

Annunciation  
Christian  
Academy

Parent Handbook

**This booklet is dedicated  
to the  
Past,  
Present  
And  
Future  
Members of the  
Board of Directors  
Of  
Annunciation Christian Academy**

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## PHILOSOPHY AND PURPOSE

The Annunciation Christian Academy was founded in 1997 by a group of dedicated members of the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church. Its purpose is to serve as a ministry of the church for children of its members as well as for the children of the entire community. The school admits and welcomes the diversity of children from any race, religion, national or ethnic origin. The philosophy, simply stated, is to provide each child an atmosphere conducive to spiritual, intellectual, social, emotional, and physical growth within a developmentally appropriate environment as defined by the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

## OUR PROGRAM

The goal of the Annunciation Christian Academy is to provide a friendly, child oriented, hands-on, developmentally appropriate environment for each child who attends. Your child's daily and weekly routine will include the following activities:

**Art** Art is an opportunity to use various mediums of artistic construction as well as age appropriate drawing and coloring techniques. Art develops the small motor skills and encourages imagination. It allows the children to work together though sharing materials and inspiration. Our emphasis will always be on the process rather than the product!

**Church** Each week the children are offered age appropriate Christian lessons given in the Church by one of the priests. On those days he is unavailable group study of Bible Stories will be held.

**Circle** Circle time is an opportunity for our students to come together as a group for conversation building skills, finger play, flannel board stories, topics of interest related to the curriculum, poems, reading, and learning the skills of listening and sharing.

**Cultural Activities** The school draws from a variety of cultural backgrounds therefore the children will be exposed to a variety of languages and cultural activities. As a group they will be exposed to the Greek language.

**Free Play** Free play is integral in developing the ability to interact with peers, in developing problem solving skills and in fostering imaginative play.

**Music and Dance** Age appropriate group music and movement classes are held weekly for the children.

**Outdoor Play** The play yard offers the opportunity to develop gross motor skills while cultivating social skills by cooperating and sharing with others.

**Snack Time** The children gain self-confidence as well as the ability to contribute positively to the group when helping with the snack preparation and clean-up. Snack time is used to

emphasize the use of good manners, gratefulness and interacting appropriately with others.

### REGISTRATION

Registration fees are **not refundable**. Due to limited space, church children are considered first, with all others admitted on a first come first serve basis. **No place** will be held without the application form and registration fee. Half registration will be charged for children entering the school after the Christmas Holiday. Registration for the following year begins in late January for the church members and current students, and February for others. Activity fees are due with the first month's tuition. There is a waiver of registration fees for families enrolling two or more children.

### CLASS PLACEMENT

All children must be of appropriate age for their class by the 31<sup>st</sup> of August, i.e. one year old before August 31st.

The child / teacher ratio and number of children per class varies with each age:

**One Year Olds:** five children / one teacher: ten per class

**Two Year Olds:** six children / one teacher: twelve per class

**Three Year Olds:** seven / one teacher: fourteen per class

**Four Year Olds/Pre-K:** eight / one teacher: sixteen per class

### TUITION

Tuition is due on the first of each month and considered late after the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month. A \$10.00 late fee will be charged unless prior arrangements have been made. A \$25.00 fee will be charged for any check returned by the bank.

Please indicate the month and the child for which you are paying with all tuition payments. Payment may be made in one of the following ways:

- In a labeled envelope attached to the outside of child's backpack
- Handed to the director, or the teacher stationed at the door
- By mail
- By annual payment

When making payments by check, please make the check payable to *Annunciation Christian Academy*. A refund of tuition, for whatever reason, will require the approval of the board of the Annunciation Christian Academy.

### HOURS AND ATTENDANCE

School hours for Toddlers Program, and the Preschool classes are 9:00am to 12:00 noon.

The Four Year Old/Pre-K Class will remain in school until 1:00 pm on Wednesday.

Children may enter the building at 8:50 am.

Early Bird hours are 8:00 – 8:55 am.

Lunch Bunch hours are 12:00 noon to 1:00 pm.

Please strive for consistent attendance and punctuality.

## PARENT INVOLVEMENT

At ACA we depend upon our parents' help and involvement to enhance the children's preschool experiences. If you have a special talent or interest that you would like to share with the children, please let your child's teacher or the director know and arrange a time and place to share with the children. Children love to have their parents come to school.

If you know of a particularly interesting trip that we could take, please let us know.

Each May ACA sponsors the children's activities at the Greek Festival. This is our primary fundraiser. Each family is requested to work one six hour shifts manning a booth of their choice for the school. It is loads of family fun with great food and entertainment.

## CATERING EVENTS

In lieu of fundraising drives we are fortunate to have the opportunity to cater events in the Hellenic Center scheduled through the church. Proceeds from these events go directly to the school. Your participation in these events is greatly needed and very much appreciated.

## COMMUNICATIONS

A school newsletter, "The Shepherd's Watch", is published bi-monthly, as well as the annual school calendar. Each classroom sends a newsletter to the parents weekly as well as a calendar of activities and events.

