

ST. THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

& PAWPRINTS PRESCHOOL

A School of the Omaha Catholic School Consortium

3515 South 48th Avenue Omaha, NE 68106

Phone (402)551-9504 / Fax (402)551-9507

School Website: stmbengals.org

Principal: Mr. Gary D. Davis

Preschool Director: Tamyra Hower

Preschool Extended Care Director: Dianna McCormick



PAWPRINTS PRESCHOOL

2018-2019

Parent Handbook

Program Philosophy

Researchers have found that if we really want to enhance children's readiness to succeed in school, then we must pay as much attention to their emotional health and social competence as we do to their cognitive abilities and academic skills (Shonkoff, 2005). At St. Thomas More Pawprints Preschool we believe in providing a safe and structured preschool environment that will direct needed attention to your child's development in all of these critical areas:

Spirituality... by sharing with your child the knowledge of God as our Creator and the life and love of Jesus Christ through biblical teachings and song we hope to contribute to their spiritual development.

Emotionally... by providing needed reassurance and guidance we help your child learn to respond appropriately to life's joys and disappointments in a nurturing environment.

Socially... by providing the opportunity for children to interact with children their own age and with caring adult care providers they may play and learn together while they develop self-caring skills and responsibility.

Cognitively... by stimulating each child so that they may think critically, problem solve, and reason.

Physically... by offering activities that help each child develop large and small motor coordination.

Discipline Philosophy

Pawprints Preschool staff use a combination of discipline methods in our classrooms. We use a program called Love and Logic which helps to guide and encourage our students through natural consequences to use appropriate behaviors and positive social skills. We also use the Girls and Boys Town discipline educational model known as The Well-Managed Classroom. This discipline model provides instruction for strong, positive teacher-student and peer relationships, instructional methods that motivate students, management techniques that maximize students' on-task behaviors and problem solving, and behavior management techniques that empower students to responsibly manage their behavior.

Teaching social skills is imperative if we are committed to helping students achieve success in school and beyond. By giving students the basic tools for social interaction, we are shaping their success experiences in the classroom, with their peers, and in future employment experiences.

Enrollment Procedures/Termination Policy

To be eligible to enroll in the preschool, your child must turn three by July 31st of the respective school year and *must* be completely potty trained. A registration fee of \$100 will be required for each child at the time of enrollment. To enroll in the program the parent/guardian needs to do the following: Families Already Enrolled at STM - Log onto **Sycamore**, click **My School**, then click **Admission Portal** to begin admissions. New Families - Go to <https://app.sycamoreschool.com/admissions/index.php?schoolid=1260> to begin the registration process. A \$100.00 registration fee and the child's immunization records must be submitted to the school office. Approximately ten days after registering online and submitting your registration fee you will receive an invitation from FACTS to set up your online payment plan. Once all steps in this process are complete the Director will then notify the individual of acceptance into the program. The Director has the right to terminate arrangements with anyone at any given period of enrollment per the Director's Discretion.

Age Requirements

To be eligible to enroll in the three-year-old class, your child must turn three by July 31st of the respective school year. Four-year-olds must turn four by July 31st of their respective school year.

Tuition

The following rates apply for the 2018/2019 school year:

CLASSES OFFERED AND FEES

- ❖ **STM Pawprints Preschool** offers both morning and afternoon **half day** sessions for 3, 4 & 5 year olds, 8:00-11:00 a.m. and 12:10-3:00 p.m.

Tuition Fees:

Prekindergarten Mon/Wed/ Fri Classes for 4's & 5's \$1,280 /year

Prekindergarten Mon-Fri Classes for 4's & 5's \$1,900/year

Preschool Tues/Thurs Classes for 3's \$910/year

- ❖ **STM Pawprints Preschool** offers **all day** sessions for 3, 4 & 5 year olds, 8:00a.m.-3:00pm.

Tuition Fees:

Prekindergarten Mon-Fri Classes for 4's & 5's \$3,650/year

Preschool Mon/Wed/ Fri Classes for 3's \$2,260 /year

A one-time non-refundable registration fee of \$100 is due at the time of registration each year.

