



KINDERGARTEN
PROGRAM GUIDE FOR PARENTS
2015-2016

St. Thomas the Apostle School

5467 S. WOODLAWN AVENUE
CHICAGO, IL 60615
WWW.STAPOSTLESCHOOL.COM

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KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM GUIDE
2015—2016

This Kindergarten Program Guide is a *supplement* to the
St. Thomas the Apostle School *Parent and Student Handbook*.

Both this Program Guide and the School Handbook are updated annually. The pastor and/or the principal retain the right to amend the Handbook at any time and parents will be given notification in a reasonable time if changes are made. Parents are responsible for understanding and following the content of these documents. Each family signs their name when they receive a copy of both books.

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St. Thomas the Apostle School

...where God's children in extraordinary variety are:

INSPIRED

to academic achievement through a comprehensive curriculum taught by dedicated teachers. STA students excel because they are educated in a safe, structured learning environment that expects their best efforts each and every day;

INSTILLED

with the values inherent in a faith-based atmosphere that nurtures an individual's spiritual, moral, and character development. STA students are prepared to meet the challenges and opportunities of the 21st Century by having a better understanding of self;

INVOLVED

members of a caring, supportive community committed to responding to the needs of others. STA students understand what it means to live their faith and use their talents as responsible citizens in stewardship to the world around them.

OUR MISSION

The mission of the St. Thomas the Apostle School community is to lead, challenge, and encourage God's children in Extraordinary Variety to grow in faith, knowledge, and commitment to service.

OUR PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

St. Thomas the Apostle School believes that childhood is the most critical period for the development of attitudes, habits, capabilities, and skills, and that the curriculum encompasses all that a child experiences in his life at school.

The purpose of the school is to create a faith-filled learning environment. The pastor, principal, staff, teachers, parents, and other community members lay the foundation for a love of learning, instill a sense of personal worth and respect for others, and develop critical thinking skills so that the children can grow to be responsible and practicing citizens. We

endeavor to develop a community of learners where respect, collaboration and excitement for learning prevail. Quality Catholic education is provided for students in preschool through eighth grade in a caring and family atmosphere.

The main components of the school's educational program are:

- Embracing a faith to be lived within a believing community.
- Developing Christian attitudes and habits as a contributing and supporting member of a diverse community.
- Acquiring essential knowledge, skills and techniques with the stimulus of practical application.
- Integrating technology skills and applications.
- Encouraging creativity and self-expression.
- Promoting each student's personal academic, artistic, and athletic gifts and talents.
- Nurturing each child to help balance the physical, intellectual, social, emotional and ethical development as a whole person.
- Promoting leadership as a service to others.

OUR VALUES

The entire staff and faculty of St. Thomas the Apostle School, in their efforts to achieve these objectives, hold certain convictions which underlie the learning process.

We believe in:

Faith Community

- The recognition of Jesus Christ as the meaning and purpose of our school
- The importance of modeling what we teach about Christian values and ethics

Respect

- Recognition of the dignity and worth of each person
- The importance of individual differences and potential

Academic Excellence

- The importance of responsiveness by the faculty to the interests, needs, and learning styles of individual children.
- Providing the academic rigor and challenge to meet each child's potential

Responsibility

- The shared responsibility of school, home and community for children's growth and development
- Fostering students' personal responsibility and accountability

Safe and Nurturing Environment

- The need for a warm, supportive school environment in which all children feel welcome, accepted, and safe.
- The importance of open and continuing communication between school and home.

Leadership

- The importance of teaching children ways to transfer learned skills to real world applications.
- The importance of teaching and demonstrating Catholic social teaching in daily life

ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS

Students must meet the age requirement: There are NO exceptions.

- Kindergarten: the child must be 5 years old by SEPTEMBER 1st of the current school year.
- First Grade: the child must be 6 years old by SEPTEMBER 1st of the current school year.

Students entering kindergarten should have their preschool records and recommendations reviewed by the principal.

Parents submit a Health (Physical) Form with all information completed AND signed by the health provider who dates the form. This form includes an up-to-date record of immunizations. Students must have all immunization records up to date by the first day of school. Until they are received, the student will not be permitted to attend kindergarten until this requirement is met.

Required Immunizations include:

- 4 DPT's (DTaP's, DT's)
- 3 IPV's (Oral Polio)
- 3 doses of Hepatitis B vaccine
- 1 MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella)
- TB test
- Lead Poisoning Screening
- 2 doses of varicella vaccine

Parents of kindergarten children submit a dental form that is signed and dated by the dentist. The child must have had a recent eye exam prior to entrance to kindergarten.

