

ST. THOMAS' NURSERY SCHOOL

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HANDBOOK

2010-2011

*"Whose child is this?" I asked one day
Seeing a little one out at play
"Mine", said the parent with a tender smile
"Mine, to keep for a very long while
To wash his hands and to comb his hair
To tell him what he has to wear
To prepare him so he may always be good
And each day to do the things he should"*

*Whose child is this?" I asked again
As the door opened and someone came in
"Mine", said the teacher with the same tender smile
"Mine, to keep for a little while
To teach him how to be gentle and kind
To train and direct his dear little mind
To help him live by every rule
To get the best he can from school."*

*"Whose child is this?" I asked once more
Just as the little one entered the door
"Ours" said the parent and the teacher as they smiled
And each took the hand of the little child
"Ours to love and train together
Ours this blessed task forever."*

(Author Unknown)

ST. THOMAS' NURSERY SCHOOL

The nursery school was founded in 1951 and through the years has grown from a handful of children to an enrollment of almost 100 pre-school students. Our goal is to offer quality preschool experiences to children of parishioners and the community. St. Thomas' Nursery School offers a developmental, hands-on program designed to promote the physical, emotional, social, cognitive and spiritual development of preschool children. They are offered many varied activities and learning experiences. Our regular program hours are 9 a.m. to 12 noon.

SECURITY

The nursery school is equipped with security doors which keep unwanted visitors out of the classroom area. **These doors will be kept closed at all times except during arrival and dismissal. Early arrival families should ring the doorbell in the morning. The doors will be opened at 8:55 each morning for regular arrival families.** If you arrive after 9:15 or prior to 11:55, please ring the doorbell and one of the staff members will open the door for you.

2010-2011 TUITION AND FEES

Registration Fee \$75 (non-refundable) for one child
 \$125 (non-refundable) for more than one child

Monthly Tuition	Two Year Olds		Four Year Olds	
	Two days/week	\$230	Three days/week	\$270
	Three days/week	\$270	Four days/week	\$290
			Five days/week	\$330
	Three Year Olds		Five Year Olds	
	Two days/week	\$230	Five days/week	\$330
	Three days/week	\$270		

September tuition is due July 1

Activity Fees	Two year olds/year	\$40
	Three year olds/year	\$40
	Blue PreK/year	\$40
	Green PreK/year	\$40

ADMISSIONS POLICY

Children between the ages of 2 and 5 may be eligible for enrollment. There are no admissions tests administered. **Children must have the developmental maturity to manage the anxiety of separating from their parents.** To ensure fair and consistent processing, applications will be accepted in the following order:

January 5 - 15

- ◆ Children who are currently attending St. Thomas' Nursery School in the present academic year
- ◆ Siblings of students currently attending St. Thomas' Nursery School and siblings of graduates
- ◆ Children whose parents are communicant members in good standing and are known to the bookkeeper at St. Thomas' Church at the time the application is submitted

January 16

- ◆ All remaining applicants eligible for enrollment

Receipt of the application and registration fee will be acknowledged in writing by the director.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

St. Thomas' Nursery School accepts children irrespective of race, creed, religion, and national origin. A diverse environment enriches the learning experience for children by providing exposure to unique cultures and backgrounds.

FINANCIAL POLICY

The registration fee and the first month's tuition are **non-refundable** and **required** of **new** families at the time the child is enrolled in the program. No registration fee is required of children on the waiting list.

The September tuition payment for all current families is due July 1 and must be received no later than July 15. Any payment received after this date must include a \$30 late fee.

The monthly tuition beginning in October is due the first school day of each month. Checks should be made payable to **ST. THOMAS' NURSERY SCHOOL** and placed in the box/basket in the director's office. Parents may also opt to pay the tuition quarterly or annually. A late fee may be imposed for late tuition. **All checks returned for insufficient funds will be charged a fee of \$25.00.**

If your child will not be attending St. Thomas' Nursery School for any reason, you must submit a letter to the director no later than July 1.

