. The school provides age appropriate training drills to alleviate this stress, but parents are encouraged to talk about emergency evacuation procedures at home as well. Our drills include both evacuation drills and shelter-in-place drills.

In the event of a true emergency, Good Beginnings will communicate promptly through ProCare. Parents should not attempt to call the school, so phone lines can remain open for emergency communication. For more details about our emergency evacuation plan, please feel free to stop by the office to review the Disaster Response Handbook.

## **FIELD TRIPS & SPECIAL EVENTS**

Most school events are held on-site. The activity fee submitted upon registration covers these events. In addition to the on-site events, classes may participate in off-site field trips. Information and details about these trips will be clearly communicated well in advance of the date. Staff members are not permitted to transport students or to arrange transportation for their students. It is the responsibility of the parent alone to arrange transportation for their child to and from a field trip. Chaperones on field trips who are responsible for children other than their own must also have clearances (please see the PARENT VOLUNTEER section below for more details).

## **FOOD**

All students should bring a small snack each day including a drink. We are a nut-free school. Please do not send any nut products of any kind to school. This can be life threatening. Although we love to share, we do ask that you instruct your child not to share food with friends.

## **HEALTH**

As a condition of enrollment and prior to the start of the school year, all students must provide a health assessment form completed by a physician including a list of the student's current immunizations and also a dental exam for kindergarteners, as mandated by the state of Pennsylvania.

If seeking a medical or religious/moral exemption from immunizations, parents must complete the blue exemption form, which can be picked up in the office.

If you see symptoms of illness, please do not send your child to school as you may expose others. If illness occurs during school, you will be notified to pick up your child immediately. Staff will attend to the child until a parent or guardian arrives.

Before sending your student to school, ask these questions:

- Has your child been healthy for at least 24 hours?
- Has your child's temperature been normal (<100.4) for at least 24 hours (not needing medication for over 24 hours)?
- Is your child's runny nose clear, not yellow or green?
- Has your child stopped vomiting for at least 24 hours?
- Has your child been on an antibiotic for at least 24 hours?
- Is your child acting normal and not overly tired or lethargic?
- Is your child's cough infrequent and not constant?

If you answered "Yes" to all of these questions, we would be very happy for your child to attend school. We do not have a nurse on staff; therefore, we maintain the authority to decline a sick child entrance into the classroom. If your child shows symptoms of illness, related to non-contagious issues, for example, asthma or allergies, the school may ask for a doctor's note.

### **IEP/IU SERVICES**

A copy of your child's IEP must be submitted to the office by September if you intend to have support personnel work with your child during school hours. Please note that you must sign an authorization form before support services can begin. All support personnel are required to present copies of clearances/online mandated reporter training or organization identification (BCIU, CBSD, etc.) before arriving at the school. Start date for all support services is mid-September. Please do not schedule any observations/visits before this time..

### **KIDS CENTER**

Kids Center classes are offered after the school day is over. Please see our website for more details about these classes. These programs are available in monthly sessions at an additional cost and run from September to May. Sign-ups begin a week after the start of the school year and can be done month to month or full year. It is recommended that you sign up as early as possible as classes have filled prior to deadline dates. We do offer drop-in registration at the beginning of the week if space allows. Please note that a session may be canceled due to lack of participation.

### **LICENSING**

Good Beginnings is registered under the PA Dept of Education. We are committed to maintaining a high-quality facility and our teachers are required to complete yearly educational and training requirements. Curriculum is reviewed often to ensure that state standards are being met.

### **MEDICATION: STORING & ADMINISTERING**

If there is an **emergency situation**, e.g. an allergic reaction and the child is in clear distress, the following guidelines must be followed:

- If emergency medications are needed at school:
  - The medicine must be in the original box with the original prescription label
  - An "Emergency Medication Dispensing Form" needs to be completed by a parent as well as the student's physician and be on file at the school
  - Medicines will be stored for easy access, but away from children. If an Epi-pen is prescribed, the school will need two epi-pens to be stored in school. Parents will be contacted 1-2 months prior to medicine expiring for renewal.

We do not administer medication preventatively. If a child needs a dose of medication during school hours, a parent must come to the school and administer the medication.

### **PARENT VOLUNTEERS**

Parents/family members who wish to volunteer at the school are expected to show the CBSD Volunteer Card or turn in copies of

- 1) Criminal background check
- 2) PA child abuse background check
- 3) FBI background check or signed affidavit (if PA residency exceeds 10 years).