Please bring your child's original birth certificate and we will copy it. For Catholic families, the baptismal certificate is required—even if your child has been baptized at St. Thomas the Apostle Parish. Other agreements are also required: financial, Parent-School contract, photographic release, medical, and emergency card—completed and signed.

KINDERGARTEN ENTRANCE ASSESSMENT

Kindergarten entrance evaluation is held in the spring of the child's pre-kindergarten year. The main objective for this assessment is to give the teacher an overall view of the individual strengths and needs of each child. All incoming students are asked basic questions to assess verbal and communication skills and auditory and visual skills. They are given simple fine and gross motor skill assessments. Based on the results, the teacher can plan activities to meet

the needs and learning styles of the children for the coming year.

Teachers will report the results to the parents and give them suggestions for promoting the child's readiness, especially during the summer before kindergarten begins. Some of the readiness activities listed below may be prescribed.

General Academic Readiness Skills for Kindergarten

1. Recognizes and names basic colors.
2. Recognizes and writes first name using the letters of the alphabet.
3. Knows age and birthday date.
4. Knows area code and phone number.
5. Knows address, city, and state.
6. Knows the days of the week.
7. Can perform the following skills: color, paste, trace, copy, and use scissors correctly.
8. Can zip, snap, button, and tie.
9. Can and does verbally communicate with others.

COMPETENCIES EXPECTED FOR CHILDREN ENTERING KINDERGARTEN

1. Ability to separate from parents, can trust adults, and is aware of others. A few children may need extra support at the beginning of the year.
2. Growing ability to care for own needs and take responsibility for possessions.
3. Ability to be comfortable with peers and relates to and interacts with other children.
4. Ability to listen in small and large groups in increasingly longer times.
5. Ability to deal with frustration and handle conflict in constructive ways without becoming physically aggressive.
6. Ability to adapt to routines and procedures/rules of the classroom.
7. Ability to invest in an activity and persevere/stay with a task.
8. Awareness of many letters of the alphabet and numerals.
9. Ability to write one's name with correct pencil grip.
10. Familiarity with books, and with listening to and telling stories.
11. Ability to use language to communicate.

SUMMERTIME READINESS ACTIVITIES prior to Kindergarten

Parents can help their child be ready for kindergarten. Learning should be fun for both you and your child. Work together when you have enough time and feel relaxed. Try your best to smile and look at your child when he/she is speaking. This encourages your child to talk and gives him/her a sense of importance and confidence.

Parents are requested to read at least 15 minutes to their young child daily before and during the kindergarten year.

The following ideas are helpful in making the transition to kindergarten, but should NOT be thought about as mandatory. *It is more important that the child be happily anticipating school rather than stressed over what he/she may not know yet.*

You may help your child to:

- Learn to hold a pencil correctly, with a two finger and thumb grip (not a fist).
- Learn to print his/her full name, using capitals for the first letter only and the rest of the letters with lower case letters.
- Learn to say his/her full name, address, and phone number, including zip code and area code.
- Learn how to dress: snap, button, zip, and tie.

- Learn to count from 1 – 30.
- Learn to recognize and identify colors, numbers, and shapes.
- Learn to accept suggestions and correction; overcome temper tantrums; be willing to accept limitations.
- Learn to use a tissue when coughing or sneezing or having a dripping nose.
- Learn to care for own toilet needs.
- Learn to wash hands and the need to wash hands after toileting, after using a tissue, and before meals.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT DURING KINDERGARTEN

Children should be able to socially interact with their peers, easily join others in play, be able to make and keep friends, and positively interact with peers during the Kindergarten year. Children learn important rules/procedures for relating with others in the classroom and on the playground. These rules/procedures are reinforced and posted in the classroom.

At regular intervals, you will receive reports of your child's progress in academics and social development. The following skills will be noted on the reports:

1. Plays cooperatively
2. Knows and follows rules/classroom procedures and routines
3. Respects rights and property of others
4. Is polite and considerate
5. Shares toys and materials
6. Knows how to resolve conflicts with others creatively.

SOCIAL COMPETENCIES DEVELOPED DURING KINDERGARTEN

1. Ability to separate from home and invest in relationships and learning in school.
2. Ability to care for own needs and take responsibility for one's possessions.
3. Ability to feel a part of the group and care for each other; ability to develop mutual respect towards each other's ideas, feeling and space. Ability to participate in group time.
4. Ability to negotiate differences and work out compromises, cope with frustration, and manage transitions.
5. Ability to accept directions, routines and rules/procedures of kindergarten classroom. The kindergarten program is more demanding in this area than is the pre-kindergarten school program.
6. Growing ability to represent ideas through a variety of symbolic ways, play being one of them. Other ways include language, music, art, drawing, writing, and drama.
7. Ability to make choices, take initiative in play and work, invest self in activities, develop interest in learning, and complete tasks.