INSURANCE

Accident insurance for all students and staff members is provided by St. Thomas' Church in cases where injury occurs on church property during regular school hours.

In-house Activities/Field Trips

The \$40.00 activity fee is used to provide in-house programs for the children in lieu of fieldtrips. We are careful to schedule the programs for the benefit of all of the children. Some examples are the Insectarium traveling program, The Academy of Natural Sciences Educational Program, a virtual whale watch, Great Valley Nature Center Environmental Educational Programs and more. With the funds collected each year we are able to finance 3 or 4 educational programs for the children.

Extended Day in the 5 year old classroom

We will begin the extended day program Tuesday, October 5, 2010. This will be offered three days a week, **Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday**. The Board suggested that we offer the extended day as a fall and spring session. The fall session will be October thru December. The spring session will be from January 2011-May 2011. This can be paid monthly or by session, not day to day.

There are two options if you choose to participate in the enrichment program:

- The first option is to have your child stay in their classroom from 12:00 p.m.-2:00 p.m. Your child will eat lunch and receive enrichment on the monthly units along with Handwriting Without Tears incorporated into the program. This will be 135.00 a month, plus tuition, for 24 hours of enrichment. This breaks down to \$5.63 an hour for enrichment.
- For some of you who need your child to stay until 3:00p.m., your child can stay from 12:00p.m.-3:00p.m., where your child will receive the enrichment until 2:00 p.m. Then will join the lunch bunch children from 2:00p.m.-3:00p.m. for indoor/outdoor activities, socialization and the famous Popsicles! This will be \$185.00 a month, plus tuition, for 24 hours of enrichment and 12 hours of lunch bunch. This breaks down to \$5.13 an hour for the enrichment and lunch bunch.

EARLY ARRIVAL & LUNCH BUNCH

Beginning in the Fall of 1996, St. Thomas' Nursery School offered parents the opportunity to extend their child's day either before school 8:00-9:00 a.m. or after school Monday – Friday 12:00 – 3:00 p.m. This program is open to all children three years or older. However, these children are required to be completely potty-trained.

The two year old program extends their day after school 12:00 – 1:00 p.m. Beginning in October, the two's can stay until 2:00 pm. These children do NOT need to be potty-trained in order to stay until 2:00 pm.

Parents are required to complete the contract form monthly and return it to the director with payment before the first week of the month. Each time period has a maximum number of children as follows:

- ◆ 8:00 – 9:00 a.m.: 8 children total and no more than 6 three year olds
- ◆ **The early drop-off is not an option for two year olds.**

- ◆ 12:00 – 3:00 p.m.: A maximum of 30 children – a third teacher is required when we have more than 20 children.

The cost of the program is 0-10 hours - \$6.25/hour; 11-20 hours - \$5.75/hour; 21 hours and above - \$5.25/hour. If there are any openings in any of the time blocks, last minute requests will gladly be filled. The charge for late sign-up is \$7/hour.

The children are required to bring their own lunch and drink. Glass containers are not allowed. On pizza days, please remember to send a drink in with your child. When packing lunch for your child, please keep in mind how much your child usually eats at home. Please use a cold-pak to keep the lunch cool, as we **do not** have facilities to refrigerate lunches. ***Candy is not allowed in lunches.*** The teachers will require your child to eat at least half of their sandwich or whatever the main food item is in their lunch before eating dessert items or chips. After lunch, the children have rest or quiet period to prepare for the remainder of the afternoon's planned creative activities, both indoors and out.

PICK-UP POLICY

We realize emergencies do happen; therefore, it is imperative that you call the school as soon as you know you may be late. If you are late arriving for dismissal without having called the school **you will be assessed a fine of \$1.00/minute.** This notice will serve as your only warning. **A parent arriving late consistently will lose the privilege of using the extended hours program for one month.**

PARKING LOT SAFETY

The parking lot is often crowded at the beginning and end of the school day. Please use extreme care when entering or leaving the building and the parking lot.