At Annunciation Christian Academy we have an open door policy. You are welcome in the school at any time; please remember that prolonged attendance in the classroom does disturb the normal classroom activities. In order to not disturb the classroom, feel free to discuss problems with the director. She is available at all times to hear your concerns, and hopefully to solve any problems, thus making your child's preschool experience the best it can be. The door is never closed to the office unless a conference is being held.

The Academy Board meets on the second Tuesday of each month. These meetings are open to all parents, however, if a parent wishes to present an issue to the board it is requested that they contact the director, the board chairman, or a member of the board in order to confirm the date and time and to be sure the concern is added to the agenda.

## PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES

We have regularly scheduled Fall and Spring Conference Days at which time the teacher discusses with the parents at length the progress being made in the classroom by their child.

Spontaneous conferences with the teacher are delightful, however, out of respect for the teacher and the classroom, please make an appointment with the teacher for before/after school discussion time for issues needing immediate attention.

## HEALTH POLICY

Please bring any and all allergies to the immediate attention of the director and the staff, even though you may have noted it on the medical report.

All health forms (Physician's Medical Statement) must be on file at the school before any child is admitted to the program unless prior arrangements have been made.

If your child becomes ill at school you will be contacted to get them immediately. Please do not send sick children to school. If you are in doubt, keep the child at home. Young children are very susceptible to colds and viruses. Please help us keep the spread of these to a minimum. If your child is too sick to go outside he or she should be kept home.

One way to help keep your child healthy is to make sure they receive enough sleep, eat healthy food, and wash hands frequently with soap.

The school intends to keep the environment as clean and germ free as possible. Please help us in our effort to keep your child healthy by cooperating with our health policy. If possible, call the school (765-3663) if your child has contracted a contagious disease (strep throat, measles, mumps, fifth disease, hand foot and mouth, etc.).

This is a PEANUT FREE environment. Please make it plainly evident to the staff as soon as you are aware that your child has any allergy. Strict enforcement of this policy is necessary. Other allergies are equally respected. If a parent feels it to their best advantage, they are encouraged to supply their child's personal snack.

### **When To Keep Your Child At Home:**

- A temperature above 100 degrees
- Sore throat with fever
- Vomiting, diarrhea and/or fever within 24 hours
- Pink eye (conjunctivitis)
- Impetigo (stay home until the lesions are healed)
- Runny nose with thick yellow or green mucus
- Loose "phlegmy" cough, with or without fever
- Head lice (until treatment is used and 24 hours have passed)
- Chicken pox (until all scales are dry)

Contagious diseases such as chicken pox, measles, mumps, and fifth disease should be reported to the office so that other parents may be informed of exposure (no names mentioned). The school intends to keep the environment as clean and germ free as possible. Please help us in our effort to keep your children healthy by cooperating with our health policy.

### **SHOW AND TELL**

Each class will have their own weekly "Show and Tell" day (no warfare items). Please restrict items coming to school to that specified day. Please keep all other toys in the car for safe keeping until after school. Some classes have a "Letter Bag" or "Special Friend" to take home overnight. Please respect these activities and participate fully.

## BIRTHDAYS

Birthday celebrations are wonderful occasions! Please do make arrangements with your child's teacher as to the day and time of your child's birthday celebration. You are encouraged to arrange special birthday games to play. You may send special drinks and a school approved snack. You may send party hats, napkins, plates and cups.

Please do not send nuts, candy, gum, soft drinks, treat bags, or party favors.

Because of our several food allergies you are required to notify your child's teacher **72 hours (3 days)** ahead of time if you would like to bring special birthday food. Otherwise the regular snack for that day will be served.

You are encouraged to celebrate summer birthdays at any time during the year. Coordinate with the teacher an appropriate day and month; perhaps a Name Day. Invitations to outside parties may only be distributed to the entire class.

## SPECIAL ITEMS

Items for the science tables are always welcomed; shells, nests, feathers, and things that they "discover" all are appreciated. If you have something that pertains to a specific topic or unit, we would be delighted for you to share it with us for a short time. All items will be cherished and hopefully returned intact. Remember that we are preschoolers and like to touch.

## FIELD TRIPS

We always welcome your suggestions for field trips that would be of special interest to the children. Sometimes the simplest thing is of greatest interest to us all.

You will be notified ahead of time when field trips are scheduled. Parents are responsible for arranging their own child's transportation. Each child must have a "Field Trip Permission" form in its permanent record file. In addition, you will receive a trip specific permission form, which is to be returned. All children must be in appropriate car seats.

## BOOK BAGS

All two, three, four, and five year olds must have a backpack with their name clearly on the outside for the transportation of "important papers". All one, two, and three year olds will be assigned a cubby in the room labeled with their name. You are to supply diapers, special wipes and a seasonal change of clothing.

Each one and two year old is to supply their own labeled "sippie cup" daily for their personal use at school. Any love object that the toddler needs to use during the day must be clearly labeled.