KINDERGARTEN CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

In kindergarten, we believe that all children can learn naturally in a social environment. Each individual's cognitive, physical, social and emotional growth needs to be nurtured and supported. The program is based on the premise that children construct knowledge through discovery in free play as well as through social interactions with peers and adults.

In our full-day program, we provide an enriched environment for reading and math readiness skills. Children use hands-on activities in order to learn by meaningful experiences and relevant connections to the world around them. Our role is that of facilitator whereby we help children to become responsible for their own learning and at the same time provide

opportunities for children to refine their social skills. We at St. Thomas the Apostle School expect you to read to or with your child at least 15 minutes a day. Read! Read! Read!

ACADEMIC CURRICULUM

Basic to achieving the academic curriculum is an attitude about learning and working as a school community. To that end, St. Thomas students recite the following school pledge as we begin each day. This pledge is included in the daily morning orientation which includes announcements, prayers, and the Pledge of Allegiance.

St. Thomas SCHOOL PLEDGE:

May God bless:

Our minds - to think our best thoughts,

Our words - to speak kindly to one another,

Our hearts - to feel compassion,

And our hands - to reach out to one another in service and care.

I promise to always do my best as a leader, and to treat everyone with respect and kindness.

I will follow the example of Jesus and Mary in all things.

Today I promise to live what St. Thomas the Apostle School teaches.

The following grade level objectives represent the course of study for an entire year of our full day Kindergarten program. These objectives provide a general focus for the instructional program. Most students are expected to demonstrate *proficiency* in these objectives by the end of the school year.

We believe that when the school and home form a partnership, our children will have the best opportunity to learn and succeed in school. We encourage parents to familiarize themselves with these objectives. If you have questions about your child's progress, please contact your child's teacher for more information.

RELIGION

Prayers

Students will be encouraged to offer spontaneous prayers and to memorize the following prayers: the Sign of the Cross, Glory Be, Our Father, Hail Mary, and Prayer before Meals. Families should teach the children to pray morning prayers and night prayers daily *and to pray before meals*. The students will learn to pray and show reverence when attending church services.

CONCEPTS

Demonstrates knowledge of God as a loving Creator.

Identifies Jesus as God's Son.

Identifies the Bible as a book that tells about God.

Recounts events and characters of the Old Testament: e.g., the Story of Creation, the Ten Commandments...

Describes stories of Jesus from the New Testament, e.g., the Miracles of Jesus...

Understands why we are special to God.

Loving Understands that we are called to love others as God loves us.

Identifies the church as a special place of prayer.

Describes prayer as talking and listening to God.

Describes God's presence within and around us.

Engage in prayers of thanks, praise, asking, and sorrow.

Recites prayers and participates in liturgy.rituals

Expresses the importance of participating in mission activities.

Demonstrates respect for others.

Expresses how we are loved by God and others.

Learns about virtue (good choices) and sin (wrong choices)., sin Baptism into God's FamilyLearns about the Sacraments. Forgiveness is an act of love The Apostles	All Saints Day Thanksgiving Advent Christmas Lent Palm Sunday Holy Week - Easter
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Children should attend Mass or Church Services regularly with their family. They learn proper church behavior at school and are expected to follow it on the weekend with their families. They should demonstrate what they have learned at school.

LANGUAGE ARTS

Phonics

- Knows letter-sound correspondence.
- Knows single consonant sounds.
- Knows initial, medial and final consonant sounds.
- Blends and segments beginnings and endings of spoken one-syllable spoken words.
- Recognizes and produces rhyming words.
- Isolates/blends/segments the beginning sound, middle vowel sound, and final sound in three-phoneme (sound) words.
- Understands left to right directionality.

Reading/ Literacy

- Understands the concept of written print and their meanings.
- Understands and uses environmental print.
- Recognizes and knows alphabet letters: upper case & lower case.
- Reads common high-frequency words by sight.
- Understands the main idea of a story.
- Understands sequencing (first, next and last) in a story.
- Follows oral directions.
- Anticipates events in a story.
- Predicts story outcomes.
- Interprets pictures to support story understanding.
- Identifies story elements: plot, setting, and characterization.
- Understands that a story has a beginning, middle, and an end.
- Differentiates between fiction and non-fiction.
- Identifies various literary genres and form (traditional tales and poetry).
- Recognizes literary devices (ex: repetition, rhyme, and rhythm).
- Actively engages in group reading activities with purpose and understanding.
- Independently interacts with books and other texts.
- Enhances literacy skills through Accelerated Reader and Digital Storytelling.
- Listens to others and takes turns speaking.
- Uses words and phrases learned through books and lessons in conversations and other daily classroom activities.
- Speaks in complete sentences, using a variety of words, word parts, and language elements.
Independently interacts with books and other texts.,

Writing/Grammar/Spelling

-
- Knows and writes all upper and lower case letters correctly.
 - Recognizes and uses environmental print.
 - Demonstrates appropriate growth in developmental spelling stages.
 - Spells and reads high frequency words and sight words.
 - Understands that print carries meaning and represents language.
 - Uses words, letters, drawings, or own inventive spelling when writing stories.
 - Adds drawings to writing to give additional detail.
 - Understands spatial relationships of letters to writing.
 - Names and understands the purpose of end punctuation.