- ◆ **All parents must use the parking lot closest to the Camphill Road entrance.**
- ◆ **Back into the parking spaces to increase visibility when leaving**
- ◆ **Drive slowly and carefully on Church property. The speed limit is 5 mph on church property.**
- ◆ **Hold your child's hand while traversing the parking lot – do not let your child run ahead of you.**
- ◆ **Remain alert at all times.**
- ◆ **Do not leave children unattended in your car.**

To ensure your child's safety, it is required that all children be brought to the classroom and picked up from the classroom. The teacher must be aware of the child's presence before the parent or carpool driver leaves.

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSINGS

St. Thomas' Nursery School has been assigned a school number in the event of an emergency school closing. There are six places to access school-closing information:

- ◆ The school answering machine message will announce a school closing(***always check this before leaving your house***)
- ◆ Fox Philadelphia – School name will appear under Montgomery County as St. Thomas' Nursery School, Whitemarsh
- ◆ KYW Newsradio –1060 AM
- ◆ Television on KYW Channel 3
- ◆ On-line at KYW1060.com
- ◆ On the telephone by dialing 1-900-737-1060 (95 cents per call)

SCHOOL NUMBER for KYW - 422

Our policy is to open the school as long as traveling to and from school is safe, the facilities are running safely and accurately, and we do not anticipate problems with dismissal. **Please, whenever the weather is questionable, check one of the six options listed above.**

SICK CHILDREN (Please read very carefully)

Every effort is made to keep the children healthy. **Your child is not allowed to attend school if he/she has any of the following symptoms:**

- ◆ A temperature of more than 99 degrees in the last 24 hours (*child MUST be fever free for 24 hours before returning to school*)
- ◆ Green or yellow nasal discharge
- ◆ Intestinal disturbance accompanied by diarrhea or vomiting
- ◆ Any undiagnosed rash on cheeks, arms, legs, chest, or back
- ◆ Persistent cough
- ◆ Sore or discharging eyes or ears
- ◆ Complaints of a sore or irritated throat
- ◆ Child must have **NO** vomiting or diarrhea for 24 hours before returning to school

THE SCHOOL RESERVES THE RIGHT TO SEND HOME A CHILD EXHIBITING ANY OF THESE SYMPTOMS.

We have a zero tolerance policy for sick children.

If a child develops any of these symptoms while at school, he/she will be isolated from the other children. Parents will be called and **must** take the child home as soon as possible. **Please be diligent in keeping your child home if there are any questions about his/her health.**

If your child has been exposed to any contagious disease, such as whooping cough, German or regular measles, mumps, chicken pox, diphtheria, scarlet fever, walking pneumonia or strep, it should be reported to the staff as soon as possible.

MEDICAL RECORDS

The medical record form given to you is to be filled out by you and your family doctor and returned to us before your child enters the program. Please be sure that all immunizations are up-to-date.

<p>All children having a known allergy which will cause an anaphylactic reaction must wear an allergy bracelet while at school</p>

MEDICATION

St. Thomas' Nursery School staff will not administer medication, with the exception of medications for severe allergies. Since the children are in school for only three hours, medication should be scheduled outside of school hours.

Any child with a food allergy requiring Benadryl or an Epi-pen, must have a written permission from the parent giving any staff member permission to administer the medication as well as written instructions from the child's physician.

All medicines must be labeled with child's name and will be kept in the red medical alert bag in each classroom. All medicines must have a current prescription attached.

Children with asthma needing an inhaler, must have written permission from the parent for any staff member to administer the medication as well as written instructions from the child's physician.

EMERGENCIES

In case of a medical emergency, a staff member will call 911 and parents will be notified immediately. If contact cannot be made with the parents, we will call the back-up person listed on the emergency permission slip.

