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Parent Hand Book

POLICIES

Florida Law requires that any person “who knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is an abused or neglected child immediately report this knowledge or suspicion to the Department of Children and Family Services.

Failure to report known or suspected child abuse or neglect is punishable as a misdemeanor. Legitimate interest in questioning the accused is secondary to and independent of the immediate reporting obligation. Any doubt about reporting would be resolved in favor of the child.

If the complaint is not received from the parent or guardian, arrangements would be made to notify the parent or guardian immediately. Notice would not be given to the parent or guardian if he or she is the person against whom the complaint is made.

Beyond the pastoral care extended by the Church to families in trouble, there are also community resources available. Parents who indicate to school personnel that they want help in coping with family problems would be informed of and directed to the appropriate agency.

Child abuse or neglect results in great harm to the child and the family. Beyond the Church’s concern to protect victims from further abuse, the Church is concerned with promoting whatever healing may be possible.

AIDS Policy: The Pre-School is in compliance with the diocesan policy on AIDS. For more details, please contact the Pre-School Administrator or the diocesan commission on AIDS.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Our Pre-School is structured so that children can make choices of play activities and materials. This ability to choose, as well as an abundance of play materials prevents many conflicts during the day.

Children are encouraged to develop language skills to help them communicate their needs and feelings. The children will also be advised of the group rules to help provide a safe environment. If a child is experiencing difficulty being self directed and using language to solve problems in one area of play he/she is offered another play activity. In the event that the child is unable to control his/her behavior he/she is removed from the problem area and given space away from others. He/she may return to the group when the behavior is under control.

If inappropriate behavior continues a conference with the parent is scheduled. Biting is very common during the toddler stage of development. Biting becomes a form of communication because the toddler wants to become independent but lacks the necessary verbal skills. While it is developmentally appropriate for some young 2's and under to bite, it is usually not appropriate behavior for 2 1/2's, 3's and 4's. Any child in rooms 1-7 upon the 3rd biting incident in as many months, will have his/her parents called to pick him/her up from the Pre-School for the remainder of the day.

We appreciate your cooperation in this matter so that we can maintain safe quality care, not only for the group but also for your child.

Dear Friends in Christ,

I wish to welcome you as we look forward to an exciting school year for 2014-2015. As you may already know, we have revised the name to Annunciation Catholic Pre-School (formerly known as Annunciation Child Care Center). This revision better portrays the primary mission that we embrace....to care for and teach infants, toddlers and pre-K students in a loving faith-filled Catholic environment. Additionally, under the leadership of Bishop John Noonan and the Superintendent of Schools, Mr. Henry Fortier, a renewed emphasis is being placed on meeting the spiritual and educational needs of the children and families being served by our early learning centers and pre-schools throughout the Diocese. Parishes, like Annunciation, that are blessed to have K-8 schools and preschools are being asked to harmonize ministries and work together towards accreditation of the early childhood programs through the Florida Catholic Conference (FCC).

Together with the administration of our school and representatives of the Diocese of Orlando Office of Schools, we will be working toward accreditation through the FCC. Additionally, our various class offerings for 2014-2015 reflect an effort to develop flexible options that will better meet the needs of our parish families.

We thank past, present and future families for entrusting the care and formation of their children to our staff. These changes bring a renewed vision and will complement the programs and care that have been experienced in the past. Thank you again for helping us to spread the good news about Annunciation Catholic Pre-School.

In Christ,



Very Rev. Stephen D. Parkes, V.F.
Pastor

OUR PHILOSOPHY

Annunciation Catholic Pre-School is a nationally accredited early childhood program for children ages six weeks through five years providing a vital service to our parish by serving as a ministry to parents and their children.

Our philosophy is to encourage the development of each child's full potential in all areas of growth and learning. Committed to educationally sound programs, we believe children learn best through active participation. Our program provides many play opportunities through which each child is guided towards his/her optimal developmental level. Our goal is to help children become independent, self-confident, inquisitive learners.

Our staff is responsible for providing your children with developmentally challenging, age-appropriate activities, based on sound early childhood principles. The highly trained professional staff at Annunciation Catholic Pre-School always strives to create a nurturing Christian environment for the children that promotes a positive sense of themselves, a healthy attitude towards others while responding to the needs of the families and the local community.

ILLNESSES & MEDICATIONS

When there are symptoms of illness or other indications that a child is not well enough for group activities, arrangements must be made for the child's care at home. The school has no provisions children who are ill. Proper care at the beginning of an illness can often shorten its duration.

Any child who has a fever, vomiting, diarrhea, or pink eye must be picked up immediately. If your child has had these symptoms during the night, please do not bring him or her to the Pre-School, as he or she is probably very contagious. Your child must stay at home from school the entire next day and may return to the Pre-School only after the symptoms have disappeared without the aid of medication.

Please notify the Pre-School as soon as possible if your child has been exposed to any communicable diseases or infectious illnesses. By the same token, the Pre-School will notify the parents if the child has been exposed at school.

All medications must be up to date and in their original containers. No medications will be dispensed without a completed and signed medication form. Doctor prescriptions will be dispensed according to the doctors instructions. No over the counter medicine will be dispensed.

