



Parent/Student Handbook

2017– 2018

Annunciation Catholic Church
1020 Montgomery Road
Altamonte Springs, FL 32714
407-869-9472
Fr. Stephen D. Parkes, V.F.
Pastor

Annunciation Catholic Pre-School
970 Montgomery Road
Altamonte Springs, FL 32714
407-869-9404
407-869-7389 fax
Christine Golas
Director

**Annunciation Catholic Pre-School
970 Montgomery Road
Altamonte Springs. FL 32714**

**Parent/Student Handbook
2016 - 2017**

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MISSION

Annunciation Catholic Pre-school is a parish school committed to fulfilling the Church's mandate to teach the Gospel and the tenets of our Catholic faith. Guided by the Holy Spirit, the Pre-School strives to teach as Jesus taught and affirm the value of living as Jesus lived.

Annunciation Catholic Pre-school is committed to preparing its students to have hearts that are burning to know, love, and serve God by loving and serving others.

PHILOSOPHY

Annunciation Catholic Pre-School is a parish school which strives to provide a stimulating environment in which each child can develop to potential spiritually, intellectually, socially, and physically.

We endeavor to promote a process of active play, exploration, and moral development which will become the basis of an active Christian life.

Annunciation Catholic Pre-School believes that parents and guardians must be actively involved in the learning process of the child and support the school. Both home and school must form a partnership to successfully enrich the heart, soul and mind of each child.

ACCREDITATION

Annunciation Catholic Pre-School is accredited by the Florida Catholic Conference and the National Council for Private School Accreditation. We completed the re-accreditation process with Annunciation Catholic Academy during the Fall of 2015. Prior to the Florida Catholic Conference, Annunciation Catholic Pre-School was accredited under NAEYC for fifteen years.

PARENTS AS PARTNERS

As partners in the educational process at Annunciation Catholic Pre-School, we ask parents:

- To set rules, times, and limits so that your child:
 - Gets to bed early on school nights;
 - Arrives at school on time and is picked up on time at the end of the day;
 - Is dressed according to the school dress code;
- To actively participate in school activities such as Parent-Teacher Conferences;
- To notify the school with a phone call or brightwheel message when the student will be absent from school;
- To notify the school office of any changes of address or important phone numbers;
- To meet all financial obligations to the school;
- To inform the school of any special situation regarding the student's well-being, safety, and health;
- To complete and return to school any requested information promptly;
- To read school notes and newsletters and to show interest in the student's total education;
- To read and respond to brightwheel messages promptly;
- To support the religious and educational goals of the school;
- To support and cooperate with the discipline policy of the school;
- To treat teachers with respect and courtesy in discussing student problems.

ADMISSION POLICY

Priority for admission will be given in the following order:

1. Families with children currently enrolled and in good standing with Annunciation Catholic Pre-School.
2. Families with children currently enrolled and in good standing with Annunciation Catholic Academy.
3. Active parishioners of Annunciation Catholic Church. The pastor will determine which families are active; factors that the pastor may consider include:
 - a. regular attendance at Mass;
 - b. use of the envelope system;
 - c. involvement in parish ministry (for example, lector, usher, Eucharistic Minister, special parish projects, etc.); and
 - d. registered for at least one year.

4. Families from neighboring parishes who present a letter from their pastor stating that they are active parishioners.
5. Families from Annunciation and other parishes who have been registered for less than one year.
6. Non-registered Catholic families, families of other religious denominations, and registered non-supporting Catholic families.

Order of acceptance within each of the above groups will be determined by a lottery.

Note: Annunciation Catholic Pre-School will make every effort to assist students with special needs. However, the Pre-School after evaluating the needs of the child will determine whether the student's educational needs can be met and whether continued enrollment at the Pre-School is in the best interest of the student.

NON-DISCRIMINATORY POLICY

Annunciation Catholic Pre-School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, national, and ethnic origin in the administration of our education policies and other school programs. All children regardless of religious affiliation are to pray at Morning Prayer and attend religion classes.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

The Pre-School opens at 7:00 am and closes promptly at 6:00 pm. Families who are late picking up at their designated program end time will be charged \$10 per ten minute increment.

In order to facilitate a safe and quick pick-up of our children, please follow the established parking procedures. Pre-School parents may use the loop in front of the Pre-School for quick pick up or drop off. If you plan on visiting with teachers or discussing business with the front desk, please use the front parking spaces. Please ensure that the Pre-School Parking permit is visible on your car's dash.

