



Parent/Student Handbook

2021– 2022

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

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MISSION

Annunciation Catholic Preschool 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 Preschool strives to teach as Jesus taught and affirm the value of living as Jesus lived.

Annunciation Catholic Preschool 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 Preschool 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 Preschool 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 Preschool is accredited by the Florida Catholic Conference and the National Council for Private School Accreditation. We completed our three year review with Annunciation Catholic Academy during the Fall of 2018. Prior to the Florida Catholic Conference, Annunciation Catholic Preschool was accredited under NAEYC for fifteen years.

PARENTS AS PARTNERS

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

NON-DISCRIMINATORY POLICY

Annunciation Catholic Preschool 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 Preschool 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 per child.

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.

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.

HEALTH SERVICES

- **Immunizations:** 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.

- **Medication:** Administration or their designated representative is permitted to dispense doctor prescribed medication. Over the counter medication will only be accepted if there is a doctor's prescription associated with the 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.
- **Illness of a child:** Children who are exhibiting symptoms of illness are not permitted on campus. Symptoms can included, but are not limited to: diarrhea, nausea/vomiting, fever of 100.4 or higher, coughing, shortness of breath, sore throat, chills, unexplained fatigue, loss of taste or smell, unexplained body aches, or unexplained rash. Children who develop these symptoms during the school day will be isolated until a parent picks up.
- **Early Dismissal for Illness:** Sick students must be picked up by a parent or guardian within an hour, unless other arrangements have been approved by the school administrator. In an effort to prevent further spread of an illness, it is essential that a student is picked up within the agreed upon time. If not, DCF or other appropriate authorities will be contacted to intervene.
- **Return to School After Illness:** To safely return to school, the student must be fever free for 48 hours without any fever reducing medication, present a doctor's note to return to school, and/or a negative COVID-19 test.

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, <http://online.factsmgt.com/signin/4K6SZ>, and follow the instruction sheet provided at Orientation. There is an annual set up fee of \$38 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.

TUITION CLAUSE

Tuition is due at the pre-arranged times as indicated in their FACTs accounts. Tuition will not be waived or refunded if the school closes due to severe weather, service interruptions, or any other unforeseen disaster or Act of God.

HOLIDAY

The Preschool will be closed New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, 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 Preschool 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 until they are standing, however socks are important to protect their feet.

PARENTS AND VISITORS IN SCHOOL

Due to the current restrictions placed upon schools the following restrictions on parents and visitors in the building are in effect until further notice:

- **Volunteers** – Classroom volunteers will be limited to only those volunteers providing specific academic and instructional support.
- **Vendors** – Vendors such as Title 1 tutors; therapists; and/or contractors will be allowed on campus.

All visitors, volunteers, and vendors must adhere to the individual school's face covering and screening protocol. All volunteers must also follow the Diocese requirement of undergoing fingerprinting and safe environment training prior to volunteering on site.

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 Preschool 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.

INSURANCE

Every child in the Preschool 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 Preschool 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 Preschool 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.

The Diocese of Orlando also requires the following safety precautions and procedures:

- Each school will conduct an annual evaluation of buildings and site to identify potential hazard and to develop plans to mitigate risk.
- Each school will implement an Emergency Operations Plan to respond to emergencies in a manner that maximizes safety and minimizes disruptions
- The Emergency Operation Plan will be updated annually in consultation with local law enforcement in preparing for potential emergencies
- The school principal will provide training for all staff and students and require all to participate in routine emergency preparedness drills and exercises

- The school will require all visitors, volunteers, and parents to check in and out through the main office and provide a valid government issued photo ID prior to entering the campus

T.E.A.M.

Together Everyone Achieves More (T.E.A.M.) is the Home and School Association for Annunciation Catholic Preschool. 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 Preschool 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 Preschool Newsletter.

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.

FOOD POLICIES

It is the goal of Annunciation Catholic Preschool to provide nutritious food for students during school hours. Snacks will be provided for all children, however, families may choose to purchase lunch from the school, or to bring a lunch from home. Families who choose to buy lunch can do so using Boonli. During holiday parties and birthdays, students may also 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 Preschool 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.

TOILET POLICY

All students in the Three and Four year old programs must be fully toilet trained. Fully toilet trained is defined as able to pull up and down pants, use the toilet, and wipe without assistance. Staff may assist when students experience accidents; however students should be able to complete most toilet activities independently.

BABYSITTING

Annunciation Catholic Preschool does not permit teachers to babysit students within their classroom. Annunciation Catholic Preschool 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.

Until further notice, please note the following about parent/teacher conferences: It is preferred that parent-teacher conferences are conducted virtually, by phone, or by email. In person conferences must be limited and by appointment only in order to minimize exposure.

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 Preschool.

CHILD ABUSE REPORTING

Annunciation Catholic Preschool will cooperate with investigations concerning reported cases of child abuse. In compliance with state law, the Preschool 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 September 7, 2021

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