

Saint Thomas Aquinas Preschool

2016-2017



Parent/Guardian/Child Handbook



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624 Dubuque Street
Webster City, IA 50595

www.stthomaswc.org

CENTRAL LEADERSHIP

*Archbishop Michael Jackels
Diocesan Board of Education
Superintendent of Schools, Mrs. Kim Hermsen*

LOCAL LEADERSHIP

*Pastor, Father Stephen Meyer
St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School Board, Mr. Ben Rahe, Chair
Principal, Duane J. Siepker
Preschool Teacher, Erin Henderson
Preschool Associate, Kathy Brandt*

I. Philosophy

Mission Statement of the Educational Apostolate — Archdiocese of Dubuque

The mission of the Educational Apostolate of the Archdiocese of Dubuque is to promote lifelong faith formation which challenges individuals to:

- respond to God’s continuous call for conversion to Jesus Christ
- form and be formed in Christian community life
- grow in knowledge of faith
- participate in liturgical celebrations and prayer
- collaborate in the Church’s mission of evangelization

Mission Statement and Objectives of St. Thomas Aquinas School:

Mission: **To provide a world-class education in the spirit of Jesus.**

Objective I

St. Thomas Aquinas School will

- involve the lives of its students in the study and worship of God.
- involve the students in giving service to others.
- involve the students in initiating and experiencing Christian community.

Objective II

St. Thomas Aquinas School is committed to

- developing Christian respect for God.
- developing Christian respect for self.
- developing Christian respect for others.
- developing Christian respect for the world.

Objective III

St. Thomas Aquinas School is committed to

- meeting the individual needs of each student.
- recognizing the uniqueness of each student.

St. Thomas Aquinas Preschool is licensed by the Department of Human Services. It follows the rules and guidelines for licensing by DHS. It also follows the policies of the Archdiocesan Board of Education and the St. Thomas Aquinas Board of Education. In addition, the four year-old program follows the policies and procedures of the Webster City Community Preschools.

II. Admission Policies/Notice of Non-Discrimination

Admission

The Archdiocesan Educational System maintains a policy of open enrollment in all educational programs.

Equal Opportunity

St. Thomas Aquinas Preschool is an equal opportunity educational institution. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic origin, or religion.

No child shall on the grounds of race, color, age, gender, national origin or physical disability be excluded or denied the benefits of any program or activity sponsored by this preschool.

Enrollment

The preschool program shall allow for an enrollment of 16 three year-olds and 20 four year-olds per session with one teacher and one associate. Birth date restrictions shall be compatible with those required for elementary age children. A Board of Education policy and procedure are followed to accommodate class enrollment. This information is given to parents upon initial interest in registering.

To enroll a child, the following must be completed prior to admission:

- Application form
- A physical exam form completed and signed by a physician including a record of immunization.
- Medical consent form in the event of illness or emergencies
- Permission slip allowing the child to participate in field trips and to be photographed while at the preschool.
- Listing of adults who have permission to transport the child

Sessions

Classes meet 8:00 –12:00 on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays for the four year-olds and 8:00 -11:30 on Tuesdays and Thursdays for the three year-olds when school is in session. If the K-6 school begins late because of weather conditions, there is no preschool.

Noon lunches are not available. Four year-olds may have busing service if it is a family necessity. Parents would contact the WCCS Transportation Director for specifics regarding four year-old busing.

Tuition/Fees

Tuition for the 3 year-old class - \$85 per month

St. Thomas Preschool participates in the Free Tuition Program for four year-olds. Children must be four years of age by Sept. 15 to qualify.

A deposit fee of \$25 is applicable for both classes during the pre-registration process.

Withdrawal

To withdraw a child from the preschool, a written notice must be submitted to the school office or preschool teacher with a minimum of one week's notice of the last day of attendance. Without such written notification, a new student cannot be enrolled to fill the vacancy. Therefore, the tuition fee will be charged until the written notice is received.

Statement of Health

Each preschool child is required to have a physical examination report for admission. This report must include an immunization record that is in compliance with the Iowa State Health Department regulations.

Admittance

Board of Education policy and procedure 5112.1 are followed to accommodate class enrollment.