FIRE DRILLS

Fire drills are held monthly and scheduled to include all classes. All children and staff must evacuate the building using the posted evacuation plans.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Discipline, the profound ordering of a person's life, is a profound emotional need in all children. Without discipline, children are uncomfortable, helpless at the hands of their impulses, and not able to make sense of their environment. We understand discipline to be the helpful guidance, encouragement and support that adults use to influence children as they learn and grow. It is not so much enforcement of rules as it is a matter of spirit that rests upon the relationship between the teacher and the child. Teachers will set appropriate and consistent limits, model acceptable behavior, redirect children, reinforce positively, and teach negotiating and problem solving skills. Children will be encouraged to use words to settle their disputes. A time-out will occasionally be used to give a child the space to re-establish his/her emotional equilibrium and composure. If necessary, a child will be removed from the classroom and taken to the Director's office if he/she is not responding to any of the other techniques or the safety of the other children is threatened by a child's behavior. ***Spanking, hitting or shaming children, withholding food, or coercion of any kind is never permitted.***

BITING POLICY

Biting occasionally may surface as a problem in the classroom. **WE DO NOT TOLERATE BITING.** When the incident occurs the "biter" is placed in a safe time-out place and told "biting hurts and I will not allow you to hurt others". The parents are informed about their child's behavior and are asked to talk to their child about the biting. At the time of the second incident, the "biter" is sent to the Director's office for a time to discuss biting as an unacceptable behavior. When the biting occurs for the third time, the parents are called and the child must go home for the day. ***A child may be asked to leave the nursery school if the biting continues.*** Here at St. Thomas' Nursery School, we will work together with the parents to help the child handle his/her frustrations in an acceptable manner.

REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT

St. Thomas' Nursery School complies with the Child Protective Service Act 124 enacted in 1976. The purpose of this Act is to protect children from abuse, to ensure their opportunity for healthy growth and development and, whenever possible, to preserve and stabilize family life. Our staff has been trained to identify signs of possible abuse or neglect. When we see those signs, we are required to report suspected abuse or neglect via telephone to Childline, which is followed up within 48 hours by a written report (CY-47) to the Montgomery County Office of Children and Youth. We cooperate with the Montgomery County Office of Children and Youth not only because it is required, but also because we understand that caring for children is a shared responsibility. We are committed to the safety and well being of each child. We solicit the cooperation of all parents in this endeavor.

SCHOOL SCHEDULE

St. Thomas' Nursery School regular hours are 9 a.m. to 12 noon. **Children should not arrive before 8:55 a.m. unless they have registered for the early drop-off option on the monthly contract for extended hours.** Daily schedules for classes are posted in individual classrooms.

Each class has a daily scheduled playground time. Each class meets with a music specialist and a cooking teacher once a week.

RELEASE OF CHILDREN

Children will only be released to their parents or persons designated by the parents in writing as having permission to pick up a child. Parents may designate, on forms provided, a person who may pick-up their child or may send a note with the child. In either case, the person's driver's license may be checked to verify their identity. The safety of the child will always be foremost when releasing children to authorized persons. Please let us know if there is a special circumstance of which we need to be aware. If a parent or escort should be an hour or more late in picking up a child, without having previously contacted the school (215-233-2923) or church office (215-233-3970 ext. 145), the police will be notified.

LATE ARRIVAL OF PARENTS

Parents are expected to bring and pick up their children **PROMPTLY** at the appointed time. Should a parent know in advance that he/she cannot be on time, another person should be designated in writing to pick up the child. In an emergency, a phone call will suffice. **A late fee of \$1 per minute will be charged for late pick-ups.**

Please contact the school office (215-233-2923) or church office (215-233-3970 ext. 145) if you are going to be late. If a parent or escort should be an hour or more late in picking up a child, without having previously contacted the school or church office, the police will be notified.

CLOTHING

Because accidents happen, we ask that you provide an extra set of clothes to be kept in the child's cubby. Please include outer clothes, underwear and socks, which are labeled with the child's name and placed in a plastic bag. We also ask that the clothing be kept seasonal.