ABSENTEE POLICY

Children who are enrolled in a VPK program can be at risk of losing their placement if they miss more than 20% of the attendance days in a month.

It is also important to note that missing days or weeks at school will not reduce a family's financial responsibility. Families must pay the full tuition rate each week even if they are out due to illness or family vacation.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Daily participation is important to the child's academic success. It is also important to arrive on time so your child does not miss important learning time. If your child is sick and/or will be absent for any reason please call the school at 407-869-9404, or notify the teacher through the brightwheel messaging system.

Children enrolled in the VPK program can be at risk of losing their placement if they miss more than 20% of the attendance days in a month.

Parents are required to sign the VPK book at the end of each month to verify your child's attendance for the month.

HOLIDAY

The Pre-School will be closed New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, the Friday after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day. When a holiday falls on Saturday or Sunday, the Pre-School will be closed the Friday before or the Monday after the holiday. Notice will be posted in advance. Additionally the Preschool will be closed on various holidays throughout the year. Please refer to the "Dates You Need To Know" document that was distributed the first week of school. This document can also be found under Parent Information on the School Website.

DRESS CODE

A clean and neat appearance enhances your child's dignity and promotes proper behavior. The school's dress code helps to achieve these purposes. Students are to wear weather appropriate and comfortable clothing that is of an appropriate size. **Student must also wear closed toe shoes and socks.**

Note: Infants do not need to wear shoes however socks are important to protect their feet.

PARENTS AND VISITORS IN SCHOOL

All visitors are required to register at the Pre-School office upon entering the school. Education students and other professionals wishing to observe classes must obtain prior approval from the Director who will instruct them on the procedures to follow.

No parent or visitor may interrupt a class to conference with the teacher. Teachers cannot confer with parents and attend to their duties at the same time. Volunteers should stay in the assigned classroom or workspace where they are scheduled. They should not use their volunteer time to "visit" with their children. All volunteers must have cleared fingerprints through the Diocese of Orlando.

If you wish to have a conference with a teacher, please arrange this time with the front office or by contacting the teacher directly through brightwheel.

Service Providers are welcome to work with your child at the preschool. Annunciation Catholic Pre-School will provide a place for therapies and will ensure that a valid background screening is on file at the preschool. All communications between providers and families must be conducted independently.

UPDATING STUDENT INFORMATION

Occasionally it is necessary for our staff to get in touch with you. We stress the importance of notifying us if your home, cell, or work telephone number changes or if you change your address. It is essential that you also notify us of any change in family circumstances.

DIVORCED AND SEPARATED PARENTS

Divorced and separated parents must provide the school with a notarized copy of the custody section of the divorce or separation decree.

The school respects the rights of non-custodial parents. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, the Pre-School will, upon request, provide the non-custodial parent with access to academic records, student sample work, and other school related information regarding the child. If there is a court order specifying that there is to be no information given, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the school with an official copy of the court order.

Since most communications from the school are available electronically, the non-custodial parent is encouraged to check these forms of communication routinely. Requests to receive routine e-mail from the school will be honored if it is submitted in writing at the beginning of the school year.

WITHDRAWALS

In case of withdrawal, parents should give written notice to the school office as soon as the withdrawal date is established. Failure to give a minimum of two weeks' notice will result in a fine up to the equivalent of two weeks tuition.

FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

Per direction of the Diocese of Orlando, all families must use the FACTS management system to pay all financial obligations. In order to set up a FACTS account please visit the FACTS website and follow the instruction sheet provided at Orientation. There is an annual set up fee of \$36 charged by FACTS for creating the family account.

Tuition payments are due based on the payment plan established through FACTS Tuition Management. There are two options of payment you may choose when paying tuition. The first option is to pay with your checking account. Using this option means there will be no additional fees assessed. The second option is to pay with a credit card. This option will result in the application of a merchant service fee which is currently charged at a rate of approximately 2.85%. Any payments received after the established due date are considered late. The late fee is \$30.00. If a check is returned from the bank, there is a return check fee of \$30.00.

INSURANCE

Every child in the Pre-School is covered by the Diocesan insurance plan for the hours he/she is under school supervision. Twenty-four hour coverage is available at an extra charge. Applications for such coverage will be distributed at the beginning of the school year.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

We at Annunciation Catholic Academy feel a child's birthday is a special day. We would like to share the joy of that day in the following ways:

1. The child may bring a treat to share with each classmate. The day for the treat must be cleared with the teacher at least 24 hours in advance. **The treat must be store bought and sealed with an ingredients list on the label.**

Be sure to talk with the teacher about what you are sending. A member of the class may be allergic to chocolate or nuts.