Tuition will be collected through an automatic bank transfer. Families enrolling in the preschool/prekindergarten program will need to enroll in FACTS to set up their account and will receive an email from FACTS approximately ten days after online registration and payment of the \$100 registration fee is complete. Students will not be considered registered until these steps are complete. If you have any questions about this process, please contact the Omaha Catholic School Consortium at (402)590-2810.

Enrollment is on a first come first served basis. Class sizes are limited to 20 students in the four and five year old classes, 12 students in the T/Thurs three year old classes and 14 students in the M/W/F 3's class.

Arrival/Pick Up

Morning: Students are expected to arrive at school between 7:50 and 8:00 a.m. Please escort your child to the preschool room. If your child is arriving after the 8:05 bell, please check in with the office before bringing your child to the Pawprints Preschool room. It is imperative that no student be left unattended on school grounds or in the classroom. Dismissal is at 11:00 a.m. outside the school's main entrance. The teachers will bring the students to the main entrance of the school for pick up. Please send a note with your student in the morning if someone other than the "normal" person will be picking up your child from school. Please inform the person picking up your child that they will be required to provide photo identification at the time of pick up or we reserve the right to not release the student. If you need to pick up your child before 11:00 a.m., you will need to check with the office prior to coming to the classroom.

Afternoon: Afternoon classes begin at **12:10 p.m.** **Afternoon students are asked to wait until 12:00 p.m. before entering the school building.** If you arrive after 12:15 p.m., please check in at the office. At dismissal, afternoon students will be brought to the main entrance of the school for pick up at 3:00 p.m. Please send a note with your student if someone other than the "normal" person will be picking up your child from school. Please inform the person picking up your child that they will be required to show photo identification before we can release the child to them. If you need to pick up your student prior to 3:00 p.m., please check in at the office.

For both the morning and afternoon preschool sessions, children must not be brought into the school building any earlier than 10 minutes prior to the start of class. The classroom door is locked before the afternoon session so teachers may have a lunch break. Please make sure your child has entered the classroom safely with a teacher present before leaving the building.

Restroom Readiness

Please have your child use the restroom prior to coming to school. We would like for all of the little boys to be familiar with using a urinal as well as a regular toilet. The bathroom available for preschool age boys has only one toilet and they may have to wait in line if they aren't used to using the urinal.

Parking

Drop Off: For safety reasons, parking in the school parking lot is only available south of the cones in the south parking lot, and on the street. Parking is available along 48th street north of the bell tower. The curb area between the two driveways of the church parking lot is for loading and unloading only. Please obey the one-way signs during school hours and be extra cautious. The west side of the building may be utilized as well. The small parking lot on the North side of the school is for staff parking and for church adorers only.

Pick Up: Parking is available south of the cones, the west and east side of the building and on the street. Please be extra cautious of the students in the lot.

Classroom Rules

The following rules were developed with the help of our past preschool students. Students will be expected to follow them on a daily basis.

- Listen politely
- Clean up
- Treat others nicely
- Use your manners
- Do neat work

Dress Code

As of the 2018/2019 school year, Pawprints Preschool will follow the St. Thomas More Uniform Dress Code. Our school uniforms may be purchased at Dennis Uniform 726-740 N. 109th Ct. Omaha, NE 68154, Phone 408-496-9911 or at Educational Outfitters 2528 S. 130th Ave. Omaha, NE 68144 Phone 402-333- 1099. While uniform shirts, shorts, and pants do not have to be purchased at these stores, they must be of the same style. They are the only stores where the shift/jumper and sweaters may be purchased. Dennis will place a permanent school monogram of the St. Thomas More logo on any white or navy uniform polo shirt for a small fee. The school encourages students to proudly wear their school logo on their uniform shirts. In adherence to our philosophy, proper dress will enhance the learning environment. Personal appearance, cleanliness and hygiene should reflect an attitude of self-worth and school pride on the part of the student. It is the parents' responsibility to know and ensure their students follow the uniform code for students in preschool through the eighth grades. Students who are out of uniform will be sent to the office and the parent/guardian will be called to rectify the problem. Uniform Guidelines: All uniforms must be consistent and color fast. Uniform items may be purchased from any vendor, but must be consistent with the St. Thomas More School dress code and must meet administrative standards. Plaids on girl's skirts must be identical with the plaid available from Dennis Uniform Company. Additional uniform restrictions will be applied by the administration in response to

changing styles and fads if they become disruptive to the learning environment. The administration will be the final judge in the enforcement of this code.