MATH

Counting and Cardinality

- Count numbers to 100 by ones and tens.
- Count forward beginning with a given number within a sequence.
- Writes numbers from 0 to 20 in a line, in scattered configurations and given a number 1-20, count out that many objects.
- Matches numerals to the correct number of objects or to a point on a number line.
- Write numbers 0-20 and represent a number of objects with a written number 0-20.
- Understand the relationship between numbers and quantities' connecting number to cardinality.
- Compare numbers of objects in one group using *greater than*, *less than*, or *equal to* by matching and counting strategies.
- Compare two numbers between 1 and 10 presented as numerals.
-
- Counts forward to 100, backward from 20; by 2's, 5's, 10's to 100.
- Knows terms such as *digit*, *equal*, *add*, and *take away*.
- Differentiates between one and two digit numbers.
- Reads the number that comes before, after, and between 2 numerals.
- Uses estimating as a problem-solving procedure.
- Estimates numbers of objects, then counts them.

Operations and Algebraic Thinking

- Recognizes the addition, subtraction, and equal signs.
- Understands the concept of addition and subtraction.
- Understands simple addition equations as putting things together and adding to. Understands simple subtraction equations as taking apart and taking from.
- Identifies the relationship between models and equations through Singapore Math strategies.
- Solves number story problems verbally.
- Solves addition and subtraction word problems, and add and subtract within ten.
- Creates simple number story problems for addition and subtraction.
- Fluently add and subtract within five.
- Decompose numbers less than ten or equal to ten into parts in more than one way.
- For any number between 1-10, find the number that makes 10 when added to the given number.
- Recognizes sets with 0 – 6 members.
- Recognizes one set and adds on the members in the other sets.
- Uses spatial terms: under, over, above, below, left, right, up, down, next to, beside, and in front of.

Numbers and Operations in Base Ten

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- Work with numbers 11-19 into tens and ones and some even greater to gain foundations for place value.

Measurement and Data

- Describe and compare measureable attributes such as weight or length
- Directly compare two objects with measurable attributes in common and describe the difference.
- Classify objects into given categories; count the numbers of objects in each category and sort the categories by count.
- Identify and describe objects in the environment by naming shapes and their relative positions
- Correctly names objects regardless of orientation or size.
- Identify shapes as two dimensional (flat or three dimensional (solid)
- Uses informal language to analyze, compare, create and compose 2 and 3 dimensional shapes.
- Models shapes in the world by building shapes and compare simple shapes to make larger shapes.
- Identifies $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{1}{4}$ of a whole.
- Relates whole numbers to points on a number line.
- Recognizes and uses the concept of zero.
- Creates and extends patterns using many activities (spoken words, objects, numbers, actions, colors).
- Recognizes even and odd numbers.
- Recognizes tools of measurements and estimates lengths of objects in non-standard units.
- Estimates weight.
- Recognizes the instruments to measure and estimate time.
- Identifies money by name.
- Recognizes, names, and sketches the following plane figures: square, triangle, circle, rectangle, oval and a diamond.
- Explores in the environment the three-dimensional forms: spheres, prisms, pyramids, cones, cylinders.
- Explores and understands symmetry in the environment.
- Collects, records, and interprets simple real-world information.
- Classifies objects into categories
- Uses tallies to record data.
- Constructs bar graphs in a whole group.
- Collects and records observations over time.

SCIENCE

Science – Life Science University of Chicago Foss Science

- Demonstrates an understanding of plants and animals through their habitats and what is needed for survival.
- Identifies characteristics of live animals and compares their behaviors.
- Communicates and journals observations.
- Shows an awareness of changes that occur in themselves and their environment.
- Describes and compares basic needs of living things.

Science – Physical Science University of Chicago Foss Science

- Observes and describes the properties of different wood and paper specimens.
- Compares different materials to discover how they are alike and different.
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- Observes how different materials interact with other attributes and how materials can change.
-
- Communicates and journals observations.
- Develops a growing curiosity and interest in the physical world around them.
- Human Body – Senses, Growing and Changing, Being Healthy
- Health and Nutrition – What are the food groups and what foods are healthy for us?
- Describes the effect of forces in nature.