III. Program Description

Early Childhood Outcomes-Archdiocese of Dubuque Catholic School System

Children will:

- demonstrate a loving relationship with God and all of creation.
- demonstrate a positive self-concept, appropriate self-control, and a sense of belonging.
- demonstrate curiosity about the world, confidence as a learner, creativity, imagination, and personal initiative.
- demonstrate relationships of mutual trust and respect with adults and peers, understand perspectives of others, and negotiate and apply rules of group living.
- demonstrate respect for social and cultural diversity, for community and social roles.
- use language to effectively communicate and gain satisfaction through reading, writing, listening, and speaking.
- represent ideas and feelings through creative play, drama, dance, movement, music, and art.
- think critically, reason, and solve problems.
- develop understanding of relationships among objects, people, and events such as classifying, ordering, number, space, and time.
- explore their physical world by manipulating real objects to learn cause and effect relationships.
- demonstrate appreciation for the fine arts, humanities, and sciences.
- become competent in management of their bodies using both gross and fine motor skills.
- demonstrate knowledge about the care of their bodies and maintain a desirable level of health and fitness.

Program Expectations

1. The content offered is age and developmentally appropriate and reflects the purpose of the preschool. Creative Curriculum has been selected as the research-based curriculum to be used.
2. Each program is based on the following foundational premises:
 - a. Each child is a unique and special child of God.
 - b. The St. Thomas Early Childhood program provides unique opportunities to enhance the development of the whole child in a setting which models Christian values and beliefs.
 - c. Child-centered and developmentally appropriate experiences enable each child to foster feelings of self-worth, self-respect, and love for others.
 - d. A cooperative and supportive teaching partnership between family and school is essential in providing a positive and enriching early childhood experience
 - e. The teacher's role is to facilitate the child's experiential learning process by providing an integrated and multi-sensory environment which uses a variety of materials and modes.
 - f. The young child needs a flexible environment which offers the security of definite limits while providing freedom and flexibility so that each child can grow in self-expression and non-competitiveness.
3. Each program offered provides appropriate developmental Christian Faith Formation experiences which enable the child to:
 - a. Learn about God by discovering his/her own giftedness
 - b. Learn about God by cultivating a sense of wonder and of ritual through celebrating
 - c. Learn about God by developing an attitude of love and respect for self and others
 - d. Learn about God by developing an understanding of what makes a peaceful and just society
 - e. Learn about God by developing an awareness of the presence of God in the world
 - f. Learn about God through his/her relationship with Jesus.
4. Each program offered provides appropriate developmental aesthetic and artistic experiences which enable the child to
 - a. Develop enthusiasm for the arts
 - b. Imagine and visualize through the arts
 - c. Respond, interpret, and create through the arts
 - d. Appreciate the arts
5. Each program offered provides appropriate developmental intellectual experiences which enable the child to:
 - a. Sustain and extend natural curiosity
 - b. Develop thinking through meaningful learning experiences
 - c. Use language to facilitate thinking and learning
 - d. Use language to communicate effectively

- e. Develop and integrate the attitudes, skills, and knowledge of the fine arts, humanities, practical arts, and sciences
 - f. Become an independent lifelong learner.
6. Each program offered provides appropriate developmental experiences in the development of responsibility which enable the child to:
- a. Value and respect individual contributions
 - b. Value, respect, and appreciate cultural identity and heritage
 - c. Accept and demonstrate empathy
 - d. Establish a collaborative environment and acquire cooperative and independent social skills
 - e. Respect and care for the environment
 - f. Adapt to a changing world.
7. Each program offered provides appropriate developmental emotional and social experiences which enable the child to:
- a. Develop a positive, realistic self-concept
 - b. Develop interdependence
 - c. Set appropriate goals and feel satisfaction in accomplishments and efforts
 - d. Cope with change
 - e. Share and cooperate
 - f. Develop friendships
 - g. Learn from others
 - h. Enjoy living and learning.
8. Each program offered provide appropriate developmental physical development experiences which enable the child to:
- a. Learn and practice safety procedures
 - b. Take care of and respect his/her body
 - c. Develop awareness of good nutrition
 - d. Develop motor skills while maintaining physical fitness
 - e. Develop an appreciation and enjoyment of human movement
 - f. Learn social skills in a physical activity setting.

PRESCHOOL SCHEDULE

A balance between free choice teacher-directed activities, group and individual activities, active and inactive experiences is the goal of the daily schedule. Although the schedule is flexible, following a daily routine provides the preschooler with a sense of security and develops order to the program. A daily schedule is posted in the preschool room.

Sharing Time: This includes showing and telling things of interest to the child and the group. Children are encouraged to bring things that pertain to the season or theme being discussed. An occasional toy is permissible. This experience provides opportunities to develop self-confidence and the ability to speak to a group of his/her peers. This is begun in October.

