

Preschool/Pre-K

St. Thomas Academy

FAMILY
HANDBOOK



2024-5

WELCOME

We are looking forward to working with you and your child this year. Our days and weeks will be filled with many wonderful experiences and opportunities to learn and grow. We are so excited you will be part of our school family.

We know that parent-teacher partnership is essential for maximum school success. Throughout the year we will communicate with you through a variety of ways. We have created this handbook specifically for Preschool and Pre-K as we have some things that are unique to us at STA.

We encourage you to reach out if you have any questions or concerns. You can call the school office at (541) 548-3785 during school hours, or message the director or classroom teacher through our communication app-Brightwheel anytime.

SCHOOL CONTACT INFORMATION

Principal: Mrs. Patty Schulte
School Secretary: Lisa Velasquez
Director: Andrea Gibson
Preschool Teacher: Heather Creswell
Pre-K Teacher: Melissa Aeschliman

Phone: (541) 548-3785 (voicemail after hours)
BASP/After hours Phone: (541) 604-2991
School E-mail: admin@redmondacademy.com
School Website: www.redmondacademy.com

Staff email addresses use the following format:
firstname.lastname@redmondacademy.com

STA Preschool, Pre-K, Before & After School and Summer program operate as a certified childcare center through the Oregon Department of Early Learning and Care. Our License number is CC503042. All required paperwork for the licensed operation of this program is posted outside the main office of the school building.

COMMUNICATION

Our primary method of communication is through the Brightwheel app. Parents and teachers may message through the app privately, teachers and administrators can also message the school or class through the app.

Each child is given one two-pocket folder for the year that we keep in their backpack for sending papers back and forth from school to home. Please keep this folder in your child's backpack so it is available for parent/school communication.

STA will hold a back to school night and two open-house events for Preschool and Pre-K throughout the year to invite families into the classroom to play together and chat with teachers.

Should you have any questions or concerns and would like to schedule a conference or check-in anytime throughout the year, please message your teacher to set up a time to meet.

Communication is vital to creating the best experience and learning environment for your child and the classroom, so please reach out with any/all questions or concerns throughout the year.

WHAT TO BRING TO SCHOOL

- ✓ Small blankie for rest time
- ✓ Backpack large enough to hold a folder (not toddler sized)
- ✓ Extra Change of Clothes (in uniform please) including socks and underwear (can stay in the backpack or in their cubby at school). PLUS one more change of clothing that can be out of uniform in case two outfits are soiled in a day.
- ✓ Water Bottle (fill with water only)
- ✓ Lunchbox with lunch and a labeled morning and afternoon snack
- ✓ Jacket, hat and gloves when needed during cold weather months or sun hat for warmer weather.

Please do not bring toys, valuables, candy, pacifiers, diapers or pull ups to school.

MISSION + PHILOSOPHY

At St. Thomas Academy, our mission school-wide is to provide a safe community for students, focused on academic excellence infused with Catholic beliefs. Our goal is to create an environment where Catholic beliefs and academic excellence come together for the best learning experience. We maintain a learning atmosphere where students feel safe, welcome and motivated to learn.

In Preschool & Pre-K we believe that a child's play is their work, and we create an experience that provides ample opportunity for authentic play throughout the day. We strive to build confidence, grow in communication skills, and inspire curious learners in our early learning programs.

In Preschool and Pre-kindergarten (Pre-K), we begin with providing opportunities tailored to individual social-emotional growth. The classroom environment is created in a purposeful way to encourage interaction amongst students and to play to each child's strengths and areas for continued development.

Academics (Literacy and Mathematics) are introduced in a developmentally appropriate curriculum-based sequence beginning in Kindergarten. We have adopted the Core Knowledge Curriculum school-wide.

SCHOOL READINESS

POTTY-TRAINING

Preschool and Pre-K students are expected to be fully potty trained before entry to our program. For school, this means your child can:

- Recognize when they have to go to the bathroom and communicate with the teacher accordingly
- Get to the bathroom independently and manage their own clothing
- Wipe independently

We understand that there may be toileting accidents from time to time with children this age. This is why it is very important to have a complete change of clothes in your child's backpack or cubby. In the event of a toileting accident, a Preschool and/or Pre-K staff member will wear gloves and may assist your child in taking off soiled clothing in the classroom bathroom and give your child a change of clothes to put on independently. If the accident requires wiping, staff

may wear gloves, use wet wipes and assist in the clean up. Parents may be called to pick up a child if the situation requires—including but not limited to: the amount of clean up required, if multiple accidents have happened in one day or consistently in a week.

Soiled clothing will be stored in a plastic bag near the classroom entry door and sent home with your child.

ADJUSTING TO THE SCHOOL SETTING

Our goal at STA is to provide a positive learning experience for each child that encourages independence, confidence and curiosity that inspires a lifetime love of learning and school. Our teachers are highly trained and committed to creating a safe and developmentally appropriate classroom environment that meets the needs of all students. While this is our goal, our program may not meet the needs of every student and every family. This is why communication is so vital to the success of each child. If a child is not adjusting positively to our environment, our classroom teacher and/or director will reach out to schedule a conference. As a team we will determine together if there are goals to be met for school readiness and/or if adjustments in enrollment need to be made. This policy will be designed with fairness and equity in mind in the best interests of the student, family, class and school.

