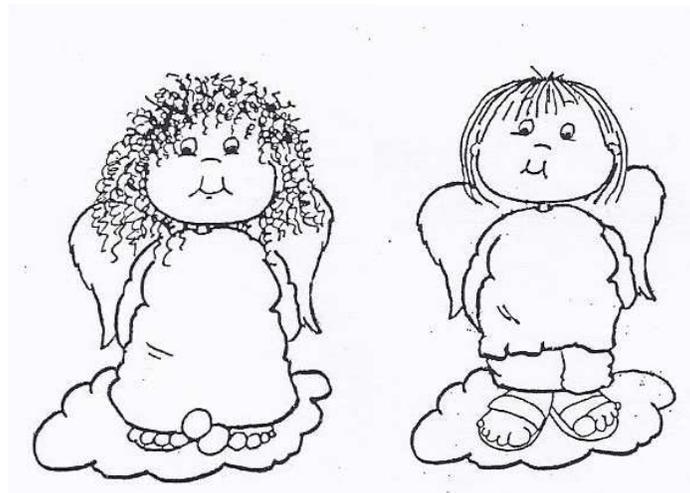


ST. THOMAS AQUINAS EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER



VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

MISSION STATEMENT

St. Thomas Aquinas Early Childhood Center is foremost, a Catholic school where two, three and four year olds are given the opportunities to develop spiritually, physically and intellectually. To accomplish this task, we work closely with parents in a complimentary manner. We are dedicated to the goal of providing developmentally appropriate programs aimed at total development.

As required by the Diocese of St. Petersburg, we ask that all volunteers read and sign the following information concerning volunteering at St. Thomas Aquinas Early Childhood Center:

ROLE OF THE VOLUNTEER

Volunteers in the Catholic Schools and Centers of the Diocese of St. Petersburg add a great dimension and enrichment to the life of the center. Volunteers are valued members of the center community. Under the direction and supervision of the administrator and the center staff, volunteers assist in the provision of educational and other services to students, faculty and staff. We would like to encourage all parents to choose an area suited to their talents and convenient to their schedules.

PARENT GROUP MEETINGS

There will be meetings planned once a month for the purpose of supporting and enhancing St. Thomas Aquinas Early Childhood Center and to offer educational and social activities for our families. These meetings provide enriching activities for the children that complement the curriculum and also provides educational opportunities for the parents.

PARENT GROUP LIAISON

Parents are selected on a yearly basis to coordinate all our activities and work in conjunction with the staff, homeroom mothers and families to provide special events to enhance our program.

STEERING COMMITTEE

Consists of parent liaisons, the center administrator, and teacher and parent representatives. The steering committee meets monthly to plan meetings and to coordinate committees and activities.

HOMEROOM PARENTS

Each class will select one or two parents to help coordinate parties and special activities. The teachers will select the room parents at the beginning of the year based on volunteers. **Room parents must be available to attend all group meetings.**

CLASSROOM VOLUNTEERS

We welcome our volunteers in the classroom. The teacher will determine with the volunteer the type of work needed and the days and times assistance is necessary and appropriate. **Please see requirements on last page.**

PROCEDURE FOR CHECK-IN

All volunteers are required to report to the office to sign in and receive a volunteer badge. This is required before entering any classroom. All visitors and/or volunteers are required to produce their driver's license to be run through the Raptor system. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

CONFIDENTIALITY

In the course of volunteer work, confidential information about students or teachers may be learned. This information must remain confidential in any setting inside or outside the center, just as one would wish his/her own privacy rights to be respected. At times, the volunteer may come into possession of information about students that may need to be conveyed to the volunteer's supervisor (teacher or administrator). If appropriate in the judgment of the administrator, other persons on a "need to know" basis may be advised by the administrator to include, but not limited to, parents/guardians, and pastor. Our Confidentiality Policy protects every child's privacy. Any parent who violates the Confidentiality Policy will no longer be permitted to volunteer in the classroom.

SUPERVISION OF VOLUNTEERS

The administrator is responsible for the total center operation. The administrator supervises all who serve in any capacity in the school/center and in official school-related activities. The administrator may delegate the supervisory role to a designated member of the center staff for specific activities. Volunteers will be expected to review and adhere to policies and procedures contained in the Parent Handbook.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

It is the goal of Catholic Centers of the Diocese of St. Petersburg to instruct students in the formation of a Catholic conscience so that they will choose behaviors which foster responsibility. In order to accomplish this, volunteers are requested to manage students in positive and constructive ways while they uphold the center's Discipline Policy. This can be accomplished through intervention and encouragement techniques and strategies, which are administered through proximity, eye contact, and privacy. In addition to supporting the Discipline Policy, volunteers are expected to support the decisions of administrators and teachers. A volunteer may not employ corporal punishment as a means of controlling a student who has misbehaved. All disciplinary issues should be handled by the teacher.

HEALTH EMERGENCY AND SAFETY PROCEDURES

All situations should be dealt with individually with prudent, adult judgment as the primary response to any illness or injury. Simple scrapes, small cuts, bruises, etc. will be taken care of in the classroom by the teacher or by bringing the student to the EC office. If a child falls or bumps himself/herself, the situation should be taken seriously. Please observe a few seconds and check vital signs. If the student seems to be stabilized, an adult should accompany the student to the office or to the teacher for observation. Do not send the child with another student. If there is only one adult present at the sight of the injury, call for assistance. Serious injury such as a possible broken bone, severe bleeding or allergic reaction should be dealt with immediately and with caution. **DO NOT MOVE THE CHILD. DO NOT LEAVE THE CHILD.** Send to the office or for the teacher for assistance. Remove other students from the proximity of the situation as soon as possible. Keep the child as still and comfortable as possible until help comes. Never dispense any medication (not even aspirin) to any child. All volunteers are encouraged to undergo first aid and CPR training.

CHILD ABUSE

Chapter 415.504, Florida Statutes protects children from abuse and/or neglect. Abuse is defined as including any non-accidental injury, sexual battery, financial or sexual exploitation or injury to the intellectual or psychological capacity of a person by the parents or other persons responsible for the child's welfare. Neglect is failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter and health care or needed supervision. Under Florida Law, anyone who suspects child abuse is legally obligated to report that abuse. It is the volunteer's responsibility to inform the center administrator of any suspicions of abuse. If for some reason, the administrator declines to make a report based on a volunteer's suspicions, the volunteer still has a legal obligation to report.

HARASSMENT/SAFE ENVIRONMENT POLICY

St. Thomas Aquinas E.C.C. strives to establish a Christian, professional and supportive educational community for administrators, faculty and staff, parents and students. The Diocese of St. Petersburg has adopted and promulgated a harassment policy for its schools that addresses behaviors that interfere with fulfilling the school's mission. We, at St. Thomas Aquinas E.C.C., condemn any form of harassment and will address all credible allegations in accord with the diocesan policy. We are also committed to providing a safe environment for our students. All staff, according to Diocesan policy, have participated in the safe environment training, which addresses the safety of all of our children. **THE POLICY OF THE DIOCESE OF ST. PETERSBURG REQUIRES ALL VOLUNTEERS (PARENTS) WHO ARE IN THE CLASSROOM ON A REGULAR BASIS MUST BE SAFE ENVIRONMENT TRAINED THROUGH THE DIOCESE IN ORDER TO VOLUNTEER IN THE CLASSROOM. MORE INFORMATION CAN BE OBTAINED IN THE ECC OFFICE.**

We would like to thank all of our volunteers for their service and commitment to St. Thomas Aquinas Early Childhood Center. Your involvement is very much appreciated by our entire faculty and staff.