FOOD

Children with any food allergy are required to provide their own snack each day.

The school provides snacks of water and crackers. Parents are encouraged to bring special snacks on their child's special day. Some healthy snack suggestions are grapes or other seasonal fruit, cheese and crackers, mini-bagels with cream cheese, assorted vegetables with dip, graham crackers, pretzels (hard and soft), yogurt, jello and pudding. Special snacks, such as cupcakes, brownies and ice cream are allowed for birthdays or other special celebrations, please advise your child's teacher when bringing this type of snack. No candy is allowed, either as a snack or with lunch. *Please be mindful of known food allergies when providing a snack for the entire class.*

- We incorporated in the fall of 2009 a policy of providing water instead of juice for the children at St Thomas Nursery School. This is based on trying to promote healthier choices for the children. As parents, you may still provide juice on your child's special day. Thank you for helping us encourage healthy choices for the children.

SPECIAL ITEMS

Children are encouraged to bring personal articles to share with the class with the approval of the teacher. Books, records, tapes or nature's treasures are usually a safe choice. **Only on your child's special day should an item from home be brought into school. We do not allow children to bring toy guns or toy weapons to school.** While we exercise care with children's possessions, accidents can happen. We ask that you do not send items of sentimental or monetary value.

PLEASE LEAVE ALL TOYS IN YOUR CAR OR AT HOME!! THERE ARE SUFFICIENT TOYS AT SCHOOL FOR YOUR CHILDREN.

PARENT-TEACHER COMMUNICATION

The teachers are eager to keep parents informed concerning their child's development and growth. Some examples of teacher communication include:

- ◆ Monthly calendars
- ◆ Newsletters
- ◆ Individual updates, notes and remarks for each child
- ◆ Conferences upon request
- ◆ Notices posted outside the classroom on the bulletin boards

The following are some suggestions of ways that parents can help facilitate communication as well:

- ◆ **Please read carefully** the notes and newsletters that come home periodically.
- ◆ If you have a concern about your child's development, please ask for a conference **immediately**. Teachers are happy to discuss your child's growth and progress.
- ◆ Please ask questions and voice concerns promptly. Teachers would prefer that you schedule an appointment when there is time and privacy to talk as needed.
- ◆ **Please do not talk about your child in front of him/her**. Children are sensitive about being discussed as if they are not there.

SPECIAL PARENT INFORMATION

Toys from home are not allowed at school. Please encourage your child/children to leave toys at home. Bringing toys from home can cause many problems in the classroom. Rest assured, there are plenty of toys in each classroom for the children.

Some children feel more comfortable if they bring a special blanket or stuffed animal to school with them. If your child chooses to do this, the special item **MUST** be left in their cubby.

Please do not remove your child from the playground by lifting them over the fence while school is in session. The teachers will gladly meet you inside for dismissal.

All birthday invitations must be sent by mail. Placing the invitations in the cubbies is not allowed.

School Calendar

2010-2011

Tuition is due your child's first school day of each month, beginning in October, if you made the July 1 payment.

- September* **9 – First Day of School**
9 - Extended Hours Program begins for 3's, 4's and 5's
- October* 4 - Lunch Bunch begins for the 2's
5- Extended Day begins in the 5's
11 - Columbus Day - SCHOOL CLOSED
26, 27- Picture Days for 3,s, 4's and 5's
28 ,29 - Halloween Parades
- November* **10 - Teacher Inservice - SCHOOL CLOSED**
23 & 24 - Thanksgiving Feast
25, 26, 29 - Thanksgiving Vacation - SCHOOL CLOSED
- December* **6-10 - Parent/Child Christmas Workshops**
17 - Christmas Pageant - 11am.
20 - January 2 - Christmas Vacation - SCHOOL CLOSED
- January* **3 - School Reopens**
3 - 14 - Registration for current families
17 - MLK Day - SCHOOL CLOSED
18 - Open registration
- February* **18 - 21 - Presidents' Weekend - SCHOOL CLOSED**
- March* **23 - Teacher Inservice - SCHOOL CLOSED**
18- Family Fun Night
- April* **18-25 - Spring Break - SCHOOL CLOSED**
26, 27 Pictures for our 2's and graduates
14 - Dads' Night - 6:30 pm
- May* 2 - 6 - May Day Tea Parties
11 - Teacher Appreciation Luncheon - No Lunch Bunch
19- Graduation
27 - Family Picnic at the Barn- 10 to 12 noon
30 - **Memorial Day - SCHOOL CLOSED**
31 - St. Thomas' Camp on the Hill begins