Organized Play: Through games the child develops habits of fair play and good sportsmanship; develops large and small motor coordination, poise, posture, and good health; establishes confidence and self-control; cooperates and becomes an important part of the group; and enjoys self.

Music, Physical Education: The children are taught music and physical education by licensed teacher specialists through St. Thomas Aquinas School. Introduction to computer is offered to four year-olds.

Story Time: The children learn to respect and appreciate children's literature. A good listening vocabulary gives a student a strong foundation for kindergarten and lifelong enjoyment in reading.

Kendall Young Library: The class makes twice monthly trips to Kendall Young Library. Each child needs to be registered at KYL by the parent.

Work Period: This helps the child learn to work with others, to share, to follow directions and to find satisfaction in achievement.

Break: The children will have use of restrooms, a drink of milk or water and a nutritious snack or treat.

Free Choice: During this time, the child may choose his/her own activity and enjoy the fun of spontaneous play. This also provides an opportunity for the adults to study and interact with each child.

Music Period: Children enjoy music and finger plays They learn not only songs and body rhythms, but also to listen to and enjoy good music. Music is also used in the teaching of colors, numbers, alphabet concepts. and following directions.

Preschool Supplies: Supplies used at preschool are supplied by the school.

Field Trips: Field trips are a valuable part of the curriculum offered at the Preschool. Permission slips will be required in advance of any field trip.

Small Groupings: Individualized assistance will be given to help improve certain readiness skills for success in kindergarten.

IV. Communication

Absences

If a child will not be attending class for any reason, parents are asked to contact the school office. No refunds or credits will be given for absences. In the event of a long-term absence due to illness, possible adjustments to tuition/fees must be discussed with the principal. If the child has an illness listed below, he/she should not attend class. Should a child become ill while at preschool, the parent will be notified.

The preschool staff needs to be informed of any changes in a child's health status and/or eating habits (i.e., a child who develops an allergy).

Colds: If in respiratory distress or if the child has an elevated temperature (unless temperature elevation is due to recent immunization), the child shall not be brought to the Preschool. This shall also be the case if the child makes high pitched croupy or whooping sound when he/she coughs.

Diarrhea and Vomiting: If there is any diarrhea or vomiting, the child should not be brought to the Preschool. If the child has any loose stools or if the child vomits at the Preschool, he/she will be sent home. The child may return to the Preschool if he/she has been free from diarrhea or vomiting for 24 hours. If there is diarrhea for several days, a physician should be notified.

Eye Infection: If a child's eyes are mattering or draining, the child shall not be brought to the Preschool. The child may return after he/she is on antibiotic ointment for 24 hours or the eyes have shown marked improvement.

Impetigo: A child with impetigo shall be excluded from the Preschool for 24 hours after treatment has begun. The return shall depend upon the location of the infected area and if the area is dried and healing well.

Ear Infection: If purulent drainage, the child shall not be at the Preschool. (Exception: If the child has tubes and has been on an antibiotic for 24 hours.) A child with a diagnosed ear infection with no drainage must be on medication or a release must be obtained from a physician stating that the child is free of communicable disease.

Lice: A child will not be excluded from school or a particular setting on the day head lice are detected, but must be treated before returning the next day.

Pin worms: When pin worms are diagnosed in a child, the child shall be restricted from the Preschool. All clothing worn by the child prior to treatment should be laundered. It is advisable that family members also be treated.

Scabies and/or Pediculosis: When scabies or pediculosis is suspected in a child, the child shall be restricted from the Preschool until after initial treatment with appropriate medication. It is advisable that family members also be treated.

Sore Throat: A child with a sore throat may be restricted from the Preschool. If strep is suspected, the child should be seen by a physician.

Fever: If a child has a temperature of 100 degrees F. and exhibits any of the above conditions, the child will be sent home. A child with a temperature of 101 degrees F. will be sent home immediately.

Accidents/Emergencies

Incidents or accidents resulting in injury to a child will be reported on the day of the accident.

The written report will be prepared by the staff person who observed the incident or accident and shall include a general description of the incident and of the action taken, if any, by the staff at the preschool. If a child is hurt more severely, the staff will transport the child as quickly as possible to the Emergency Room and contact the parents.

Change of address

Parents are asked to notify the preschool personnel immediately if there is a change of address or telephone number. This information must be kept up to date, particularly in the case of an emergency.