- Copies of all documents must be submitted before being permitted to volunteer in the classroom. Volunteering/classroom visits must be pre-arranged with the teacher.
- All volunteers must report to the office, sign the volunteer log and wear a volunteer badge before proceeding to the classroom.
- Volunteers are not permitted to open student folders or view any documents that concern students other than their own. Volunteers may not deliver any paperwork, checks, etc. to the GB office.
- Volunteers are not permitted to take children, other than their own, to the bathroom.

Parents who volunteer are expected to follow all the policies and guidelines set forth in the student handbook. Although we do allow siblings to come with a parent volunteer, we ask that parents keep direct supervision over siblings and that they take every precaution to not allow disruption of the normal school routines and activities.

### **PET/ANIMAL POLICY**

Due to allergies, we do not allow pets in the classrooms or the building.

### **RECORDS**

The school keeps a confidential file of your child's application papers, attendance, health forms and achievement reports. No information may be released unless a release form is completed.

### **RE-ENROLLMENT**

Current families are given the first opportunity to re-enroll for the following academic year. Applications will be available and enrollment will begin December 1<sup>st</sup> for current families. Enrollment will be open to the community beginning in January. If there is an outstanding tuition balance, we cannot accept an application for the next school year until the tuition is current. Should tuition payments fall behind after application is made, the application will be put "on hold" until tuition is paid. If there is a waiting list for the class in which the student is enrolled, the child will be placed on the waiting list until a spot becomes available.

### **SNOW DAYS**

- Check the website of Central Bucks School District ([www.cbsd.org](http://www.cbsd.org)) for school closings. A notice will show up immediately on the CBSD website if school is closed.
- Check our ProCare app
- Listen on the Radio 1060 AM, 1490 AM, 920 AM, or 1440 AM. Central Bucks code is 755.

2-hour delay hours:

- Early Care 11:00-11:30
- 3s, 4s, PreK – 11:30 am- 2:00pm
- Kindergarten - 11:00 am until 2:00pm
- Kid Center is canceled if there is a 2-hour delay.
- After Care: 2:00-2:30

Early Closing: In the event that CB would dismiss early, GB will dismiss at noon and Kids Center will be canceled.



We also use the ProCare text messaging app. All parents will be placed on the distribution list to receive these texts. Messages will only be sent to alert parents of weather-related closures or cancellation of events and school emergencies,

Check the internet site for Central Bucks School District or listen on the Radio 1060 AM, 1490 AM, 920 AM, or 1440 AM. Central Bucks code is 755.

School make up dates (after five weather-related cancellations) will be in keeping with the Central Bucks calendar.

### **STUDENT WITHDRAWAL**

In the event that a parent should withdraw a student from school, a two-week notice, (handwritten note or email) addressed to the office, is required. Tuition will be reimbursed after the two weeks are completed regardless of whether or not the student attends the two weeks. Number of weeks of school attended will be calculated and any remaining balance will be returned at the end of the two weeks. A book fee will be charged.

### **TAX DOCUMENTS**

Tax documentation is always available on the ProCare app.

### **TUITION**

Tuition is due on the 1<sup>st</sup> of every month. There is a \$30 late fee for tuition received after the 10<sup>th</sup>. After the 15<sup>th</sup>, a child may not return to school until balance is paid. Tuition should preferably be paid on the ProCare app or by check either sent in your student's folder in a sealed envelope with the student's name or put in the drop box in the church foyer. Please make all checks payable to "Living Hope". If cash is necessary, a parent should place it in an envelope with the student's name and put it directly in the church drop box.

There is a \$20 charge for returned checks due to insufficient funds. Monthly receipts will not be sent home with your child unless it is requested. Otherwise, the canceled check is evidence of payment. Parents can also view payments on the ProCare app.

Financial burdens do occasionally arise and make it difficult to pay tuition on time. Please contact the office promptly to make special arrangements. If necessary, consult with a member of the Leadership Team to discuss scholarship information. Living Hope also offers financial counseling.

Late notices will be sent if tuition is not received by the due date. If any tuition, fees or materials are still outstanding at graduation time, the school reserves the right to withhold the student's graduation portfolio until balances have been satisfied.

### **WEAPONS POLICY**

All weapons are prohibited anywhere on school property. Items considered weapons may include, but are not limited to, the following: guns, look alike guns, pellet guns, stun guns, splat guns, explosives, ammunition, mace, knives, clubs, metal knuckles, num-chucks, throwing stars, etc.