DRESS CODE

Please, for your child's safety, NO open-toe shoes, jellies, or slip-on shoes. Sneakers are best for active play. Be sure your child is dressed appropriately in play clothes and for the weather each day. Bring a change of clothes for emergencies and PLEASE BE SURE YOUR CHILD'S CLOTHING HAS HIS/HER NAME CLEARLY MARKED. We will not be responsible for any clothing not properly labeled. The children will not be allowed to bring toys to the Pre-School(exception: Show and Tell). We cannot be responsible for items brought from home.

For infants and toddlers, diapered children must arrive in and use disposable diapers for sanitary reasons. Please furnish diapers by the box, or at least 5-6 daily. They will be marked with your child's name and you will be notified when your supply runs low. All bottles and baby food must be clearly labeled with your child's name. Please furnish extra clothing.

LUNCH & REST TIME

We will be serving a hot and nutritious lunch daily. No child has to eat any food that he or she does not like, but will be encouraged to at least try a new or different food. Please advise us of any dietary needs your child may require. The menu will be posted monthly for you to see. Please do not bring food or treats unless prearranged with your child's teacher. Lunch will be served at 11:30 a.m. with Infants and Toddlers being fed first. The rest of the children will follow accordingly. With clean hands and faces, blankets will be taken out of cubbies and the children will be required to rest 1 1/2 to 2 hours. Your child will not be forced to nap, but needs to lie quietly so that those who need to nap may do so. Please be sure your child brings a blanket and a sheet on Monday and takes it home on Friday to be laundered.

THE CURRICULUM

Our program offers a balanced, integrated early childhood education. Each activity is designed on an individual basis to meet the child's five areas of development: spiritual, social, emotional, cognitive and physical. The philosophy behind our curriculum is that young children learn best by doing. Learning requires active thinking and experimenting to find out how things work and to learn firsthand about the world we live in.

Play provides the foundation for academic or "school" learning. Play enables us to achieve the goals of our early childhood program. It is the work of young children. One of the most important goals of our curriculum is to encourage children to be active and creative, not afraid to try out their ideas or thoughts. We want to help children become independent, self-confident and to have a positive sense of themselves.

Our curriculum identifies goals in all areas of development:

- **Spiritual** - to know that Jesus loves all children and to learn how Jesus would want us to treat others through simple prayers and bible stories.
- **Social** - to help children feel comfortable in school, trust their new environment, make friends, and feel they are a part of the group.
- **Emotional** - to help children experience pride and self-confidence, develop independence and self control, and have a positive attitude toward life.
- **Cognitive** - to help children become confident learners by letting them try out their own ideas and experience success, and by helping them acquire learning skills such as the ability to solve problems, ask questions, and use words to describe their ideas, observations, and feelings.
- **Physical** - to help children increase their large and small muscle skills and feel confident about what their bodies can do.

The activities we plan for the children, the organization of the classroom, their materials and schedules are all designed to give your child a successful start in school.

INFANTS & TODDLERS

Infants and toddlers learn by experiencing the environment through their senses (seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling and touching), by physically moving around, and through social interaction. The children are given ample opportunities to practice newly acquired skills and to experience feelings of autonomy and success.

Although a significant part of their development is learning and acquiring social skills, toddlers are not able to understand the concept of sharing. Age-appropriate toys are available at all times in order to encourage self-directed play and imagination. Simple art projects are introduced to toddlers, while songs, stories, and finger plays are recited often in each age group. Weather permitting, all toddlers and the older infants have daily outdoor playtime.

TWOS

Two year olds are learning to produce language rapidly. They develop these language skills by actively participating with story books, finger plays, songs and flannel board stories. Color recognition, shapes and counting are enhanced through these verbal activities.

Two year olds thrive on exploration and creativity. They enjoy fantasy, such as pretending toys are alive or using an empty box as a car. We provide time and space (indoor and outdoor) for gross motor activities (running, jumping, throwing), as well as manipulatives (puzzles, play dough, pegboard, string beads, scribbling) for fine motor development. Self-help skills (buttoning, zippering, snapping) are encouraged and worked on as interest is shown.

ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE

Upon arrival, all children must enter through the front lobby accompanied by an adult. Please adhere to our sign-in/sign-out policy by signing in and out each day on the attendance sheet located outside your child's door when you arrive and depart. Children may be picked up from the classrooms. For early dismissal, please send written notification or inform the office. No child will be allowed to leave from the playground, over the fence, or from the parking area for any reason. Do not leave children unattended in the parking lot.

Your child will not be released to anyone for whom we do not have a current name, address and telephone number on record. If not recognized, proper identification (i.e., a driver license) will be required. Verbal messages from your child are not acceptable. Please send a note to his or her teacher or the Director. If there is any doubt at all and the parents cannot be reached, the child will remain in the Pre-School until proper release is arranged.

Cell Phones: We know that communication is vital in today's busy world, but we kindly ask that you refrain from using your cell phone while dropping off and picking up your child.

