



# ST. THOMAS PRESCHOOL FAMILY HANDBOOK 2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR

5150 NORTH VALLEY VIEW ROAD  
TUCSON, ARIZONA 87518  
(520)577-0503

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## Purpose

This handbook is intended to familiarize families with the current St. Thomas Preschool policies and procedures. An electronic version (PDF) of this handbook can be found on our website. The Director may, at any time, review and revise school policies as deemed appropriate.

## St. Thomas Preschool Mission and Philosophy

Thank you for enrolling your precious child at St. Thomas Preschool. Please read through this handbook, as it provides important school policies and procedures that are important to both us and your families.

St. Thomas Preschool promotes lifelong learning founded in Christianity through a safe, creative, and spiritual learning environment that nurtures the whole child.

We believe early education should be relevant, meaningful, and fun. Early learning is accomplished by providing a safe environment that inspires the natural curiosity of children and encourages the exploration of their world through different types of play.

### Objectives:

- To provide children with the experience of God's love everyday through celebrations, prayers, bible stories, music, and a sense of community.
- To provide a diverse environment for children to practice the teachings of Jesus, by accepting and celebrating differences with respect and compassion.
- To foster independence in children. All children are encouraged to try new experiences and they are supported in mastering developmental milestones.
- To encourage parental involvement. All parents are encouraged to participate in our school community through various activities. Parental involvement creates a positive learning experience both at school and at home.

## General Center Information

### Address and Phone Number

5150 N. Valley View Road  
Tucson, AZ 85718

(520) 577-0503 PHONE (520) 577-0441 FAX

### Director

Michelle Garmon, (520) 577-0503, stthomaspreschool@gmail.com

## Licensing

Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) State Day Care Licensure Division  
400 W. Congress, Suite #100  
Tucson, Arizona 85701

Phone Number: (520) 628-6540

License Number: CDC-12595

All inspection reports are available for review in the Preschool Office. We are licensed for part-time care, full-time care, and school age care.

St. Thomas carries liability insurance in accordance with regulations of the State of Arizona.

## Hours of Operation

School hours are from 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The School Office will be open from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday throughout the school year. Summer hours may vary.

*The school day begins promptly at 8:50 a.m. The first 20 minutes of the school day is filled with educational opportunities. Tardiness is stressful for your child or children. Children who arrive in class late are often disoriented. Transitions into their school day usually take about fifteen minutes. Children, who are late, miss circle time or class activities that help them grow and bond with their classmates. Arriving late gives a child the message that it's okay to be late to school.*

If you have an emergency delay and you are going to be late picking up your child, please call the school before closing time. You must designate two different contacts numbers on your blue emergency card for reasons like this and others should we not be able to reach you.

If you are later than 5pm (or 12pm on early release days), the following fees will apply:

- 5 minutes: \$15.00
- 6-15 minutes late \$40
- 16-25 minutes late: \$45.00
- \*\* Each additional 10 minutes \$15.00 \*\*

St. Thomas Preschool does not provide transportation. Parents/guardians are responsible for dropping off and picking up their children.

The school will be closed for a variety of in-service and vacation days. A yearly calendar will be available outlining these specific days.

## Child Enrollment

Registration is ongoing only when space is available. If there is an opening in the program, the Director may select to place a child in a program once the school year has started. If there is no opening, a family may request to be added to the wait list.

Registration requires the completion of the following paperwork:

- Preschool Registration Form
- Complete ADHS Emergency Card with 2 separate Emergency Contacts
- Copy of Immunization Record showing all current vaccinations and/or physician's signature needed on immunization exempt forms
- Tuition Express payment options
- Registration Fee of \$125.00 per child (non-refundable fee)
- Snack Fee of \$200 per academic year
- Technology Fee of \$50 per child per academic year
- Materials Fee of \$60 per child per academic year
- Graduation Celebration Fee of \$25 per child (Pre-Kindergarten Students Only)
- Additional forms as necessary

### Tuition

Monthly tuition is billed each month beginning in August through May. Payments do not change in months when there are school holidays, vacations, or in-services. A late charge of \$25.00 will be added to the tuition for the current month if not paid by the first five working days of the month. Tuition payment for August is non-refundable. Failure to pay tuition in a timely manner will result in dis-enrollment. You will be given one written warning of this action. Please communicate with the director about any concerns or late payments to avoid late fees.