Young Ladies: The uniform for girls (Preschool-3rd grade) is the Campbell plaid shift (jumper). Shifts (jumper) must be no shorter than 3 inches above the knee. Girls may wear navy slacks in place of the plaid shift. (Slacks must be similar to those sold by Dennis Uniform—no cargo, corduroy, wind pants, etc.) If slacks have belt loops, a plain dark colored belt must be worn. If blouses are worn, they are to be long or short sleeved, tailored, and collared. Navy or white knit shirts may be worn as long as they meet the same standard (no logos). Shirts must be tucked in at the waist. No t-shirts with writing or designs that show through the shirts are allowed.

Young Men: The uniform for boys is solid navy slacks which must be similar to those sold by Dennis Uniform—no cargo, corduroy, wind pants, etc. All slacks originally made with belts loops must be worn with a plain dark colored belt. Shirts are to be long or short sleeved, tailored, and collared. Navy or white knit (polo) shirts may be worn as long as they meet the same standard. Shirts must be tucked in at the waist. No t-shirts with writing or designs that show through the shirts are allowed.

Shorts Uniform: Navy walking shorts may be worn by students from the beginning of the school year until October 15 and from April 15th to the end of the year, in addition to other times as determined by the administration. Shorts should be knee length. Shorts must be similar to those sold by Dennis Uniform—no cargo, corduroy, nylon, etc. All shorts originally made with belt loops must be worn with a plain dark colored belt. Shorts are to be worn with uniform blouses/shirts.

Sweaters / Sweatshirts: A navy cardigan sweater with the St. Thomas More crest emblem that may be purchased from Dennis Uniform at 740 North 109th Court Omaha, NE 68154 / (402) 496-9911, or online at www.dennisuniform.com is the only sweater that may be worn as part of the school uniform. It is to be worn with a white or navy collared shirt underneath.

Socks: Socks are to be plain with no logos in white, gray or navy. Girls may wear tights in the same colors only. Socks that are visible from the top of the shoe must be worn at all times.

Shoes: Athletic shoes are required for gym class and may be worn at other times. They must be neat, clean and in good condition. Shoes with laces must be properly tied. Please avoid wearing dark soled shoes that leave marks on our floors. During cold and/or wet weather, appropriate boots may be worn for recess; however, **no boots may be worn in the classrooms.** Shoes must have a solid sole and cover the entire foot - no sandal type shoes may be worn.

Hair: Hairstyles must be simple and not obstruct students' vision. Hair must be kept neat and clean. If a style or extreme hair coloration causes a disruption in the learning environment as determined by the principal, it is considered inappropriate. Boy's hair must not cover their eyes and must be above the collar. The Principal will provide final determination of questionable hairstyles/color.

Fingernails: Finger nails are to be kept clean and cut to a reasonable length. Only clear or very light undetectable nail polish is acceptable **for only junior high girls.**

Jewelry: Jewelry should be kept simple and appropriate. Dangling earrings are not allowed. Necklaces and bracelets will be limited to religious styles. Boys may not wear earrings.

Other Adornments: Students may not wear makeup. Additionally, temporary tattoos on any visible body part(s) are not allowed.

Spirit / Jean Days / Dress-Up Days: Out of uniform days will be announced and defined by the principal.

Spirit / Jeans Days For Spirit Days: Students may wear a school spirit shirt and jeans. When Spirit Days are held during shorts season, students may wear school appropriate school uniform length non-athletic dress shorts. Typically these days are held as part of a fundraiser and required students to bring an item to participate. The weekly newsletter will provide dates and additional details when these days are scheduled.

