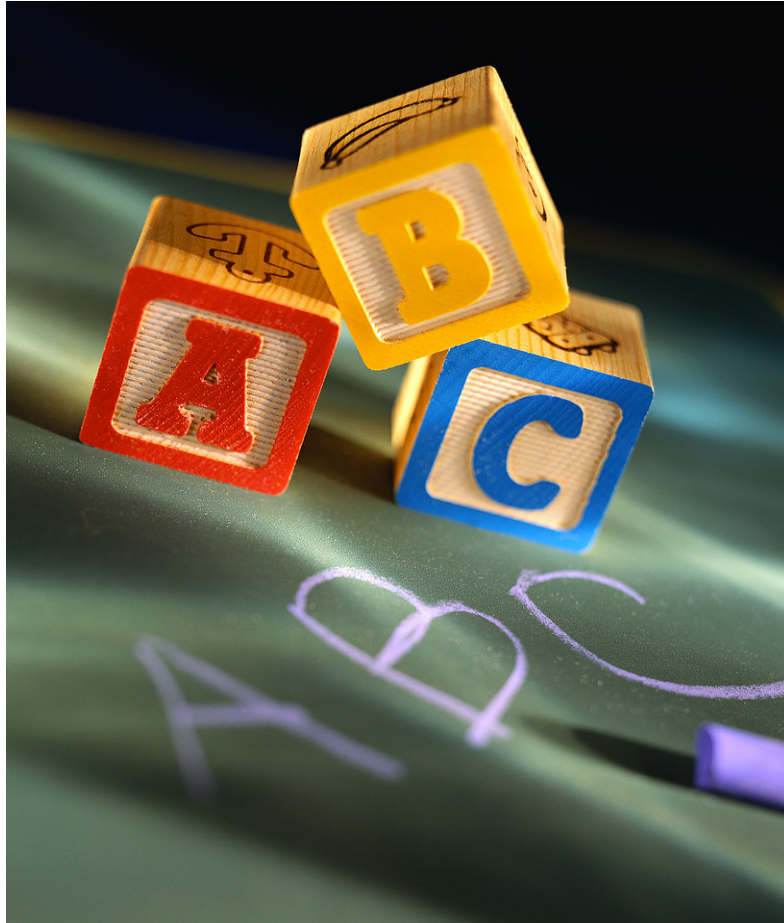


St. Thomas Aquinas Preschool



Parent Handbook 2010-2011

13720 West Thomas Road
Avondale, Arizona 85392
623.935.0945

Table of Contents

Mission Statement	3
Philosophy	3
Statement of Services	3
Daily Schedule –3 year old “Cherubim”	4
Daily Schedule – 4 year old “Seraphim”	4
State Regulated	5
Hours of Operation	5
Child Enrollment and Disenrollment	5
Charges, Fees and Payments	5
Child Admission and Release	6
Discipline Guidelines	6
Transportation	6
Inspection Reports	6
Responsibilities of Parents	6
Criminal Clearance	6
Activities and Programs	6
Liability Insurance	6
Medications	6
Emergency Medical Procedures	7
Health Cards and Absences	7
Snacks	7
Dress Code	8
Communication and Assessments	8
Toys	8
Suspected or Alleged Child Abuse	8
Special Needs Children	8
School Calendar	9

Mission Statement

The Catholic Community of St. Thomas Aquinas Grade School is a partnership of parents, students, staff and all parishioners that strive to nurture the growth of the whole child in a Catholic, faith-based environment. We seek to promote academic excellence in a safe and nurturing environment while fostering responsibility, positive discipline, service to others, and a life-long learning.

Philosophy

We believe the role of St. Thomas Aquinas Grade School is to provide a holistic Catholic environment that serves the mind, body and soul of each child. Within this environment, basic intellectual skills are developed, religious traditions are celebrated, and students are prepared to live in and make a vital contribution to a changing society.

Statement of Services

STAGS Preschool program provides a sound educational curriculum which empowers a child to learn at his/her own pace in a safe and nurturing environment. The curriculum concerns the child's spiritual, cognitive, social-emotional, physical and sensor motor development. These goals are experienced through instruction and through the child's self-directed activities daily enhancing the child's experience.