All families must use the Tuition Express options for tuition fees and payments. Tuition Express for debit and ACH transactions will be assessed a \$10.00 fee PER SCHOOL YEAR; credit card processing will be assessed a 3.5% fee PER TRANSACTION. This information is provided to all families at registration.

St. Thomas Preschool program may be forced to close down temporarily because of a public health emergency or a public pandemic. This may happen because we are forced to shut down by a government agency or because we believe it is in the best interest of our families, teachers, or staff to do so. If this happens, families will have the following expectation regarding tuition; pay tuition in full during the closure. Our program will commit to providing educational curriculum to families during the closure.

### **Extended Care**

Extended care hours used will be billed at the rate of \$5.50 per hour and is pro-rated. Each child, each school day receives a 10 minute grace period window on extended care billing. This window can be reflected at the sign in time or the sign out time. (Example: If a child is clocked in at 8:40 a.m. and clocked out at 12:30 p.m., extended care billing would be a total of 40 minutes because the 10 minute grace period is forfeited.)

Extended care is billed at the end of each week. Family accounts will reflect charged amounts weekly. Extended care balances are due at the end of each month and will be reflected on family month tuition reminder bill.

\*\* Each family will receive an emailed monthly statement via the Director at the end of each month including all fees from prior month. \*\*

### **School Day Attendance**

When your family is provided a registration form for enrollment to St. Thomas Preschool, families are asked to select the days of the week that your child or children will be attending our program. Tuition rates are based on the program and days of attendance.

### **Daily Drop-In**

Children may be enrolled for all or part of the afternoon on the days that they are scheduled to attend. Drop-in care for registered students is available when space is available. If you would like your child to attend on an unscheduled day, please contact your child's teacher via email and copy the director for space, availability, and approval.

The daily drop-in rate is \$30.00. This fee does not include extended care hours. If drop-in is available and approved by the teacher and director, the drop-in rate will be reflected in your extended care billing that week.

## STAFF & PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

### Staff

The staff at St. Thomas Preschool will offer a safe, relaxed, and casual setting for your child's learning experiences.

- Follow the standards represented in the policies of this book.
- Follow the Diocese of Tucson curriculum, Arizona Infant Toddler Standards, and Arizona Early Learning Standards.
- Listen to any questions, comments, concerns that you may have, and set up confidential meetings if you so desire. Meetings can be scheduled with teachers privately through email.
- Share information with families about difficulties and successes.
- Inform you of any illness or accident.
- Provide newsletters, announcement, and calendars to inform you of classroom themes and events.
- Provide families with ongoing developmental assessment progress.
- Provide families three opportunities throughout the school year for teacher/parents conferences to discuss your child's development (pre-conference in August or prior to start date, fall conference in October, spring conference in March)
- Staff participates in a minimum of 20 hours of continuing education for professional development.

### Parents

Parents are invited to participate in our program as they are able. Please plan to attend any and all of the planned activities throughout the school year. These gatherings are not mandatory, but they are wonderful opportunities to meet your child's friends and their families.

- All parents will be treated with respect and concerns/issues discussed confidentially.
- Individual family culture will be respected. You are invited to share your family experiences with the school community.
- Parent volunteers (HUGS) are essential to our program's success. Families are required to volunteer 30 hours per school year or pay the opt-out fee of \$500. Many options are available for you to select from.
- Parents have the responsibility of reading the information regarding the school and our programs, checking the parent boards daily, Bloomz communication, and other forms of communication.
- Share information about your child with staff members.
- Pay tuition fees using Tuition Express payment options.
- Call or email the school when their child will be absent.
- Parents and extended families are invited to visit the school at any time. Communicate with Director and/or teacher with any special requests.
- Sign their child in and out each school day in the ProCare system.
- Attend Teacher Parent Conferences to understand child's development and progress (pre-conference in August or prior to start date, fall conference in October, spring conference in March).
- Update all emergency contact information and immunization records.



## Absenteeism, Illness, Medications & Injury

### Absences

If your child is absent on a day when he/she is scheduled to attend, please notify the preschool via phone (577-0503) or email the school attendance account at: [attendance@stthomaspreschool.com](mailto:attendance@stthomaspreschool.com). For your child's safety, it is **very important** that you first contact the school versus a staff member's personal cell phone.

If your child is absent due to illness, the school needs to know the nature of the illness to record with ADHS. The Preschool Office opens at 8:00 a.m., but a message can be left prior to school hours on the answering machine.