Dress-Up Days: On dress up days students may wear dress-up (nice) clothes, but **NO** t-shirts, wind pants, jeans, shorts, sports clothes, or sweatshirts. Skirts must be the length of uniform skirts. **NO** flip-flops or slippers may be worn at any time. Shoulders and waists must be covered and shirts must be of sufficient length

to reach the top of the waist band. All non-uniform apparel must be of a modest nature. The administration reserves the right for final clothing approval.

Extra Clothes

Accidents do happen, so please keep a change of clothes (season appropriate) in your child's backpack. Clothes need to be sealed in a Ziploc bag marked with your child's full name. Each item inside of the bag should have your child's name on it as well. Please be sure to include a shirt, navy pants or shorts, socks, and underwear.

Calendar

Pawprints Preschool follows the St. Thomas More Catholic School calendar as closely as possible. A separate preschool calendar is sent home monthly along with a newsletter to keep you up-to-date on preschool happenings.

Lunch (All Day Students)

Lunch is available through a prepaid lunch ticket. A nutritional hot lunch served with milk will be made available each day in the cafeteria for children who are enrolled in the All Day Programs. Parents/Guardians must indicate each morning on the lunch charts in the preschool rooms whether or not their child is having hot lunch or if they have brought a cold lunch from home. If your child will be having a hot lunch and you did not notify your child's teacher, you will need to notify the school secretary or by 9:00 a.m. If you are unable to do so, please be aware that your child may be served a lunch that is different than the one shown on the daily menu. **Lunch tickets must be purchased ahead of time from the school office.**

Rest Time/Quiet Time (All Day Students)

Each day in the afternoon each child will be expected to participate in one half-hour of rest time/ quiet time. Resting mats will be provided by the preschool/prekindergarten and will not need to be purchased by the parent/guardian. Please send a small blanket to be kept in your child's backpack for resting time. A small stuffed animal is acceptable also, but please do not send items that make noise.

Snack Schedule

We will send a snack schedule home monthly. Your child will only get a snack schedule if they will have a turn to bring snacks for their friends during that month. A basket will be sent home at the end of the week with a label indicating what days your child will get to bring snack and for how many children. Healthy snacks (anytime foods) such as vegetables, fruit, cheese, crackers, etc. are strongly encouraged. A small apple, half a banana or a handful of baby carrots make a great snack. Snacks must be in their original containers due to health code regulations. No cookies, candy, or snack cakes please unless they are being sent as a special birthday treat.

Milk fees vary each school year. As soon as the fee is established, it will be communicated to parents. Checks for milk will need to be made payable to OCSC (Omaha Catholic School Consortium). If your child will not be drinking milk, please send a note and provide cups for water instead.

Birthdays

If your child's birthday falls within the school year, he/she is allowed to bring snacks that are pre-packaged on a day close to the child's birthday to share with the rest of the class. Homemade items can no longer be brought for snack due to health department regulations. If your child's birthday is during the summer, we will

celebrate it on a specific day at the end of the school year (parents will be notified of the date of the celebration). All summer birthdays will be celebrated together. If your child is having a birthday party outside of school and you want the invitations to be distributed through school, there must be an invitation for each child. If every child is not invited, then we ask that you send the invitations by mail to the homes of the children that are being invited. We do not want any of the children to feel hurt or left out due to not being invited.

Field Trips

Field trips will be held in the fall and possibly spring with the four and five year old classes. Permission slips will be sent home with your child. Parent chaperones or parent drivers may be requested for some field trips. Parents who volunteer to drive on field trips must have a completed Driver Information Form on file in the school office and must complete a Catholic Mutual Safe Driver Training Course administered at the school prior to the day of the trip. Parent drivers should take the agreed upon/ most direct route to and from school to the place of the field trip, and must be sure that each child is seat-belted in an appropriate seat in their vehicle. All parent helpers need to be fully aware of their responsibilities, and should not bring any additional children with them.