Daily Schedule
3 year old “Cherubim”

12:00 – 12:15	Welcome Sign in. Put backpacks & water away.
12:15 – 12:30	Gathering prayer, sharing time, assignment of helpers
12:30 -1:15	Outdoor Discovery
1:15 – 1:25	Rest time with Classical Music
1:25-2:35	Learning Centers
2:35– 3:00	Story time, recall, blessing & goodbye

Daily Schedule
4 year old “Seraphim”

7:45am – 8:00	Morning prayer, Pledge of Allegiance & All School Rules with STAGS
8:00 - 8:10	Welcome Sign in. Put backpacks & water away.
8:10 -8:25	Circle Time
8:25 -9:30	Learning Centers
9:30 9:40	Recall and story time
9:45 – 10:30	Outdoor discovery
10:35-10:45	Rest time with classical music, recall and blessing, Goodbye

Circle time consists of songs, prayer, lessons for the day, finger plays and sharing.

Centers consist of small group play, which includes science discovery, art, exploration, pre-reading and literacy activities, snack time, and dramatic play and book exploration.

These areas will change according to weekly theme.



State Regulated

The preschool is licensed and regulated by the:

Arizona Department of Health Services

License # CDC-10717

150 N 18th Ave, Suite 400

Phoenix AZ 85020

602-364-2539

Persons in charge of the St. Thomas Aquinas Preschool:

Co-Directors – Mrs. Kelly Minten and Mr. Patrick Reardon

Associate teacher – Marcy Baca

Hours of Operations

- The 3 year old preschool class hours are 12:00- 3:00 pm, Monday through Thursday.
- The 4 year old preschool class hours are 7:45 am to 10:45 am, Monday through Friday.

The preschool will follow the “early dismissal and days closed” schedule that the grade school uses.

Child Enrollment and Disenrollment Procedures

All students are required by our state license to have an emergency card on file with us. Every registration packet will have one for your completion. **No student will be allowed to attend the preschool without a completed card. Only contacts on the emergency card will be able to pick up the child.**

A child may be asked to leave our program if he or she displays behavior that is threatening to other children or to staff members; or if a staff member or student is assaulted in any manner by a parent or relative of an enrolled preschool student. A child may be asked to leave if he or she has a difficult time adjusting to the preschool setting after a reasonable amount of time.

Charges, Fees and Payment Requirements

There is a \$100.00 registration fee. Each family is required to purchase one yearbook for \$35. Milk and juice fees are \$70.00 for the 3 year olds and \$80.00 for the 4 year olds. These fees are due at the time of registration. Tuition for the preschool is as follows: \$2700 a year for the 3 year old program & \$2950 for the 4 year old program. There are three ways that tuition may be paid. Paid in full in August, bi-yearly in August and January or you may choose to use FACTS. This is an automated payment plan made through your bank. These payments will be deducted directly from your checking or savings account in 9, 10 or 11 month installments. We do not offer any credits in tuition for missed or absent days. Tuition is due regardless if your child is in attendance or not, i.e. vacations, personal or sick days. This assures your placement in the program.

Parents have an obligation to work 15 volunteer hours. All service hours need to be completed by April 30, 2011.

Parents also have a \$150.00 fund raising fee. Scrip is a gift certificate program that benefits Saint Thomas Aquinas Grade School. The purchase of Scrip is one way this can be accomplished. Each family is responsible for earning \$150.00 in profit for the school during each school year (August to April). Gift certificates are purchased from the school and can be used for full face value at participating stores and businesses. The school receives a percentage of profit from each gift certificate purchased. Parents can choose to buy out of the scrip program and pay the \$150.00 up front. **This is not considered a tax-deductible contribution because you are receiving full cash value for your Scrip purchase.**

Arrival and Dismissal of Children

Persons dropping off and picking up children must accompany them into the classroom or designated drop-off spot. They must also sign in and sign out in the daily register. The register is a legal document and therefore can only be used by the adult signing in or signing out. Only people designated on the registration form, or designated in written form for a special occurrence, will have permission to pick up a child. Anyone picking up or dropping off a child from preschool must be at least 18 years of age, unless special permission has been granted by the office staff, due to unusual circumstances.