If your child cannot attend on a day for which he/she is scheduled, please do not bring him/her on other days. There will be a preschool day charge for additional or alternate days.

In the event of family vacation, prolonged illness, or other extended absences, space in class for your child can be reserved **only** if tuition is paid continuously.

If your child must be withdrawn from school, a **two-week** advance notice is required or you will be responsible for the entire next month's tuition. In the event of withdrawal in the middle of the month, tuition will **not** be prorated. The entire month's tuition must be paid. If your child is absent for one month and tuition has not been paid, your child's enrollment in the preschool program will be terminated. If you wish to have your child reinstated, payment of the registration fee will be required.

If a temporary withdraw or suspension from program is requested family must follow policy above providing a two week advance notice is required or you will be responsible for entire next month's tuition. If you wish to have your child reinstated, payment of the registration fee will be required.

The following charges will be applied to your account if your child is not picked up by school closing time:

- 5 minutes late: \$15.00
- 6-15 minutes late: \$30.00
- 16-20 minutes late: \$45.00

### Pick-Up/Drop-Off Changes

When your child's school routine changes, please let us know. A note, email, or phone call in advance to the teachers and/or Director is needed if your child is going home with a school friend or being picked up by someone other than those you have already designated. Staff will also require photo identification to verify and confirm their identify. In addition, it helps us and your child if he or she is aware of any changes in routine.

## Illness Policy

St. Thomas Preschool reserves the right to temporarily deny any child admittance to school for reasons of obvious illness or to request early departure, should symptoms become apparent during the course of the day. Any child who seems unable to participate in our program for any reason will be sent home. This is to ensure the continued good health of everyone at the school. We realize that most of you are working parents, and we do try to accommodate you as much as possible. However, for the health and well-being of the children in our care and our staff, we feel it is vital to maintain a strict wellness policy. We ask for parents to assist by keeping sick children at home. We do take into consideration your physician's recommendations nevertheless it is up to our discretion when your child may return to school.

### ***When a child may not attend school:***

**Fever:** Children will be sent home if their temperature is 100.4 or higher and must stay home the next day for observation. Children must be free of fever for at least 72 hours without the use of fever reducing medication. The same policy applies if your child develops a fever at home. They must be fever free for at least 72 hours without the use of fever reducing medication.

**Rash:** Any rash other than a common diaper rash or skin irritation will require that child to be sent home for an evaluation and diagnosis from their doctor in writing of exactly what it is. They may return to school based on that written doctor's evaluation, and clearance that it is not contagious.

**Conjunctivitis (pink eye):** Children will be sent home if there appears to be an unusual amount of discharge from or irritation to their eye(s) and must stay home the next day for observation. Before returning to school they will need an evaluation and diagnosis from their doctor in writing of exactly what it is.

- *If the diagnosis is BACTERIAL CONJUNCTIVITIS, child must have received at least 24 hours of treatment.*
- *If the diagnosis is VIRAL CONJUNCTIVITIS, your child may return AS LONG AS THERE IS NO DISCHARGE.*
- *If in fact they do not have "pink eye" we need a doctor's note with a diagnosis and a clearance that it is not contagious.*

**Thick White, Green or Yellow Discharge:** Children will be sent home if they appear to have any thick white, green, or yellow discharge. This is often indicative of an infection, and they must stay home the next day for observation. Before returning to school, they will need a written evaluation and diagnosis from their doctor and at least 24 hours of treatment. If in fact they do not have an infection, we need a doctor's note with a diagnosis of exactly what it is with a clearance that it is nothing contagious. The Department of Health and most doctors are of the opinion that once on antibiotics for 24 hours, the discharge is no longer contagious even though it may persist for up to two weeks.

**Diarrhea:** Children will be sent home if they have three or more loose bowel movements in one day and must stay home the next day for observation. Before returning to school (after the day of observation), children must be free from diarrhea for 24 hours with at least 1 regular bowel movement. If your child has one or more loose bowel movements on their first day back, they will be sent home again.

**Vomiting:** Children will be sent home if they vomit and must stay home the next day for observation. Before returning to school (after the day of observation), children must be symptom free with no vomiting for at least 24 hours.

**Persistent Hacking Cough:** Children will be sent home if they have a persistent hacking cough and must stay home the next day for observation. Before returning to school they will need a written evaluation and diagnosis from their doctor and at least 24 hours of treatment. If in fact they do not require any treatment, we need a doctor's note with a diagnosis of exactly what it is with a clearance that it is not contagious.