Volunteers

Pawprints Preschool is always looking for parents who can volunteer time to help with various tasks, both in and out of the classroom. When parents volunteer to assist with students in the school setting, they are required to complete and retain current Safe Environment certification. Information about Safe Environment Training can be found on the Archdiocesan website.

Assessments

Assessments will be conducted at the beginning of the school year and again during the 3rd quarter. The results of the assessments will help us determine specific areas to focus on with each child. Results will be discussed with parents at Parent-Teacher Conferences.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

At the end of the first and third quarters, parents may be expected to attend a conference to discuss your child's progress with his/her teacher. We hope that you will accept this invitation to share this important information. Teachers are also available for individual conferences during the school year. These meetings must be prearranged. We would like to encourage open communication, so please feel free to contact us at any time if you have concerns or questions.

Sick Policy

Pawprints Preschool & Daycare follows the St. Thomas More Catholic School sick policy. Please call the office at 551-9504 to let us know that your child will be unable to attend preschool because of illness. When the student is able to return to school, the parent is to send a written note explaining the reason for the absence. If a child becomes ill during the school day, a staff member will notify the parents immediately. The parent will be expected to arrange for the child to be picked up. **A child must be fever-free for 24 hours before returning to school.**

Medication

Pawprints Preschool & Daycare follows the St. Thomas More Catholic School policy on the distribution of medications, prescriptions or over-the-counter: No medicine can be given without a doctor's note. Parents wishing to have their child take a prescribed or over-the-counter medication during school hours must send a written, signed, and dated permission statement from a physician. The medication to be administered must be in its original container and will be kept in the school office unless it is required to be with the child (i.e., an inhaler).

Asbestos Notice

Our building materials contain asbestos. There is no danger to anyone as long as the material is not disturbed. Parents may view our state-approved management plan by contacting the school office.

Fire and Disaster Drills

In order to ensure the safety of the students, plans have been developed for use in case of either a fire or tornado emergency. These plans are practiced periodically throughout the year to ensure the students are aware of procedure. Students with special needs will follow the same plans and will be accompanied by a teacher. The tornado shelters have been inspected and approved by the Omaha/Douglas County Office of Civil Defense. In case of a tornado, students will remain at school until they may safely leave. No child will be allowed to leave without a parent or authorized adult during a tornado warning.

School Visitation

Parents are welcome to visit Pawprints Preschool & Extended Care at any time to observe but they must first check in at the office prior to entering the classroom.

Reading Program

We invite your child to join our book club! All you have to do to join is to read at home to your child! When you read a book, write that book's title on a book slip along with the date and your child's name. Each book slip will have seven spaces (one for each day of the week). Please use one book slip per week, including weekends. We will be sending home book slips weekly. If you run out, please let us know. Children will bring their book slips on Thursday for 3 year olds, or on Fridays for 4/5 year olds. A completed book slip could mean as little as one book per day read together for a total of seven days of reading.

When your child has read for 25 days, a prize can be chosen out of the treasure chest and a free book is theirs to keep. We call these "Bing, bing, bings!" (Please consider donating a book or two to our classroom "bing, bing, bing" bin for our Book Club participants. We also accept small prizes for our treasure chest. Your child will receive a prize and a book for every 25th day of reading.

Scholastic Book Clubs

Scholastic book club order forms are sent home monthly. These book orders are optional. However, if you would like to purchase books, please make your check payable only to "Scholastic".

Please consider purchasing books during the year to donate to our Book Club Participants. Simply write "gift" on the order form next to the items you wish to donate, include payment, and send to school with your child.

Also, each time you purchase books through Scholastic Book Club, you help our class earn points that we can use to purchase books for our Bing, Bing, Bing, bin! We thank you!