Please remember the classroom environment has been prepared for the days activities. STAGS asks that you please keep non-preschoolers by your side upon daily registration.

In order to receive the full benefits of our program, as well as to help your child adjust accordingly, we ask that your child maintain a regular school schedule. Please assure your child arrives no later than 7:40 am or 11:55 pm.

Late Pick-Up Policy

STAGS Preschool dismisses promptly at 10:45 am and 3:00 pm. All children must be signed out by this time. The school's clock will serve as the "official clock" for determining time. Please synchronize your watch with this clock. Parents that have a lengthy departure routine must arrive early enough to meet the time criteria. A No Exception Policy is in place for several reasons:

- Teachers give their best to your children each day. They also have responsibilities to their own children and family. They need to know they can end their school day reliably at 3:00 daily.
- Most preschooler's internal body clock knows when their usual pick-up time is! Children can become nervous or fearful when they are at school later than normal. Please know that your child will always be comforted and safe, even in the event of an emergency.

The STAGS Preschool Late Policy is as follows: A fee of \$1 for every minute that your child(ren) is in the building after 3:00 pm is applied per family. After 10 minutes, this late pick up fee goes to \$2 per minute. This fee must be paid at the time when you pick up your child.

There will be no exceptions or warnings. If you are late for ANY reason, a charge will be issued. This **No Exception** policy makes it easier for us to apply the late policy to everyone consistently and fairly. It will be greatly appreciated, however, if parents call to notify us if they will be late and give an approximate arrival time so that we can better comfort your child. If this becomes a frequent problem, STAGS reserves the right to dismiss a family from the program.

Discipline Guidelines and Methods

St. Thomas Aquinas uses the "Discipline with Purpose" method. This method teaches students to think before they act. For more information on this method of discipline, handouts are available upon request in the school office. The children will also participate in a daily stop light procedure. This procedure will be explained further at parent orientation.

Potty Training Requirements

Preschoolers **must** be potty trained upon enrollment. Our definition of potty training includes being able to manage clothing and toileting independently.

Preschoolers should be encouraged to self-dress and undress. Children should be able to take off and put on their own clothing and shoes. Please have your child wear unrestrictive clothing and shoes which they can put on independently. Self-help skills development is important during this stage of development.

Extra pants, socks, underwear should be kept on site at school in the child's cubby.

All children attending preschool must be toilet trained. Occasional accidents happen and are not a problem. However, we are not equipped for daily accidents.

Transportation

St. Thomas Aquinas does not provide transportation to or from school at this time. Preschool does not take field trips.

Inspection Reports

Inspection reports are available upon request.

Responsibilities and Participation of Parents

Parents are required to volunteer 15 hours in the preschool room or school activities. However, according to our state license anyone who regularly volunteers in the preschool must have a fingerprint clearance card and show proof of a recent Mantoux TB skin test. In addition, the Diocese of Phoenix requires that all persons working with or around children must complete the **Safe Environment Training (SET)** course offered through the school or parish.

Criminal Clearance

The Catholic Schools Office of the Diocese of Phoenix requires Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and/or Arizona State Department of Public Safety fingerprint clearance for all Catholic School Personnel. Administrators and teachers are required to file for FBI fingerprint clearance prior to signing the 2009-2010 contract. A copy of the fingerprint clearance card and/or employer copy of filed application must be included in the on-site personnel folder of all administrators and teachers.

Activities and Programs

St. Thomas Aquinas Preschool's goal is to help prepare your child for success. Therefore we offer a variety of activities such as hands on, reasoning, thinking, imagination, and fine and gross motor skills. Your child will always be offered opportunities to explore his or her world.

Liability Insurance

A copy of our insurance coverage certificate is available upon request in the school office.

Medications

All medications that should be given to the preschool student must have a completed permission slip on file with the school nurse. All medications **MUST** be in their original packaging with the student's name printed on it. All medications will be locked up in the nurse's office. Medications should be administered at home whenever possible.

Emergency Medical Procedures

If an injury requires immediate medical attention, 911 will be called first. The parent will then be contacted. If the parents are not available, the persons who are listed as the emergency contact will be notified. Every attempt to contact a parent will be made.