**Lice:** Head lice does not infest classrooms or homes. They are blood-feeding insects; they do not survive for very long (24-48 hrs) when separated from the warm human body environment. Children with head lice will not be sent home from school immediately. Parents will be notified, and the child must have a lice treatment prior to returning to the school. Parents are required to have direct conversations with the Director regarding the situation; this will ensure privacy of the child. The school will take precautions to stop the spread of head lice if it arises (deep cleaning, washing dress-up clothing, sanitizing, etc.).

### ***Common Cold Policy***

Children suffering from a common cold will be assessed on an individual basis.

Factors for consideration include the developmental level of your child in congruence with our ability to limit the spread of germs.

The younger your child, the more difficult it is to keep the spread of germs down. For example: hand to face contact, mouthing of toys, uncontrolled nasal discharge, uncovered sneezing and coughing etc.

A child who becomes ill while at St. Thomas Preschool must be removed from the classroom in order to limit exposure of other children to communicable disease. An ill child will be sent to the office to wait for his or her parent to arrive.

St. Thomas Preschool reserves the right to make the final determination of exclusion due to illness. Any exceptions to our illness policy will require a written note from a licensed health care professional stating that the child is not contagious.

## Medications

Medications, both prescription and over the counter, are rarely given at school; the only exceptions involve special or serious problems where it is deemed absolutely necessary by the physician that the medication be given during school hours. The parent is urged, with the help of your child's physician, to work out a schedule of giving medication at home, outside school hours whenever possible.

*IF MEDICATION IS TO BE ADMINISTERED AT SCHOOL, ALL OF THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS MUST BE MET:*

1. A signed request from a licensed physician/dentist specifying the condition for which the medication is to be given, the name, dosage, route, side effect and specific instructions for emergency treatment must be on file at school. School staff is not authorized to determine when an "as needed" medication is to be given.
2. Specific instructions must be provided.
3. A signed request from the parent/guardian must be on file at school.
4. Medication must be in your child's original, labeled pharmacy container written in English.
5. All liquid medication must be accompanied by an appropriate measuring device.
6. A separate form is required for each medication.

Medications must be stored in a locked box (refrigerated medications) or in a high cabinet (non-refrigerated medications) while in use at St. Thomas Preschool. The Medication Authorization Form must remain with the medication at all times. Unused medications must be immediately returned to the family and will not be stored at St. Thomas Preschool.

## Documentation of Accidents/Injury

All children must have an updated and current Emergency Information and Immunization Record Card on file. This form must indicate, in case of an emergency: the child's doctor, preferred hospital, and who to contact in case of an emergency.

Staff members shall document accidents and incidents that occur at St. Thomas Preschool using an Ouch/Incident Report. If the injury is serious, the injury must be photographed and monitored as needed. In addition, a parent needs to be contacted regarding an incident report before pick-up. The parent shall sign the report *the same day* as the incident. All Accident/Incident Reports must be given to the Director to be placed in the child's permanent file.

## Documentation of Health Incidents

Each time a parent is contacted regarding an ill child or symptoms of illness, staff members should complete a Health Note. All parents will be notified of any communicable illnesses present in the program via a sign posted on the main entrance to the office explaining the illness.

## Documentation of Allergies

A child with allergies must have an Allergy Action Plan posted in a visible location in the classroom. If the allergy is food-related, an Allergy Action Plan must also be posted in the kitchen area. All staff working in the classroom of child with allergies must review the Allergy Action Plan to ensure understanding of emergency procedures, should the child have an allergic reaction. All allergic reactions must be documented and posted in all classrooms.

## Documentation of Special Health Care Needs

An Emergency Care Plan will be on file for any child or staff member with special health care needs (seizures, etc.). A copy of the Emergency Care Plan must be kept in the classroom emergency binder. All staff working in the classroom must familiarize themselves with this plan, should an emergency arise. If necessary, staff will receive training regarding a child's or staff member's specific health care needs.

## Preschool Access

The safety of all our children is of utmost importance. It is imperative that parents DO NOT share their school gate codes. Make sure the office and teachers are aware of anyone on campus or its surroundings that seem concerning or suspicious.

Any person on campus who is not a staff member, substitute teacher, subcontracted staff or volunteer and is not the parent, guardian or custodian of an enrolled child on campus will be approached and asked what their purpose is.