Science – Scientific Inquiry

- Uses the senses, simple tools and equipment to explore and observe materials and natural phenomena.
- Collects, describes, compares, and records information.

Science –Earth Science

- Identifies, observes, and describes changes associated with night/day.
- Identifies, observes, and describes changes associated with seasons using common weather-related vocabulary,
- Begins to understand ways to reduce, reuse, and recycle materials.

SOCIAL STUDIES

- Understands peoples and cultures of other countries.
- Understands the roles and importance of members of the family.
- Understands geography – concepts of map and globe.
- Understands the school setting and school community.
- Demonstrates beginning awareness of city/town, state and country,
- Understands different areas of the neighborhood/community (ex: grocery store, police station, fire station and library).
- Demonstrates an understanding of self and others.
- Describes some people’s jobs and what is required to perform them.
- Begins to understand the use of trade or money to obtain goods and services.
- Understands economics: recognizing the concept of needs vs. wants.
- Understands the difference between basic needs (e.g. shelter, food) vs. wants and desires (e.g. toys).
- Participates in a community service project.
- Participates in current events discussions.
- Understands the concept of past as part of our history.
- Shows beginning understanding of what it means to be a leader.,

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- Learns and demonstrates appropriate fundamental skills through participation in early elementary games and activities.
- Develops and performs acceptable behavioral patterns in accordance with the basic school rules/routines and class structure.
- Interacts with others to develop a positive self-concept, and demonstrates an understanding of responsibility and the consequences of choices.
- Engages in active play using gross motor skills, fine motor skills.
- Coordinates movements to perform complex tasks.
- Understands the importance of physical fitness.,

- Participates in simple practices that promote healthy living, safety and prevent illness.,
- Begins an awareness of environmental health risks.
- Identifies examples of good nutrition.

COMPUTER SKILLS

- Introduction to keyboard and computer parts.
- Introduce tech vocabulary and operations. Open up a document and typing text: left to right.
- Mouse skills, basic navigational skills, and basic keyboarding skills such as space bar, number keys, and arrows.
- Use paintbrush and other drawing tools: to draw picture and illustrations in tux-paint program.
- Manipulate and play learning games in academic areas.
- Explore technology programs to enhance academic learning.
- Learn how to safely use the internet

MUSIC

- Recognize steady beat.
- Recognize various uses of the voice: sing, shout speak, hum, and whisper.
- Dramatize songs and stories.
- Sing various traditional, religious, folk and holiday songs.

ART

- Explore line, shape, color, texture, and space.
- Create art using materials such as crayon, chalk, markers, pencils, paints, papers, and three-dimensional materials.
- Create art using various techniques such as drawing, painting, printmaking, sculpture.
- Use scissors, glue, brushes, and related art tools properly and safely.

LIBRARY

- Understands book circulation procedures.
- Recognizes parts of a book.
- Differentiates fiction and non-fictional books.
- Recognizes how to select and evaluate books.

SPANISH

Demonstrate and awareness of a different language manners, and customs of societies.
Learn basic vocabulary and expressions through song and play and interaction.

Students will

- Introduce themselves and others in Spanish by using forms of the *verb SER*.
- Indicate their address and inquire from others their address by using forms of the *verb SER*.
- Describe their feelings and emotions in Spanish by using forms of the *verb ESTAR*.
- Tell what they like by using forms of the *verb GUSTAR*.
- Respond to the teacher's questions in Spanish.

- Speak to a small group about a topic that includes vocabulary about: animals, numbers, colors, food, feelings, names, addresses, relatives.
- Sing selected songs in Spanish.
- Count #Count #1-20 in Spanish.
- Be able to express language in social situations at home.
- Indicate their fluency in speaking Spanish in other settings.

HOMEWORK

All Kindergarten children at St. Thomas the Apostle School have some homework to reinforce their learning in the classroom. The goal of homework is to promote your child's success in school. Parents should never personally complete their child's work.

The following activities are important and can comprise homework for your child.

1. Read to your child or having your child read to you at least 150-2015 minutes a day.
2. Practice math concepts by spending 10 minutes of counting and practicing number concepts. Your child's teacher will offer many simple activities to you.
3. Check over written homework to note whether they have printed their own name on the paper and that their work is neatly completed.
4. Students will have weekly sight words to learn. Please study these words with your child. Making flashcards for the words is often most helpful.
5. Students may have family projects, such as class books to be shared with parents and writing activities given by the teacher.