Dual Parent Reporting

According to Archdiocesan policy 5124, in the case of a child whose parents' marriage has been dissolved or a separation of a parent from the home, the name and address of BOTH parents should be on file. Unless otherwise decreed by a court order, information commonly made available to parents of any child will be made available to both parents.

Inclement Weather Closing

Parents are asked to listen to the area radio station (KQWC 95.7 FM, 1570 AM) for announcements in the event of school closings due to inclement weather. There will be NO preschool class if there is a late start or early dismissal. Preschool days are not rescheduled due to these cancellations.

Parental Visits

Visiting: It is important that children be given a chance to adjust to their preschool setting before parents visit the classroom. Therefore, parents are asked not visit during the first two weeks of school. When an adult visits, he/she should not expect to just observe. Either the children or the teacher will encourage participation.

Meeting: A number of events will be scheduled throughout the year for parents, offering opportunities to become better informed about issues relating to the child's development.

Parent/Teacher Conferences: Conferences are scheduled twice a year – fall and spring.

Telephone Number: St. Thomas Aquinas School - (515) 832-1346

Biting Policy

The safety of the children at our center is our primary concern. The center's biting policy addresses the actions the staff will take if a biting incident occurs.

The following steps will be taken if a biting incident occurs at our center:

- The biting will be interrupted with a firm "No...we don't bite people!"
- Staff will stay calm and will not overreact.
- The bitten child will be comforted.
- Staff will remove the biter from the situation. The biter will be given something to do that is satisfying.
- The wound of the bitten child shall be assessed and cleansed with soap and water and ice applied.

- The parents of both children will be notified of the biting incident. Appropriate forms will be filled out (Incident Report).
- Note: If a bite requires medical treatment, a copy of the incident report must be mailed to the Department of Human Services within 7 calendar days.
- Confidentiality of all children involved will be maintained.
- The bitten area should continue to be observed by parents and staff for signs of infection.

V. Discipline

Discipline

It is important to treat each child as an individual in a manner which is appropriate to the child's development, activity, and general well being. Consistency, positive reinforcement, natural consequences, and positive redirection are used at the Preschool to shape appropriate behaviors in the children.

When necessary "time out" or a brief isolation from the group may be used. If a child is exhibiting a behavior problem, a conference with the parent may be requested. Parents are encouraged to discuss with the staff any changes, observations, questions, or suggestions that they might have concerning their child. The staff has been trained in the use of Positive Behavior Supports.

Dismissal Policy

Occasionally, a child will experience difficulty in adapting to a preschool environment and/or abiding by certain rules of behavior in the group setting. A conference will be scheduled with parents, the child's teacher and/or the principal to see if the problem(s) can be resolved. If a child's behavior and attitude continues to be disruptive to the group or to other children's welfare, the preschool reserves the right to request that the child be withdrawn from the Preschool program.

VI. Regulations for Participation

Arrival

Parents are responsible for bringing their children to the preschool classroom and picking them up there also. Parents must sign their children out if taken before the end of the scheduled time. Some four year-olds may be bused.

Calendar

A yearly and monthly calendar and newsletter will be provided to parents.

Departure/Pick-up

Pickup: Children must be picked up by 11:35 (noon for four year-olds). If a parent is going to be late, he/she is asked to notify the school as soon as possible. Only persons listed on the pick-up permission form in the registration packet will be allowed to take a child from the Preschool. Should another adult (not listed on original form) be asked to pick up the child, the staff needs to be notified in advance..

Dress/Clothing/Shoes

Children should wear comfortable clothing so that they will feel free to participate in all activities from easel painting to play. Playing outside (weather permitting) is an important aspect of preschool. Children will need to wear coats, hats, mittens, and boots when necessary. Shoes need to be constructed for running and play. Shoes that are hazardous by design and can cause tripping or sprains, such as “flip-flops” or clogs, should not be worn.

Each child may also have at least one extra set of clothing at the Preschool. These articles of clothing should be marked with the child’s name and kept in the child’s backpack.

VII. Health/Safety/Compliance Issues

Fire/tornado Drills

Fire drills and tornado drills are practiced monthly formally and more often informally so that the children become familiar with the procedure and are not frightened by the loud alarms.

Required Immunizations

Applicants enrolled shall have received:

At least three doses of combined diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis vaccine. Adult tetanus and diphtheria vaccine or pediatric diphtheria and tetanus may be substituted for combined diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis vaccine is contra-indicated for a child.

At least three doses of trivalent oral polio vaccine

At least one dose of rubella vaccine received after the applicant was a least fifteen months of age at the time of the immunization.