BEHAVIOR, GUIDANCE + DISCIPLINE

All St. Thomas Academy students are expected to be responsible, safe and respectful. In Preschool and Pre-K we ask for students to be respectful of themselves, each other and our supplies and materials.

When intervention is required, we utilize positive verbal conflict resolution, stemming from a mutually respectful standpoint with all of our students and teachers. We aim to create a safe, peaceful classroom environment where our students can play and have fun but also control their own behavior and take responsibility for their choices, big and small. We encourage cooperative play, and work to scaffold language to encourage creativity, turn-taking and encourage independent thinking. When situations arise that do require intervention, we use positive guidance techniques and support our students in making positive (or “green”) choices and having empathy for their peers.

We do not under any circumstances, allow the use of physical or negative verbal punishment.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

STA does not tolerate violent actions, disrespect or inappropriate language from students, parents or staff. If a child is demonstrating aggressive or inappropriate behavior towards themselves or others, STA will call the parent and the child will be required to be picked up immediately. In the case that our staff is devoting an extreme amount of time to one child due to inappropriate or hurtful behavior, the following steps will be taken:

- Parents will be called for a conference right away.
- A plan will be formed with parents to support the student to resolve the behavior.
- Continuing behavior issues may result in STA requiring the family to temporarily remove the child from care, while the parents and staff discuss a further plan to resolve the issue.
- Unresolved behavior challenges may require outside professional evaluation/support.
- If no resolution is able to be reached, STA may request the child's withdrawal from the program.
- Connections to professional early childhood resources will be provided for families as needed.

SCHOOL DAY

6:45 am	Before School Program Opens*
8:30 am	Students may enter classrooms
8:45 am	School begins
3:15 pm	School ends
3:15 pm	After school program opens*
5:30 pm	After school program closes (NO LATE PICK UP)

*must be enrolled in this program to utilize this service

Students are not permitted in the building until 8:30 am unless they are enrolled in the before school program.

TRANSPORTATION, DROP-OFF + PICK UP PROCEDURES

STA families must provide transportation to and from school. STA does not offer bus transportation.

DROP OFF

Drop off occurs at the entrance gates of the Preschool and Pre-K buildings. Please park in a designated spot and walk together to the front doors. Parents are permitted in the building; if you choose to come inside together, please set clear expectations for your student so they know your routine (for example, come inside, hang up the student's backpack and hug good-bye).

PICK UP

Pick up occurs at 3:15 daily at the entrance gates of the Preschool and Pre-K buildings. Please park in a designated spot and walk to pick your child up in line. Your child will raise his/her hand to be dismissed by their teacher. Only students enrolled in our afterschool programs may stay at STA after 3:15pm.

Any changes to the way your child normally goes home must be updated in Brightwheel under the contact information section and marked as an adult that may pick up your child. Please note that our staff may request ID from any adult picking up your child that they don't recognize to match with our Brightwheel approved pick up records. Please prepare your family/friends to have an ID available the first time they would pick up your child.

EARLY PICK-UP

Families may arrange to pick students up early from time to time for travel or appointments. Please message your classroom teacher to alert them ahead of time so that your child can be ready. Allow yourself plenty of time, as you will need to check your child out from the main office and staff will have to bring your child from the classroom to the office for pick up. If your child will return after an appointment, drop off at the main school office and they will be escorted back to class. You must sign your child in and out on the office clipboard.

All school doors are locked during school hours; entrance to the main office is granted by using the video doorbell at the main entrance.

EXTENDED DAY PROGRAMS/SUMMER

BASP

STA offers before and after school care (BASP) as well as full-day care over the summer. This is an on-site fee-based program that is open to all STA students from Preschool through age 12.

To enroll in the BASP program, you may register via Brightwheel during

announced enrollment timeframes with an invitation link provided by the director, or request the link from the director. Enrollment is granted on a first-come, first-served basis based upon required ratios for staffing and space allocations.

Students enrolled in BASP may not be dropped off earlier than 6:45am and must be picked up no later than 5:30pm. Late fees will be assessed and are charged at \$5.00 for the first 10 minutes and \$5.00 per minute, per child. Three or more late pick ups are grounds for dismissal from the program.

Fees for the BASP program are invoiced monthly based upon days attended. Students may not attend the program if a family has outstanding fees.

SUMMER

STA offers a fee-based summer program open only to our students. Managed and staffed by our school teachers and administrators, it is designed to create a fun, relaxed summer experience for our students with working families. Weekly themes, games and activities are planned for this program and no uniforms are required. This program requires pre-registration and is open to STA students ages 3-12.

No scholarships are given for the BASP or Summer Program.

ATTENDANCE

DAILY ATTENDANCE

Regular, on-time attendance at school is vital to your child's success. Most of our learning activities take place in a large group setting and involve interaction with classmates. Many of our learning experiences take place in the first half of the day, so it is important to be at school on time.

We understand that there may be instances when it is not possible to be here on time, however, please make every effort to have your child at school on time (by 8:45) so we can begin our day together.