KINDERGARTEN Learning Activities DAILY SCHEDULE

This schedule may be adjusted periodically. In a typical week, activates activities undertaken in a Kindergarten classroom include:

- 7:45- 8:00 Manipulative Workplay / Language Arts sheet or activity
- 8:00- 8:20 Bell rings, Prayer, & Pledge, and Morning Meeting Time
- 8:20- 8:45 Story Time or Music & Movement
- 8:45- 9:00 Washroom Break/Snack
- 9:00 – 10:30 Literacy/ Phonics/ Reading
- 10:30 – 10:50 Math
- 10:50 – 11:05 Outdoor Recess
- 11:05 – 11:15 Washroom Break/Prep for Lunch
- 11:15 – 11:45 Lunch Time
- 11:45 – 11:55 Washroom Break
- 11:55 – 12:40 Quiet Activities
- Writers' Workshop
- 12:40 - 12:50 Math Games Enrichment
- 12:50 – 1:35 SPECIAL CLASSES:
Mondays: Art/ Computers
Tuesdays: Spanish/Music

Thursdays: Physical Education

Education/

Fridays: Library

- 1:35 – 1:55 Social Studies/Science
- Learning 1:55 – 2:35 Centers / Free Choice
- 2:35 – 3:00 Religion
- 3:00 – 3:15 Simple Solutions Mmath or Reading Activity / Music & Movement
- 3:15 – 3:30 Afternoon Mtg. / Prep for Dismissal
- 3:30 Dismissal

GENERAL SCHOOL INFORMATION

Attendance/Absence/Tardy

A student who is not present *inside the classroom* by 8:00 a.m. is marked absent. If the child arrives later, then the child attendance is changed to "tardy."

Children will be **tardy** if the parent does not bring the school in time to be seated in the classroom ready to learn at 8 a.m. When students arrive at or around 7:45 AM, there is sufficient time to store items in the locker, greet one another, and to get settled with materials in the classroom. Students who arrive late lose out on morning rituals and activities and sometimes even class work. This has a negative impact on the child's success. Late arrivals can happen occasionally but should not become a regular occurrence. Children learn habits from home. Support your child with regular and timely arrival at school for the start of each and every day.

On the day of the child's **absence**, the parent must call the school office by 9:00 a.m. or leave a message on the night answering machine. The answering machine is on during the time school is not in session. Upon the child's return to school, a written note stating the number of days absent and the reason for the absence must be sent to the homeroom teacher.

School ends daily at 3:30pm. Do not retrieve your child from the classroom or the hallway near the classroom. Meet your child OUTDOORS. The entire class will be brought outside for dismissal. Do not pull your child from the line. This is very disruptive to the entire class. Please keep early dismissals to emergencies only. When you must take your child out before the regular time of dismissal, you need to complete a form in the office with the explanation for the early dismissal. The school secretary will call for the student to be brought to the office. Parents do not go directly to the classroom.

Daily attendance in kindergarten is important to student success. If at all possible, please avoid missing any part of the school day! Kindergarten students who are absent 25 days or more are required to attend a minimum of 25 hours of tutoring in the summer and will pass *conditionally* to the first grade.

EXTENDED CARE: Before and After School Care Program

This is a program for before and after school care. The Before-Care Program is located in the Pre-K classroom. The After Care Program is located in the Cafeteria/Lunch Room on the second floor of school. Hours are from 7:00 a.m. to 7:45 a.m. before school, and from 3:45 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. after school. The cost is \$1.50 per (any part of) 15 minutes of care. Further information about registering your child for the Extended Day program and about fees is available in the office. Extended Care handbooks are available from the school office.

Uniforms and Dress Code

Kindergarten students will follow the uniform policy that is found in the school handbook. The kindergarten child follows the same dress code as children in grades 1-8. Uniforms are worn daily. Students wear solid white or solid black **gym shoes** or dress shoes with the uniform. Shoes may not have colors, colored laces, designs, stripes, logos, or lights on them. The school sweatshirt features the St. Thomas emblem and name. Only these sweatshirts are permitted when students wear their uniforms on regular school days for gym. Students have many options for their uniform wear. Spirit Wear is for Spirit Day and the white Spirit shirts may be worn for gym class instead of the white gym t-shirts. NUT Day cards are never used on Physical Education Days or on Tuesdays when students attend Mass. **Parents must be acquainted with the Dress Code as outlined in the school handbook because kindergarten students must follow every part of the code as explained.** Teachers will notify you of any infractions to the rule and students must quickly come to compliance.

Last Day of School Kindergarten Celebration

Kindergarten students end the year with a class celebration. On the last scheduled school day, children participate in a closing program in the gym. Parents and the student body are invited to attend the brief program held in the school gym. Parents ARE EXPECTED to attend this final school event for their kindergarten child. A parent committee plans the event with the kindergarten teachers. (This event is not a "graduation" since children are continuing to first grade).

Children present a short agenda of song and poetry for their families. Kindergarten children will receive their report cards at the end of the celebration and are dismissed for the year. There will not be a reception after the celebration if the parents do not plan it.