If a child becomes ill while at school, the parents or emergency contact person will be contacted and asked to take the child home for the day.

Parents will be notified verbally and in writing if exposure to contagious illness or infections occurs in the preschool.

Health Cards and Absences

All students enrolled in a state-licensed facility must have an emergency card filled out completely. **All lines on this form must be filled out.** A copy of your child's immunization records MUST be attached to this form.

In case of illness or absences, parents should call the attendance office ext 221 by 8:00 am. If your child will not be attending STA i.e., out of town, spending time with family, a written note from the parent or guardian must accompany his/her return to class.

For the health and safety of all the children in our facility, we ask that you do not send your child to school with any of the following symptoms:

- Fever: A temperature of 100F. **The child may return when he/she has been fever-free 24 hours without the use of a fever-reducer.**
- Breathing: Difficulty breathing or hard cough.
- Diarrhea: Two or more abnormally loose stools in the previous 24 hours.
- Vomiting: Two or more episodes of vomiting in the previous 24 hours.
- Eye/Nose: Mucous or pus from red eyes or cloudy or thick drainage from the nose.
- Sore Throat: When fever or swollen glands are present.
- Rash: Undiagnosed rashes with fever or other signs of illness.
- Sores: Infected sores with pus, crusting or yellow or green drainage that cannot be covered by bandages.
- Itching: Persistent itching or scratching of the body or scalp.
- Unusual Color: These signs suggest hepatitis (liver infection) and should be evaluated by a health care provider. (Eyes or skin –Yellow) (Urine-Strong dark color)

If your child shows any signs of these symptoms while at school, the parent will be called and asked to have the child picked up.

Snacks

Snack time is a great opportunity for preschoolers to develop social skills along with self-help skills. A child may bring in a healthy, nutritious snack on his or her birthday (i.e. frozen yogurt, frozen juice bars, etc.) or a non perishable "treat"- pencil, stickers, bubbles etc. Teachers will not be responsible for handing out invitations. If a parent chooses to invite the children, parents will be able to add an invitation to each folder.

A monthly calendar will be posted with our current snack menu. Parents will be responsible to bring in a nutritious snack approximately once a month for the whole class. If your child will not be present in school on his/her set day, please make arrangements to have snack brought in on an earlier day. Milk or juice will be available at snack time. The menu will be posted on the Preschool webpage, & the licensing board.

Dress Code

Children should be sent to school in comfortable clothing. Please do not send your child to school in his/her best clothes. They will be participating in many “hands on” projects, which may get messy. Please send your child to school in closed toe shoes with socks. **Thong, sandals and bare feet are not permitted.**

**If your child is not wearing socks, he/she will be limited to the grassy area.

**Girls must wear shorts under their dresses or skirts.

Communication

Parents are asked to make an appointment if you have any questions or concerns that you would like to discuss. Communication between the school and parent is very important and we will do everything we can to assist you.

Assessments will be conducted twice a year for the four year old children who will be entering kindergarten. Progress reports will be sent home with each child at the 1st and 3rd quarters. During October, Seraphim parents may want to meet with the teachers to discuss their child’s present level of development.

All written communication from the school will be in your child’s hanging folder. Please check your child’s folder upon sign-in. Children are not permitted to remove anything from folders. Please make sure that the office has your current email address as many notices are sent in this manner. The STA Preschool webpage is updated every Friday. The weekly newsletter will be sent out via email on Thursdays. We strongly suggest you check weekly for up to date information.

Toys

We ask that children refrain from bringing toys to school. They often get misplaced or broken and feelings get hurt. Small children sometimes have difficulty sharing “their” toys. We have many educational toys for all the children to enjoy and sharing “school” toys is easier for them to accept.

We will however, have special days when all children are asked to bring in a special item to show to the class. These items will be kept on display in the room for everyone to see.

Suspected or Alleged Child Abuse or Neglect

The staff must report and document all suspected or alleged cases of child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities.

Special Need Children

If a child is unable to adjust to the curriculum guidelines or if behavior issues persist, a child will be asked to leave to a more appropriate setting. We do not have a Certified Special Education Staff to assist in the development of a child with special needs.