## Curriculum & Assessment

We believe that children learn best when active and engaged. Play is the best way for children to learn and is how skills are practiced and developed. Children will be offered choices each day during center time that may include: fine arts, dramatic play, blocks, looking at and reading books, science experiments, math activities, social studies, language arts, cooking, puzzles, manipulative, and outdoor play.

Our foundation for the school's curriculum is taken from *The Creative Curriculum* and *Allelu*, a religion curriculum that is age appropriate. Religion will be conducted several times throughout the school day: learning circles (guided curriculum teaching), prayers, individual prayer intentions, songs, and Community Prayer. Community Prayer gatherings happen on Thursdays in the chapel. Families are always welcome and encouraged to attend and participate.

*The Creative Curriculum* is theory and research based and focuses on interest areas (centers). Teachers will create lesson plans by using the Diocese of Tucson curriculum, Arizona Early Learning Standards, and Arizona Common Core Standards.

Within the first 90 days of enrollment, families will be asked to screen their child using *The Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ)* tool. This screening will help us to identify areas of strength and need in your child's development. It will also be useful in making a referral to a professional, if

needed. The ASQ is not used to track children's assessment over time; therefore, it will not be administered again unless there is a concern about a child's development.

Also, assessments will occur prior to the first day of school for a pre-conference, during the fall and spring seasons. Parents will be provided these assessments. Formal mandatory conferences will be offered during the months of October and March for all children. Teacher-parent conferences provide a time for the teacher to share what he or she has learned about your child and for you to share any ideas or goals for your child. You may request a conference at any time throughout the school year. Please speak with your child's teacher to set up any conference or meetings.

### **Classroom Arrangements**

All children will be placed in a classroom for a complete school year when the child is registered in August. Depending on child's birthday or developmental level of the child, children may spend more than one year with a teacher(s) or in an age group. All classrooms have two or more teachers. These two teachers are primarily responsible for their group of children throughout the school day.

After registration is completed teaching staff will meet to discuss classroom placement and arrangements for the upcoming school year.

### **Child Guidance**

We believe that discipline is a positive ongoing process that teaches children how to effectively relate to others. Children are encouraged to solve problems that may arise throughout the day. We encourage the use of self-control, redirection, problem-solving, and cooperation. These methods are utilized to teach the children how to be responsible and accountable for their own behavior. Occasionally, a child may be redirected to another area of the classroom to help him or her to make a better choice. In order to build self-esteem, we will explain to the child that the behavior, not the child, is unacceptable.

Excessive occurrences or degrees of inappropriate behavior are reported to the parents. At this time, a parent conference will be scheduled with the teachers and director, and a behavior modification plan will be set up.

### **Communication with Parents**

Communication with parents is a crucial part of our program. The teachers, staff and, director will communicate with parents in many different manners: conversations when your child is dropped off and picked up, parent meeting, telephone contact, communication via Bloomz, hard copy notes, parent boards, calendars, and formal conferences. If you ever feel that the communication is not as frequent or as detailed as you would like, please see the director, so that additional arrangements can be made. All parent comments and suggestions are valued. Written communication can be translated to a family's home language if needed. Please talk with the director to make arrangements.

## Confidentiality

All information regarding your child, including your child's records, is confidential. This includes all medical information, developmental screenings, and assessment tools. The only people permitted to see your child's records are you, the St. Thomas Preschool staff, and state licensing specialists. The information is protected in a locked cabinet when not in use. St. Thomas Preschool will ask you to sign a permission slip to release any confidential information to other persons, area schools, or professional organizations.

## Toddler Policies

**Diapering:** Please provide commercially available disposable diapers/pull ups, wipes, and ointment, if your child requires it. Diapers are checked often throughout the day, at least every two hours and after naptime. When children are placed on the changing station, a staff member's hand will be on them at all times. The changing area is cleaned and sanitized after each child's diaper is changed. Teachers and staff will wash their hands after each diaper change, as do the children (it's a good habit to begin!). Please ask if you have any questions. We ask that your child not arrive at school in a soiled diaper.

**Potty Training:** The toddler teachers are happy to help with your child's transition from diapers to the potty. If we see your child become interested in potty training during their school experience, we will highly recommend that we begin the process.

We have implemented a policy for this transition, due to the amount of time it takes to clean up from a potty accident, that children must continue to wear pull-ups or diapers to school until they have used the potty successfully (pee and poop) for one full week at home and at school (excluding night time). We are happy to take your child to the bathroom every two hours, and we will remind him or her to go throughout the day.