School Spirit Days

School Spirit Days are scheduled monthly and on some special occasions. Reminders of these non-uniform days are posted in the school newsletter. On these days, the children wear school colors: green and white. Spirit wear shirts may be worn on gym days with gym shorts or gym sweatpants also. *School Spirit Wear* t-shirts, sweatshirts, etc., may be ordered at the school office periodically during the year.

Personal Responsibilities

All children are expected to be able to dress themselves, buckle, snap, and zip their clothes and tie their shoes. Kindergarten children are able to hang their coats in their lockers by themselves. They are able to walk to their own classrooms and to carry their own sack lunches and backpacks. Please help them to learn personal responsibility and independence.

By the second week of school, end of the third day of school, all children are expected to enter the classroom by him or /herself. *Most children will be ready to do this by the second day!* Parents are asked to assist their child by **NOT** escorting him or /her to the door and not lingering.

Plan to bring your child to the main floor and your child will either attend Before Care in the Pre-K classroom if he or /she arrives very early or will go directly to his or /her locker with peers after the 7:45 a.m. bell rings. Remind any grandparents or caregivers of the fact that kindergarten children are **not escorted** to the classroom. S.T.A. students demonstrate a family spirit and will help the younger children find their way to the classroom until they have the confidence to do so independently. Kindergarten children are eager to show their personal skills early in the year.

By the second week of school, All children are expected to leave the building with classmates in a class line. Do NOT pull your child from the line indoors. Wait

outdoors for the class to arrive.**School Library**

Kindergarten visits the school library at least once a week for story time and book selection. The children select one book to take home to read with their families. As the year unfolds, kindergarten children begin to read independently. Kindergarten students begin to participate in the Accelerated Reader program after Christmas vacation. At the second trimester Halfway through the school year, parents will receive information on how to log in to a website follow their individual child's progress in reading through the Accelerated Reader Program.

Sharing Time

"Show and Tell" time will be on an assigned day that the Kindergarten teacher designates. Each week the children will be able to bring in something "special" according to the letter of the alphabet they are learning for that week. Encourage your child to leave all toys and treasures at home on the other days.

Snack Break

Each day, the children will be able to enjoy a nutritious snack that parents take turns to donate to the classroom. You will receive a parent snack schedule from the teacher to provide snack for one week and a list of healthy snacks. The snack time is for an energy pick-up, so please keep the snack healthy. Do not send in any food that contains nuts, as ours is a **"nut-free environment."**

Lunch

Students have a choice of bringing a lunch or buying a hot lunch at school. Milk may be ordered separately as a choice.

Students should bring lunches at arrival time only. **Parents should NOT bring lunches after arrival time.** Lunches should provide **nutritious food** for children and **NOT** not consist of "junk" food. Occasionally children will forget to bring a lunch and we will call home to remind you. Our school nutrition policy requires that we avoid high-sugar foods and drinks. There are no "extra lunches" available to be bought on a daily basis through the hot lunch program.

The hot lunch program follows federally approved guidelines. Each month a menu is published by the Food Service Program and sent home with the students. The deadline for ordering is closely followed. The lunches are ordered *a month in advance*. They must be ordered in the timeframe given. Be aware of this requirement. Free and Reduced Lunch forms are available to all. You can inquire about the hot lunch program from the Lunch Supervisor who is in the school office or in the lunchroom 9 a.m. until 2 p.m. daily.

Birthday Treats

Children may bring in a *healthy* birthday treat to school. Our school nutrition policy requires that we aim to avoid high-sugar foods and drinks. Please check with the teacher before the day you plan to bring treats to school. Please do not bring peanuts or any nuts for a treat.

Home-School Communications

The Kindergarten teachers will communicate with parents through various media. Most of the communications will be through the **Fast Direct** online communications program. You will receive a periodic classroom news letter that indicates many activities that your child is participating in during class. The teacher will include reminders of upcoming school activities. Assessments are posted on a regular basis and families may send messages back and forth to the teacher. Personal visits are always helpful for matters that take more time and explanation.

The teachers may also periodically send notes home in hard copy or phone parents to discuss arising matters. Teachers will answer emails and phone calls from parents within 24 hours of a call or as soon as possible. Weekly the school principal sends home general information about upcoming activities at school (**S.T.A. News briefs**) through the **School Reach** email, text message, and phone communications system. Emergency or arising matters will prompt more frequent communications. Families are responsible for opening these messages. Never mark School Reach messages as spam.

Progress Reports and Report Cards

Report cards are issued three times per year in the trimester format at St. Thomas School. All grades and report cards are on line through the *Fast Direct* Information program. These reports will document your child's progress in learning. A progress report is available simply by reviewing the *Fast Direct* student reports online. Parents will receive a password to their child's account at the start of the year. Everyone must log in and set up their personal password for their account within the first week of school.