In case of inclement weather we will follow the same procedures as the Seminole County Public Schools. Announcements will be made on local radio stations, as well as on the Pre-School voice mail. The staff will make every attempt to call you as necessary.

ENROLLMENT

Upon acceptance, you will receive an enrollment form which should be completed and signed immediately. All children will need to have proof of a recent physical and an up-to-date immunization on record. These are required by State Law and this policy is strictly enforced. Also on occasion visitors request to take photographs while touring our facilities. As part of the registration process, families are asked to sign a form which permits their children to be photographed or video taped. If you do not give your consent, please indicate on this form.

Your child will be assigned a “cubbie” for his or her nap blanket, an extra change of clothes, jacket or sweater. Your child’s papers and projects are kept in a file crate located in the front lobby or in his/her classroom. Please check this daily and take a few moments to discuss these projects with your child. Your encouragement and interest is very important in the learning process. If you would like to discuss your child’s progress with us, please call and make an appointment. You are welcome to observe your child in class at any time.

ASSESSMENTS

During your child’s first few years of life many important skills and abilities are established, skills that are key to success in school and later in life. We believe that it is very important to monitor the growth and development of children in our care, so that we can call early attention to any possible delays. Early attention often means delays can be solved and children can “catch up” with their playmates.

Your child’s teachers have completed training in the observation and screening of young children and we have implemented a program of periodic screening for the children in our care. With your permission, we will observe your child’s development and will record the results using a screening checklist developed for this purpose.

We welcome your participation in these screening sessions, and we would be glad to explain the screening process to you in detail. When the results indicate that your child’s development is typical, we will provide you with a summary of your child’s progress and will suggest age appropriate activities that you might do with your child. If results point out areas of possible concern, we will advise you on how to schedule a more detailed assessment for your child. We will keep all information about your child and your family in confidence.

THREES

Three year olds are no longer toddlers but, at times, they will behave like toddlers and at other times, their language skills and motor skills will deceptively mimic the four year old. This is a distinct period of development with its own unique challenges and accomplishments. Three year olds are usually more cooperative than toddlers, but can easily revert back to toddler behavior when feeling tired or upset.

The Pre-school Program and afternoon play periods are designed to encourage the development and practice of self-help skills (dressing, feeding, toileting and washing themselves, as well as picking up toys), fine motor skills (puzzles, pegboards, etc.) and language skills (through poems, rhymes, finger plays and musical activities). As they begin to form relationships with peers, they are given plenty of time to practice their socialization skills through indoor and outdoor play. Creative art is another avenue provided where self-expression and initiative are explored through various materials

FOURS

This group is exposed to a variety of experiences and an increased opportunity for fine motor skills. Attention span and memory skills begin to mature (through games of color recognition, object size and shape), as does the development of basic math concepts and problem solving skills. Four year olds learn through active participation with adults, other children and materials, while enjoying indoor and outdoor play.

Four year olds are learning to make choices through planned activities. Teacher prepared learning centers will include housekeeping, blocks, science, math, manipulatives, music and art. Through weekly activities, the four year olds are introduced to the alphabet, as well as an introduction to the Spanish language. Math concepts include patterning, sequencing, opposites, shapes, likes and differences, and counting. Other media, such as social studies, art, cooking, and computers, reflect the letter theme of the week.

HOURS

The Pre-School is open between the hours of 7am and 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. A late pickup fee of \$10.00 per child, per 1-10 minutes will be charged after 6pm.

HOLIDAYS

The Pre-School will be closed New Year's Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, the Friday after Thanksgiving, 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.

BIRTHDAYS

Please keep your child's birthday celebration simple, by bringing a special morning snack for the class that day. Please coordinate with your child's teacher for the amount of the appropriate snack needed. We also invite you to join in the "Birthday Book" program. We ask you to donate a book to the Pre-School on your child's birthday. A special name plate will be placed in the front of the book to honor your child. You may also include a picture of your child on the inside cover.

We hope this will add to the excitement of your child's birthday. The Pre-School thanks you in advance for your donation that will help us maintain a quality library.

REGISTRATION

For children currently enrolled, re-registration will take place in late February. Any available positions determined at that time will be filled by:

- Those registered and supporting the Parish, with siblings already attending the Pre-School.
- Those registered and supporting the Parish at large.
- Those registered and supporting another Catholic parish.

The registration, supply and insurance fees are annual and non-refundable.

TUITION

Weekly tuitions are due by Tuesday's closing. Payments after Tuesday will be automatically assessed a \$10 late fee (preschool will be assessed a \$15 late fee after the 5th of the month).

If tuition is not received by Friday, your child will not be allowed to return until full payment is received or financial arrangements are made. Full tuition must be remitted for all weeks or your child's place will not be held. Unfortunately, we will not be able to make any exceptions to this policy.

There will be no prorated rates for days missed due to illness, etc. No allowance will be made for holidays falling within a given month. This fact is taken into consideration at the time prices are established. In the event you must withdraw your child from the Pre-School you are required to give two weeks notice.

NOTE: There is a \$20 return charge for any check returned by the bank for any reason. The check will not be re-deposited and cash payment will be due immediately upon notification.