We want to do everything we possibly can to assist in this process. This is an exciting time for you and your children because they are becoming more independent and learning how to make their own way in the big world. We understand that accidents happen and are to be expected. For the first month of wearing underwear, please send pull-ups and wipes to school for your child due to the fact that we will need to use them if they have two consecutive accidents in a day.

We ask that families provide pull-ups that have Velcro sides (Huggies, NOT Pampers).

Please keep three full changes of clothes in your child's cubby during this period. If you are experiencing any potty training issues, please hang in there. All children need to be completely potty trained before transitioning to their new classroom.

**Feeding:** Toddlers will be drinking from small cups, using forks and spoons, practicing hand washing and manners. We ask that sippy cups remain at home.

**Bottles/Sippy Cups:** Bottle and sippy cups are not allowed on campus and will not be given to your child during the school day.

**Water Bottles:** We ask that each toddler bring a reusable water bottle to school everyday. The school has water fountains and self-serve water containers, but these are not always easy for little hands to manipulate. Providing a reusable water bottle will ensure your child is getting enough water throughout their school day. Please take the water bottle home at the end of each day and return to school each day with the bottle cleaned and refilled.

**\*\* Please do not fill your child's water bottle with milk or juice, ONLY WATER. \*\***

**Pacifiers:** We understand that every child is different. If your child is still using a pacifier, we will help with your child's transition. We will allow pacifiers ONLY during nap time. It must be left your child's cubby. We will keep you updated on the progress, and hopefully together we can help make this transition as smooth as possible.

**Biting:** One of our primary goals is to provide a safe and loving environment for all children. When a biting incident occurs, there are many upset feelings. When it does occur we take it very seriously and try to find the reason why the child is biting and try to extinguish the behavior as quickly as possible. Assisting in developing positive social skills and providing appropriate use of language is important when navigating social experiences. That being said, biting is not uncommon. It causes more upset feelings than any other behavior in group settings with young children. Parents of the child who was bitten, parents of the child biting, and their teachers all want the behavior to end as quickly as possible. As we know, young children anywhere from 1-3 years of age learn through oral manipulation, which sometimes involves people.

### **Nap Time**

A rest or nap time is required by state regulations for all children staying for more than 8 hours. Our program also requires toddler aged children to rest or nap. Nap time is from 12:30 to 2:00 p.m. Children not staying for nap need to be picked promptly at 12:30 p.m. After this time, it is disruptive to the children's nap time transition. Teachers and staff have the right to ask families to return at 2:00 p.m. at the end of nap time.

Some children are developmentally past the need for a nap. After 30 minutes of quiet rest time, children are allowed to get up and participate in quiet activities.

Each child who takes a nap will need to bring: a small pillow, a small blanket, and a fitted crib size sheet that will fit in the labeled St. Thomas Preschool bag that will be provided by the school. A child may bring a stuffed animal or soft toy that he or she normally takes to bed. Please bring these items marked with the child's name, even if your child stays only occasionally for the afternoon. The bedding needs to be taken home at the end of each week to be washed and returned to school on Monday.



## Field Trips

St. Thomas Preschool (pre-kindergarten aged) may participate in field trips throughout the school year. Parent volunteers will be needed for chaperoning, driving, and maintaining children teacher ratios to a manageable level. Chaperones are required to complete a clearance process. All children must have a completed consent form with a parent signature to participate. Some field trips may require a small fee. Families are responsible to pay fees with cash or charge to school account.

## Dress Code

### School Uniforms

Children will be required to wear a basic uniform including a St. Thomas Preschool shirt/top. This uniform shirt must be worn to school everyday, unless special dress days are scheduled. Orders will be placed several times throughout the school year.

If your child arrives at school without a uniform shirt, parents will be called to bring one or we will provide your child a used uniform shirt and \$5.00 charge to your account for the shirt. Families are responsible for the fees and cleaning of the uniform shirts.

Uniform shirts can be recycled and will be re-sold for a small fee. Please bring your used shirts to the office and also feel free to ask about our current stock of recycled shirts.

Children can wear any bottoms they wish (shorts, pants, skirts). If girls wear skirts, they must wear bike shorts or bloomers underneath. Children love to run, jump, climb, and turn upside down. In addition, they are involved in painting, digging, water play, and sand on a daily basis. We have smocks available, but children are not required to wear them. Even though we use washable and fabric-friendly products, your child's clothes may be soiled or even stained. When the weather turns cool, warm clothing is also needed, especially for early morning temperatures on the playground.