## CLOTHING

Please dress your child in comfortable clothing. Remember that we play hard and strive to be self-sufficient. Appropriate footwear would be tennis shoes, or hard sole, closed toe shoes. **No flip-flops or open toe sandals.** Their clothing should be child friendly for unassisted bathroom use. A seasonal change of clothing in the child's cubby (in a labeled zip lock bag) at school is advisable.

Outdoor play is scheduled daily, weather permitting (above 32°). Please include jackets, hats, and mittens accordingly; cool clothing and sunscreen in warm weather (remember to apply sunscreen before leaving home. Staff is not allowed to apply). All outer clothing should have the child's name on it.

## SNACK

**This school is a nut/peanut free school (special instructions included).**

Please bring any food allergies immediately to the attention of the director and staff. Other allergies are equally respected. If a parent feels it to their best advantage, they are encouraged to supply their child personal snack. Napkins and cups are provided daily by the school. Parents supply snack upon a rotating basis. We drink water, except for birthday parties. Your teacher will give you a snack schedule and reinforce this with a weekly reminder. We request nutritious snacks.

**Remember to check the ingredient list and be certain that there are no nuts of any kind, and that the item has not been prepared in a facility which prepares nuts of any kind.**

A general guideline for snack choices:

Monday – dairy

Tuesday – fruit

Wednesday – grains

Thursday – veggies

Friday - child's choice, within reason.

One and two year olds supply their own labeled and covered cup daily.

## INCLEMENT WEATHER

In times of bad weather, decisions regarding delays or school closings will be made independently of public school.

You are requested to tune to your local TV and or radio station to determine the status of open/closed for Annunciation Christian Academy. We notify WXII 12 and WGHP 8 TV stations. Remember to look under "T" for the school listing. Check the stations online listings also. Should it begin to snow during the morning hours please call the school to determine closing plans. Normally we do not make up snow days until after one week (5 days) is missed. Then we will use days after the Greek Festival. We do not issue refunds for missed days due to bad weather.

Spring is a time to be aware of tornadoes. Please notify the school if you hear a warning, as we are not always near the weather radio.

## CHILD ABUSE POLICY

Child abuse or neglect in any form will not be tolerated. We will document and report any evidence of abuse or neglect of which we are aware. By law, we are required to report this to the Department of Social Services.

## DISCIPLINE

We practice the following rules:

We:

- Praise, reward, and encourage appropriate behavior
- Reason with and set appropriate limits
- Model appropriate behavior
- Listen well
- Are respectful
- Ignore minor misbehavior
- Distract to solve minor altercations
- Use humor when possible
- Are consistent in our rules and expectations
- Maintain a child friendly atmosphere

Teachers at ACA are not permitted to use any form of physical discipline. Under no circumstances will the children be spanked, smacked, pinched or hit; nor will children be humiliated or verbally belittled by a teacher.

Sometimes children's group behavior, and their reactions to certain group situations, differs from their behavior at home. On occasion behavior such as hitting, biting, scratching, grabbing toys, etc. may occur at preschool. While these behaviors are not desirable or acceptable, they may sometimes occur. Toddlers and twos do not always possess the verbal skills and reasoning powers necessary to clearly communicate their wants and needs. Although not desirable, please understand that these behaviors are not unusual and are developmentally expected for children who are under four years of age.

Our school policy is to use positive reinforcement, praise, and good teacher-child modeling skills to encourage positive classroom behavior. Only after distraction has proven ineffectual, may a "time away" space be used along with explanation of the inappropriate behavior and the expected behavior. After the child returns to the group the incident is considered closed. Persistent inappropriate behavior will be discussed with the parents in hope that reinforcement from home combined with the teacher's efforts may bring about the desired change of behavior.

The most effective method of discipline is exemplification of good manners at all times.

Parents and teachers must work constructively together to instill this worthy goal.

Our teachers are dedicated to providing an environment conducive to the growth of developmentally appropriate behavior in the children they nurture.

## ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

### **Arrival:**

- ❑ Doors open at 8:50 am.
- ❑ 8:50 am until 9:10 someone is at the door to greet and assist the children in their arrival at school.
- ❑ One and two year olds will be taken from the car, unless the parents wish to park in the lot and walk them in. Please do not park at the steps at any time.
- ❑ Threes and fours/pre-K may be dropped off at the door. They are assisted to the classroom until they are comfortable going on their own (watched).
- ❑ The parent must park in the lot and walk the child to class when arriving after 9:10 am.

### **Departure:**

- ❑ At pick-up time the parent is asked to park in the lot and go to the classroom to retrieve their child, waiting in line until the teacher is ready to dismiss the class
- ❑ If you find that you are to be unavoidably late please call the office (765-3663, school/765-7145, church office) and let the staff know.
- ❑ A person who is unfamiliar with the staff must be on the list of approved "pick-up persons". They will be asked for photo identification the first few times they arrive.
- ❑ Remember that school pick-up is at 12:00 p.m. (noon). We ask that you please BE ON TIME for pick up. It is difficult for both our teachers and students to have to wait for parents. For students left longer than 10 minutes, a Lunch Bunch fee of \$4.00 will be charged to your account.

A Suggested Driving Pattern