Preschool Teachers

Three year old program:

Mrs. Lilla, Miss Kerry Storm, and Mrs. McCormick

Four and Five year old program:

Ms. Elsasser, Mrs. Vomacka, Mrs. Brannen, Mrs. Hower, and Mrs. Grzebielski

About Preschool/Prekindergarten Extended Care

Preschool Extended Care is available for students enrolled in our three day and five day classes. Pawprints Preschool Extended Care was established in 2007 to compliment the hours of our preschool for working parents. Children will spend their time in quality activities under the supervision of compassionate and caring teachers. The requirements of children enrolled in the daycare are the same as the [preschool/prekindergarten requirements](#) .

Hours of Operation

Preschool Extended Care shall be open between the hours of 6:45 a.m.-7:45 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m. at the normal rate. **Students staying between 5:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. will incur an additional charge of \$8 per day.** The operational days will follow the St. Thomas More day school's annual calendar with few exceptions. Preschool/Prekindergarten Extended Care will not be available when preschool is not in session. Due to requirements in student teacher ratio, drop-ins will not be accepted.

All registrations will be accepted on a first come-first served basis and spaces are limited. There is a nonrefundable \$50 registration fee due at the time of registration.

Preschool Extended Care Fees

Preschool/Prekindergarten Extended Care fees are based on a \$4.00 per hour rate and will be assessed on a minimum weekly rate. A signed Preschool/Prekindergarten Extended Care Commitment Form and a non-refundable \$50 registration fee are required for enrollment in the Preschool Extended Care Program. Please see the Preschool/Prekindergarten Extended Care Commitment Forms at Stmbengals.org or stmbengals1.weebly.com for exact prices.

Afternoon snack including milk is included in this fee. All daycare fees are due on the following Monday or first day of return for the new week.

Billing and Payment

As stated on the Preschool Extended Care Commitment form that parents completed at preschool registration, parents will be charged the selected fee for the week. Parents will receive their statement on the last day of each week that the preschooler attends. Charges for attendance after 5:00 p.m. will be addressed in the following week's statement. The payment must be made on the following Monday or first day of return for the new week. Payments may be given to your child's preschool teacher. Insufficient fund checks will be assessed a fee. All payments will need to be in the form of check or money order: no cash payments please. Checks need to be made out to OCSC (Omaha Catholic School Consortium). Payments must be enclosed in an envelope with your child's name and marked "Preschool Extended Care".

Enrollment Procedures/Termination Policy

To be eligible to enroll in Preschool Extended Care your child must turn 3 by July 31st and be completely potty trained, and be enrolled in our three day or five day classes. To enroll in the program, the parent/guardian needs to obtain a registration and commitment form from the school office or school website and must submit it with the \$50.00 Preschool Extended Care registration fee. The Director has the right to terminate arrangements with anyone at any given period of enrollment per the Director's Discretion.

Preschool and Preschool Extended Care

Problem Resolution

Communication and cooperation between a parent/guardian and a teacher are essential to a student's success.

If at any time issues or concerns arise, the parent must first consult with the teacher to seek understanding or resolution. If the parent is unsatisfied with the results of that conference then they may seek consultation with the Preschool Director or Preschool Extended Care Director, then the school Principal. The principal may choose to convene a conference to address the matter and may also seek the advice of the Executive Director. If a satisfactory solution is not achieved, the Executive Director may become involved in the process.

Parental Dissatisfaction

When parents are seriously dissatisfied with an aspect of the school's program or operation, which the administration deems as integral to or in the best interest of the school, and they have exhausted all efforts at a mutual resolution of the problem, they should exercise their option of choosing another school. When the dissatisfaction results in continued agitation on the part of the parent, the administration may exercise the school's right to withdraw permission for enrollment of the child or children.

Director's Right to Amend

The Directors of the Preschool & Preschool Extended Care reserved the right to amend these policies as it becomes necessary to do so.

St. Thomas More School Principal- Mr. Gary Davis

Preschool Director- Mrs. Tamyra Hower

Preschool Extended Care Director- Mrs. Dianna McCormick

Preschool Extended Care Staff- Mrs. McCormick, Mrs. Lilla, Miss Kerry Storm, Mrs. Brannen, Mrs. Grzebielski, and Mrs. Vomacka

Contact Information

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