Lead in the Drinking Water

During 1991 all schools of the Archdiocese were tested for lead in the drinking water. The test results indicated the lead levels were below the established safety levels. Based upon these results and the rules of the Iowa Department of Public Health, no additional testing for lead needs to be done at this time.

Mandatory Reporting

As outlined in the Iowa code, all providers of the preschool are mandated by law to report any suspected cases of sexual abuse, physical abuse, or neglect. Iowa law states that the preschool may take, at public expense, photographs of the injured area. Any person participating in the making of, or in the investigation of, a report shall have immunity from any liability, civil or criminal, which might otherwise be imposed.

Medication Policy

The following medications will be administered by a trained staff member and a record of the medication will be kept by this person:

- Cough syrups/drops
- Oral prescription drugs
- Salves
- Acetaminophen

All medications require a permission slip signed and dated by the parent before medications can be administered to the child. Each prescription drug shall be in the original container and be accompanied by a physician's or pharmacist's direction. Since the administration of Acetaminophen, etc. may disguise the symptoms of what could be a contagious disease, the staff will administer Acetaminophen for analgesic discomforts only.

Radon Testing

During 1991 all schools of the Archdiocese were tested for radon. The Preschool room was also tested again in 2005, 2009, and in 2014 per DHS requirements. Radon testing is conducted on a schedule determined by DHS.

Smoking / Smoke Free Building

St. Thomas Parish Center has been designated a "Smoke Free Building." At no time will smoking be permitted within the building.

Student Privacy Act

In conformity with the Student Privacy Act, and Archdiocesan policy 5125, St. Thomas Aquinas School does not send out student information to any outside organizations without written authorization of the parent/guardian.

VIII. Student Services

Snacks/Birthday Treats

Snacks are provided by parents and must be in sealed individual packages. Whole fruits will be cut into small servings at preschool. Water or milk will be provided by the preschool. A child may celebrate his/her birthday by bringing a special treat.

Lost and Found

Lost and Found items are kept in the classroom. Articles that can be easily lost should be marked with the child's whole name rather than using initials or first name.

Toys

As a general rule children are asked not to bring personal toys to preschool. Sharing Time begins in October. If a child brings an item from home to show other children, it must remain in his/her backpack. The teacher will allow the child to take it out at the appropriate time. The preschool cannot be responsible for lost or broken toys.

IX. Staff

Staff Descriptions

Miss Erin is a licensed preschool teacher with the Iowa Department of Education. The associate, Mrs. Brandt, also teaches music for all the elementary grades and is licensed with the Iowa Department of Education.

Volunteers

Occasionally, volunteers will assist the preschool staff. Parents, college students, as well as other community members, will be in the classroom. The Dept. of Human Services, with whom the preschool is licensed, requires any parent or individual volunteering in preschool to have a state background check completed. The State of Iowa DHS Criminal History Record Check Form B must be completed by anyone who could have direct contact with children. The check includes

criminal history, child abuse information, and sex offender registry. In accordance with the Archdiocesan policy for the protection of minors, all personnel, whether employees or volunteers, who are regularly in the school for one hour or more weekly are required to attend a three hour Virtus educational training program. In addition, changes went into effect in July, 2010 that require additional FBI fingerprinting checks. Only staff, substitutes, or volunteers who have had the required record/fingerprinting checks and are approved to be involved with child care will have unrestricted access to children for whom that person is not the parent, guardian, or custodian. Additionally, a sex offender who has been convicted of a sex offense against a minor who is required to register with the Iowa sex offender registry shall not be on the property of the preschool center.

Teaching Children to Pray

It is firmly believed that the relationship of little children to God is very deep and important and influences the rest of their lives precisely because it is so simple. It is natural for little children to want to pray; as St. Paul says, "His Spirit speaks in our spirit." The spirits of little children are very open to contact with the Divine Spirit. All one has to do is to elicit this contact gently and freely.

Preschool Parent/Guardian Handbook
Revised: August, 2016
Agreement Form

St. Thomas Aquinas Preschool
624 Dubuque Street
Webster City, Iowa 50595
(515) 832-1346

Please return this form after reading/reviewing the Parent/Guardian Preschool Handbook.

To: St. Thomas Aquinas Preschool

I/we have read the St. Thomas Aquinas Preschool Parent/Guardian Handbook and understand our responsibility in the matters included in this handbook. I/we have discussed the appropriate items with my/our child/ren.

Parent/Guardian: _____

Date: _____

Please return this form sometime during the first week of classes.

Thank you.