### Shoes

Shoes must be worn at all times. Tennis shoes are best, but a strap sandal or buckle shoe with a rubber or composite sole that grips is acceptable. Crocs are acceptable and encouraged. We ask that your child not wear party shoes or flip-flops. Shoes with slippery soles are not permitted.

Your child's activities could be limited if improper shoes are worn. If we observe that your child's shoes limit their play, we will ask that your child not wear the shoe to school.

## Nutrition/Meal Times

Parents are responsible to pay a fee for snack at the beginning of the school year for the purchase healthy snacks. Our school will use a cycle menu of three weeks or longer. Menu items will include food items from a variety of cultures and daily snacks from 2 food groups, served with water or milk (skim or 1%).

Children are asked to bring a re-usable water bottle for thirst. Water will be used as the first choice for thirst and will be offered throughout the day. Fruit juice will not be served at snack times or throughout the school day.

Lunch is every day at 12:00 p.m. in your child's classroom. If your child is staying for lunch, please provide healthy lunch items that will be stored in a commercial refrigerator. Teaching staff cannot heat up lunch food items.

Please label your child's lunch box. At drop and after lunch, children will place lunch boxes in a container outside classroom door. Please take-home lunch boxes at the end of each school day. Children will be asked to place all uneaten food back into their lunch boxes; this will allow you to see what your child has eaten for lunch.

If your child does not have a lunch, you will be contacted to bring a lunch as soon as possible. If the school provides lunch, a \$5.00 fee will be charged to your account.

We are committed to creating a pleasant mealtime for all children and teachers. We recognize that family-style meal service has many benefits; it provides opportunities for teachers and children to support social skills, interactions with peers, good eating habits, and conversations.

### Snack Time

- Food is placed on the table in serving bowls, plates, or baskets.
- There are child-friendly serving utensils for food.
- Food is passed from one person to another.
- Everyone serves him or herself (with assistance if needed).
- Children choose what to put on their plates and how much to eat.
- There is adequate food on the table for all children and teachers.
- Teachers will model family-style practices and etiquette for children.

## Meal Time

- Teachers will participate, sit, and interact with children at mealtimes.
- Encourage words are used and negative facial expressions, body language or verbal cues are avoided in regards to the food being served.
- Teachers will talk to the children about the food and encourage children to discuss the food texture, taste, color, shape, size, quantity, number, etc.
- Teachers will not use food as a reward or punishment
- Teachers will be prepared for spills and accidents (keeping extra utensils, paper towels and soapy water nearby).

St. Thomas Preschool will avoid foods that can cause choking such as hard candy, hot dogs, sticky candy, or chunks of raw carrots. We recommend that parents send age appropriate food as well. If you have a question regarding the appropriateness of food, please talk with your child's teacher.

St. Thomas Preschool encourages healthy eating. We do not have to commercial kitchen to support CACFP policies.

St. Thomas Preschool keeps all liquids or food hotter than 110 degrees out of children's reach.

## Food and Other Allergies

If, at any time, a child enrolls with a diagnosed nut allergy, the nut allergy policy will change and will be effective immediately.

Please be sure to clearly communicate on your child's Emergency Contact form any other food or substance allergy so that a substitution or accommodation can be made. In addition, each child with a food allergy must have a Food Allergy Action Plan, Asthma Action Plan, and/or Allergy Action Plans completed prior to the child's first day of school. Allergy Action Plan documents are available in the office. The document must be completed by your child's physician and reviewed with the office staff.

## Birthdays

We are glad to celebrate your child's birthday in the classroom. Please see your child's teachers to set up specific arrangements. On your child's birthday, you may bring: mini muffins, fruit, frozen yogurt, frozen fruit bars, goodie bags, or healthier food options to share with the other children and teachers in the classroom. These treats can be homemade or store bought.

We ask that you do **NOT** place birthday invitations in cubbies or hand them out at school. Children are very aware and feelings could be hurt when everyone is not invited. We are happy to provide you a school directory so invitations can be mailed or emailed to families.