School Events At St. Thomas' Nursery School

***School pictures** - October 6 & 7

Pictures are taken of each child in the 3, 4 and 5 year old classes...individual as well as class group. Pictures of Two Year Olds will be taken in the spring...date to be announced for the Two Year Old pictures.

Halloween Parades - October 29 & 30 9:15 am

Students come to school in their costumes (no masks, please) and at approximately 9:15 a.m. the children will parade across the stage in the auditorium upstairs by class beginning with the Two Year Olds and say a special poem or two. Parents are invited to watch the children and help change them out of their costumes after the parade.

***Book Fair** - To be scheduled

Parents, grandparents, friends, etc. are able to purchase books from a large selection. Gift books may be purchased for individual classrooms. All proceeds benefit the Nursery School program.

Thanksgiving Feasts- November 23 & 24

The children gather together in the auditorium dressed as pilgrims or Native Americans and share seasonal songs and/or poems. They enjoy a feast of chicken nuggets, muffins and fruit. **This event is only for the children.**

***Parent/Child Christmas Craft Workshops** - December 7-11

Parents join their children at 9 am to create special Christmas crafts and enjoy Christmas treats baked by the children in cooking class. Please watch your child's classroom bulletin board and calendar for the day you are to attend. Not recommended for siblings....babysitting may be provided.

***Christmas Pageant** - December 18 at 11 am

A very special event! All families and extended families join us in the auditorium to watch the 3's, 4's and 5's perform a retelling of the Christmas story. Bring your video cameras!

***Family Fun Night** - March 19 (6 to 8pm)

An event for the entire family! Crafts and activities related to the night's theme keep everyone busy. A delicious dinner is served.

Dad's Night – April 22

A chance for the Dad's to have some One-on-one time with their children. The evening includes crafts, a benefit art show of the children's work and refreshments. Not recommended for siblings not attending the school.

May Day Tea Parties – May 3-7 at 11 am

A lovely time to share tea sandwiches and delicious treats prepared by the children. Each child's special companion is invited to be pampered by their little host/hostess. Please watch your child's classroom bulletin board and calendar for the day you are to attend. Not recommended for siblings....babysitting may be provided.

End of Year Picnic – May 28 – 10 to 12 noon

Bring your entire family and meet up at the barn for a morning of fun and games. Students, parents and teachers and extended family members gather for a cookout to celebrate the end of the school year.

Camp on the Hill – begins June 1

Join us for a fun time at St. Thomas' Nursery School summer camp. From 9 to 1 each day for several weeks during the summer there are many fun activities planned around weekly themes. Sign up for days that suit your child's needs.

Media Permission:

Throughout the year staff may be taking pictures of the children attending school events of the Nursery School or during classroom activities. If you are not willing to allow your daughter/son's photo to be used for promotion of the nursery school please let the Director know at the beginning of the school year.

***These events will need volunteers to help. Sign-up sheets will be posted or distributed detailing areas in which help is needed. Parent volunteers make these events successful. Please sign up when you can. Your help is greatly appreciated.**



St. Thomas' Church

W H I T E M A R S H

Come with us on a journey with Christ

Bethlehem Pike and Camp Hill Road

Fort Washington, PA 19034

stthomaswhitemarsh.org