Formal parent-teacher conferences are scheduled for November and again in March. The teacher or the parent may request a parent-teacher conference at other times of the year. Report Cards indicate growth in achievement of learning standards.

STANDARDS-BASED SCALE FOR KINDERGARTEN, GRADES 1-2-3

- 4** = Advanced. Student independently and consistently exceeds expectations
- 3** = Proficient. Student frequently meets expectations
- 2** = Progressing. Student occasionally meets expectations
- 1** = Beginning. Student rarely meets expectations
- >** = Evaluate later. Learning goal was not a focus during this trimester
- *** = Not evaluated, will be evaluated when developmentally appropriate.

SUMMERTIME READINESS ACTIVITIES *Prior to First Grade*

Parents can help their child be ready for first grade. Learning should be fun for both you and your child. Work together when you have enough time and feel relaxed. Try your best to smile and look at your child when he/she is speaking. This encourages your child to talk and gives him/her a sense of importance and confidence. Parents are requested to read at least 20 minutes to/with their young child daily before and during the first grade year.

The following ideas are helpful in making the transition to first grade. *It is important that the child be happily and readily anticipating the school year.*

You may help your child REMEMBER HOW TO:

- Hold a pencil correctly, with a two finger and thumb grip (not a fist or any other array).
- Print his/her full name, using capitals for the first letter only and the rest of the letters with lower case letters.

- Say his/her full name, birthday, address, and phone number, including zip code and area code. Students should also know the emergency phone number.
- Dress independently: snap, button, zip, and tie (without adult help).
- Count from 1 – 20 by ones forward and backward.
- Identify the letters of the alphabet and their corresponding sounds (in mixed order).
- Recite the words from the Pre-primer and Primer Dolch Sight Word List. You can find the list at <http://www.dolchword.net>
- Identify the days of the week and months of the year.
- Identify color words and shape words.
- Identify major U.S. holidays and identify their meaning.
- Accept suggestions and correction; overcome temper tantrums; be willing to accept limitations.
- Use a tissue when coughing or sneezing or having a dripping nose.
Wash hands properly and the need to wash hands after toileting, after using a tissue, and before meals.
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Kindergarten School Supply List

Some supplies will be shared in general with classmates

(This List will need to be updated with the list that we sent home for the current school year)

Book Bag (durable, backpack style, waterproof, NO wheels)

6 sharpened Primary pencils with erasers - Primary pencils only

1 large pencil eraser

1 - 4 oz. size Elmer's glue

8 glue sticks

4 two-pocket folders

1 - 3-ring binder - 1 inch width, clear view cover

1 wide-ruled composition notebook

1 "Space Maker" style utility box (7.5 x 4.5 x2)

1 Scissors—children's Fiskars or Crayola, metal

2 large boxes of tissues

2 rolls of paper towels

1 box (25 ct.) Ziplock gallon storage bags

2 containers of antibacterial disinfecting wipes

2 bottles of hand sanitizer

1 set Crayola brand 8 water color paints – PRIMARY COLORS

1 set Crayola brand washable markers – set of 8-12, non-permanent PRIMARY COLORS

1 extra set of clothes for the season. Please label them.

Please make sure that all supplies are labeled with child's first and last names.

Parent Involvement in School

Parents are urged to become involved in your child's education by keeping in contact with your child's teacher through the various means outlined for you. Besides helping your child with homework, stay current by reading the teacher newsletter and the school News Briefs online. Follow the information posted on Fast Direct, on the website, and even on the school Face Book page. Attend school and Home and School events.

You are encouraged to volunteer to help with classroom activities. **You can volunteer to become a Room Parent to plan or coordinate events through the Home School**

Association.. All families are encouraged to participate in classroom activities and to offer your suggestions and ideas. At St. Thomas, all families must complete a minimum of 20 Service Hours a year. This is easily achieved and requests for school involvement for service will be announced on a weekly basis.

If the teacher has a special project and needs extra help from the parents, she will notify the parents in writing. Parents may be able to earn service hours for their time spent on classroom activities as well as school events. Opportunities for service hours begin in July and must be achieved prior to the close of school.

During the school year, parents will be called upon to help with field trips, parties, and special events. All parents must be Virtus trained and up to date with training bulletins if they are involved with direct student activity. *Virtus* primarily is a program about child safety. Information about *Virtus* training will be distributed to all parents at the Back-to-School Night. Please review the School Handbook for a greater explanation of *Virtus*, also known as "Protecting God's Children." It is located in the section titled, "Safe Environment Program."

**See the Parent Handbook for additional information about
St. Thomas the Apostle School.**