## Gross Motor Development / Physical Activity

St. Thomas Preschool is committed to our children's health. We encourage all children to participate in a variety of physical activity opportunities throughout the school day, that are age appropriate, fun, useful, and develop various gross motor skills. In keeping with this philosophy, our program will follow the guidelines below:

- All children over the age of two are provided at least 30 minutes of physical activity as part of our morning program and an additional 30 minutes for children in our afternoon program. It will include both teacher-led and free-play activities in accordance with the Empower guidelines.
- Teachers will provide opportunities twice per day for children to play outside. Teacher-led activities will be divided into shorter segments and will provide opportunities for children to practice fundamental skills.
- Teachers will encourage moderate and vigorous levels of physical activity.
- Every child will have the opportunity to participate in outdoor physical activity for at least 20 minutes per day.
- Every child will have the opportunity to participate in structured physical activity for at least 15 minutes in the morning and again in the afternoon.
- We encourage children to be active throughout the day, exploring their environment by limiting sedentary activities to less than 30 minutes at a time (except during nap time).
- Use of screen time is limited to educational physical activities and is limited to three hours per week.
- No screen time during meal or snack time is permitted.
- Physical activity is not used as a punishment, nor can physical activity be withheld from a child for behavioral reasons.

Children are provided various times throughout the school day for physical play and gross motor activities. Our outdoor environment is an extension of the classroom learning, and children will be provided opportunities for unstructured and structured physical play and learning.

## Sun Safety

Please apply sunscreen to your child prior to sending him or her to school. If you would like us to reapply sunscreen throughout the day, please bring a labeled bottle of screen with your child's first and last name. It must be stored with the office staff, and a parent must sign a permission slip to apply.

Children are encouraged to bring a hat with a brim that they can keep at school, labeled with his or her first and last name. Sunglasses that provide UV protection are welcome but must be shatter proof.

## Insect Repellent

If you would like the staff to apply insect repellent throughout the day, please bring a labeled bottle with your child's first and last name. It must be stored with the teachers, and parents must sign a permission slip to apply.

## Pesticide Application

St. Thomas the Apostle is exterminated monthly or as needed. Notification of application will occur within 48 hours before application. The following information will be posted:

- Brand, concentration, rate of application, and any restrictions
- Date and time of application
- Pesticides safety data sheet
- Name and phone number of the exterminating business
- Name of licensed applicator

## Emergency Procedures

All staff members are certified in pediatric First Aid and CPR. In the event of illness or accident, first aid will be administered and parents (or emergency contact person) will be contacted.

In the event of a building safety issue, such as a fire, the teachers will evacuate the children following the escape route or alternate route as indicated on the building map. Maps are posted in all classrooms and office. Drills are held monthly.

In case of an actual emergency, staff will begin to notify parents of children involved in the emergency within 30 minutes of the emergency. Written notices of the incident will be available at the front desk for parents within 24 hours.

In the case of an emergency lockdown, all doors to the building will be locked. Children will remain in the classrooms with doors locked. No one will be allowed in or out of the building until the police clear the lockdown.

## Crisis Plan

In accordance with the requirements of the Diocese of Tucson, St. Thomas Preschool has established a Crisis Response Plan and a corresponding manual that includes procedures, contacts, and child information deemed necessary to utilize in case of any emergency. The staff is frequently trained on these procedures. The entire school participates in emergency drills including fire drills, lock down drills, and evacuation drills. The drills are reviewed by the staff as a means to continually improve the response time and protocol during any emergency. The crisis plan also includes procedures for: hazardous materials events, radiological events, sheltering, weather, and bomb threats. Environmental hazards are also taken into consideration including: air pollution, lead, and pesticides.

If any parent or visitor is present during a drill, they are expected to comply with the emergency procedure protocol under the direction of the staff.

St. Thomas Parish and Preschool campus is a smoke-free environment.

## Abuse / Neglect

In accordance with the Arizona State Law, the staff at St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Preschool must report suspicion of any form of child abuse. This includes sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, or neglect. The preschool does not condone, hide, or tolerate any type of child abuse. Our foremost responsibility is to ensure the safety of your child.

Sexual misconduct includes a broad range of acts and behaviors that are defined in Section IV of the Diocese of Tucson *Guidelines for the Prevention of and Response to Sexual Misconduct*. To protect children, adolescents, and adults from sexual misconduct, the Parish has adopted the *Guidelines for the Prevention of and Response to Sexual Misconduct*, and the Summary Statement of the guidelines as promulgated by the Diocese of Tucson, and the *Diocese of Tucson Code of Conduct*, both of which must be read and adhered to by all employees.