2. Parents may also choose to participate in the Birthday Book Club. Parents can participate by providing a new book with their child's name and an optional picture to be placed in the classroom library to commemorate their celebration in the classroom.

Invitations may only be passed out by placing them in the classroom folders.

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSING

In the case of hurricanes and other emergencies, Annunciation Catholic Pre-School will follow the same procedures as the Seminole County Public Schools in regard to closing. Re-opening the school will be done at the discretion of the administration after considering local conditions. An automated message will be sent to all home phones and cell phones which have been listed on the family's contact forms. The brightwheel system will also be utilized to message all parents about reopening dates and times. Finally, a message will also be left on the school answering machine once power and phone service is re-established. Please call the school to access the message.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

The school will conduct regular fire and safety drills and instruct students on the procedures to follow in case of an emergency. The cooperation of all students is required in order to practice exiting the school grounds in a quick and orderly fashion.

In the case of an actual emergency the school's emergency management procedures will be followed. Parents should not come to the school unless they are called to pick up their children.

T.E.A.M.

Together Everyone Achieves More (T.E.A.M.) is the Home and School Association for Annunciation Catholic Pre-School. This association is a vital link between school and parents. It is the vehicle for involving parents in various volunteer activities and for providing support and encouragement to families through social interaction and planned learning events.

By merit of registration, your family is automatically a member of Annunciation Catholic Pre-School T.E.A.M. We urge you to participate in the activities of the Association and to attend its meetings. The best way to keep informed of all the Association's activities is through the Pre-School Newsletter. The newsletter is also available on line. Please be sure to read it.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND PUBLICATIONS

On occasion we utilize pictures of our students for promotional purposes. As part of the registration process, families have been asked to sign a form which permits their children to be photographed and/or videotaped and for such pictures to be reproduced or published. If you do not give your consent, you must submit a written notification to the office.

ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

Through the generosity of our parish and the continued support of our parents, ACP is blessed with some of the latest educational technology. Along with these blessings come clear responsibilities. Catholic values, morals and ethics must always guide the use of technology resources. All students and parents must sign the "Acceptable Use Policy." Violations of the policy will result in penalties that range from loss of technology privileges to removal from ACP.

FLYERS

At times the school gives permission to certain community agencies or groups to distribute fliers to the students. The distribution of these fliers does not in any way indicate that the school authorizes or takes responsibility for the activity announced.

HEALTH SERVICES

All students must be in compliance with the Florida requirements for immunization and health screenings. A certificate of compliance must be turned in to the office before the student is allowed to begin

school. Religious exemptions from being immunized are **not** accepted by Diocesan schools. Students with this form of exemption will have to attend school elsewhere.

Students who are ill or injured are sent to the front office where only emergency care may be rendered. If conditions warrant, the parent will be contacted to determine the appropriate action to be taken. The school will send home students who show signs of contagious illness and the child may not return until symptoms are clear for at least 24 hours or a doctor has determined it is safe for the child to return and has provided documentation of clearance. Some symptoms include 2 or more instances of diarrhea, vomiting, and or a fever above 100.4 degrees. Alternate emergency telephone numbers must be filed in the school office. If a child has a special medical condition, this information should be filed in the school office together with instructions on how to proceed.

Administration or their designated representative is permitted to dispense doctor prescribed medication. This type of medication will be administered only in cases where failure to take prescribed medication during school hours could jeopardize a student's health. The use of inhalers with chambers is permissible; however the use of nebulizers will be at the discretion of administration.

Any medication to be administered in school must have a pharmacy label which includes the student's name, directions for administration and the physician's name and phone number.

The parent/guardian must sign an Authorization for Medication form prior to the administration of any medication. This form may be obtained in the school office.

FOOD POLICIES

It is the goal of Annunciation Catholic Pre-School to provide nutritious food for students during school hours at no additional cost to parents. As such, no outside food is permitted at the preschool except in the case of infant students. Infant students are permitted to bring in appropriate food for their developmental stage. Exception to this rule will only be permitted under the following provisions.

- The student has an allergy or dietary restriction that prevents them from eating items on the school menu. A doctor's note stating the allergy or restriction is required.
- During holiday parties and birthdays, students may bring a treat to share provided that the item is store bought and sealed. It must also contain a clearly labeled ingredients list.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Educating the students of Annunciation Catholic Pre-School spiritually, academically, and socially is a priority of all the teachers. In an effort to create a positive school climate, students are encouraged to respect themselves and others at all times. Positive behavioral strategies and coaching techniques are implemented throughout the school on a daily basis. As in life, it is important to learn the lessons that there are consequences for making poor choices. To assist in the development of these social skills, the teachers will direct and teach appropriate behavior through modeling and the use of visual and verbal guides. They will also provide consequences as necessary. However, if these classroom strategies prove ineffective, the Director will intervene and determine the appropriate course of action. Please note any behaviors that lead to physical harm of others or extreme disruption of the classroom environment may be sent home for the remainder of the day at the discretion of the Director.

Children who are in the three year old program or higher who bite three or more times in a three month period will be sent home for the day. Teachers will work with the child and parents to help curb this behavior; however strict adherence to this policy is necessary for health and safety reasons.

Note: Corporal punishment is not permitted at any time nor allowed under any circumstances.

TOILET TRAINING

Toilet training is an important milestone for every child. Successful toilet training can help a child gain positive self-esteem and the independence they crave at this developmental stage. Conversely, attempting this milestone before the child is ready can result in unnecessary stress and frustration. It is for this reason that teachers will begin toilet training at school only after students have experienced a successful weekend at home. Teachers are always willing to provide suggestions and resources to parents interested in starting the toilet training process.

BABYSITTING

Annunciation Catholic Pre-School does not permit teachers to babysit students within their classroom. Annunciation Catholic Pre-School is not liable for staff members whom parents may contract outside of school to babysit. Staff members are not permitted to transport children that are not their own to or from school.

TOYS

The only time a child can bring a toy to school is on their assigned show and share day. Children are responsible for any toys they bring to school. Children are not allowed to borrow, lend, or give toys to any other student.

CURRICULUM

The curriculum utilized follows Florida's Birth to Three Early Learning and Developmental Standards and the Florida State Standards for Four Year Olds and the guidelines of the Diocese of Orlando. It is based on national, state and professional association standards for each content area and is infused with tenets of the Catholic faith. The main program used to meet these standards is the Frog Street curriculum. This program is based on current brain research and best practices in early childhood development and education. The program used to teach our faith to the three and four year old classrooms is called Discovering God's Love. This program uses familiar stories and concepts to help the children begin to understand the foundations of our faith.

REPORTING PROGRESS

Paper Based Developmental Progress Reports are the current method of written communication between teachers and parents regarding developmental milestones for the Three and Four Year old programs. They are the chief means of communicating a child's progress. Developmental Progress Reports will be issued at the conclusion of each trimester. Teachers will schedule parent conferences to review the reports during the first and third trimester. Parents or Teachers may schedule additional conferences upon request. Infant, Toddler, and Two year old programs will use the Frog Street Developmental Checklist to monitor growth of the children. Teachers will schedule a yearly conference with parents after the Christmas Holidays. Parents or Teachers may schedule additional conferences upon request.

REVIEW OF RECORDS

The school voluntarily complies with the Buckley Amendment (1974) and allows parents to see the student's cumulative record file. A request to see a student's file must be put in writing. Within 24 hours the school will permit the parent to review the file in the presence of a witness delegated by the principal.

ASBESTOS REVIEW

In accordance with the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA), 40 CFR 763.93(g), the Management Plan for Asbestos-Containing materials as developed by Law Engineering is available without restriction for your inspection at the school's administrative office. We ask that you make any appointment if you wish to review the plan. No materials containing asbestos were used in the construction of the Pre-School.

CHILD ABUSE REPORTING

Annunciation Catholic Pre-School will cooperate with investigations concerning reported cases of child abuse. In compliance with state law, the Pre-School will report all incidents in which we have reason to suspect child abuse, neglect or endangerment.

HANDBOOK REVISIONS

The administration reserves the right to make revisions to the existing handbook at any time the school deems appropriate.

I have read and understood this Responsible Use Policy and Parent/Student Handbook and agree to abide by it:

(Student Printed Name)

(Parent Signature)

(Date)

Please return this form to your teacher by August 31, 2017

Annunciation Catholic Pre-School reserves the right to amend the Parent/Student Handbook and will notify parents of any substantial changes.