If you are planning to keep your child home, please call the school office at 541-548-3785 or email the office at admin@redmondacademy.com, or message using Brightwheel so that we know your child is home that day!

MISSED DAYS

Short term absence from STA due to minor illness, travel or vacation are not

credited or reimbursed. If you are traveling, please enjoy your family time together, no need for homework from us! Read together, explore your surroundings and relax—family time and creating special memories are important too!

SCHEDULED SCHOOL CLOSURES

STA operates Preschool/Pre-K and K-8 classes on the same school year schedule. We are closed for major observed holidays as well as Thanksgiving, Christmas and Spring breaks. We also have one Friday each month dedicated to staff professional development where school is not in session. A school year schedule is provided upon enrollment.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

STA follows the Redmond School District for all weather related delays and closures. Decisions for delays or school closures are communicated by 6:00am on the RSD website or through local news stations. In the event that students are already at school and weather conditions cause for closure, STA will reach out to our families via Brightwheel or email, or if necessary by phone. STA reserves the right to decide whether or not additional school days will be added to the end of the school calendar in the case of excessive closure days in the winter.

NUTRITION AT SCHOOL

There is no food service available at STA. Families must pack a lunch and two snacks from home for each child.

Preschool/Pre-K students have specific USDA snack and lunch requirements per the Oregon Department of Early Learning and Care. Upon enrollment you will receive these guidelines. Should you happen to omit a required item in your child's lunch you will receive a slip of paper indicating what was missing and STA will supplement this item from our pantry. *STA retains the right to charge families market value for supplemented items.*

LUNCH

All students are encouraged to eat independently, please send utensils that your child can use on their own. We have a microwave for warming—but not cooking food. Items like chicken nuggets or leftovers are great, but Cup of Noodles and mac and cheese take too long to cook for our lunch time.

Preschool and Pre-K students are offered 2% plain milk with lunch daily. There is not an extra charge for this item.

SNACK

We have snacks two times per day; once in the morning about an hour after school starts and again in the afternoon after rest time. Families are asked to pack two small, nutritious snacks in a lunch box/bag each day. Please label each snack with AM or PM and put them in separate containers/bags.

FOOD ALLERGIES

All food allergies must be documented on an Allergy Care Plan form and returned to the school office. Food sensitivities should also be discussed and documented with the Director and Classroom teacher so we can keep all students safe.

REST TIME AT SCHOOL

In compliance with state licensing requirements, we offer a rest time for one hour after lunch and recess for our Preschool and Pre-K students. Each student is supplied with a high-quality cot for rest time.

We ask families to supply a small blanket from home—we send this home on the last day of each week to be laundered and returned to school. Families may also bring a small stuffed animal or travel sized pillow for rest time.

Students are given the option to sleep or sit/lay quietly on their cot during the hour. After the first 20 minutes, students that are not sleeping may be offered a book or quiet activity at their cot.

ILLNESS

If a child is complaining of general illness, he or she may be sent to the office for a temperature check; children with a temperature of 100.1 degrees or above will be sent home for the day. If your child has been ill, please make sure that your child is fever-free (without medication) and/or has not vomited or had diarrhea for 24 hours before returning to school.

In compliance with the Oregon Department Early Learning and Care, STA will report communicable illnesses that have been present in our classroom (excluding the common cold/minor stomach ailments) to our Preschool, Pre-K and BASP parents with a note posted on our door and a short message over

Brightwheel. The message will include the diagnosed illness and last known classroom exposure to the illness. This is always reported anonymously to parents—a child/family name will never be disclosed.

Should your child have a diagnosis such as: flu, pink eye, or strep throat, please notify your child's teacher so that other families can be on the lookout for symptoms and we can work together to eliminate/mitigate exposure.

Teachers are not allowed to give medication to students. If your child requires medication, please take it directly to the school office and discuss it with the school secretary or director. There is a mandatory form that must be completed for any medicine to be dispensed at school.

Please do not send Tylenol to school to treat your child's fever.

If your child has serious allergies that may require medication (i.e. Benadryl or Epi-pen) please complete a medical form and arrange with the school office to store your child's medication safely in the office. It is very important to communicate ALL allergies and medical conditions with your child's teacher so that we can keep your child safe during the day.

SUNSCREEN, LOTION AND CHAPSTICK

Sunscreen, lotion and chapstick are considered a non-prescription medication and may be used only when written parental permission is obtained. A form will be sent home with your child upon enrollment to receive permission for these items and further explain our school policy. Please apply the first coat of sunscreen for your child at home when weather requires.

UNIFORMS

As a part of St. Thomas Academy, all students from Preschool through middle school are **REQUIRED** to wear uniforms daily. There are some special "free dress" days throughout the year communicated ahead of time by your classroom teacher. On those days, please remember to send your child in clothing that they can manage independently and does not interfere with toileting. Enrolling in our school acknowledges that your family understands and will support your child in our uniform policies.

BOYS REQUIRED Uniform (must wear on **Wednesdays**, Special Events, STA Weekend Mass)

Shirt: Solid white, collared or polo shirt

Pants: Khaki Plain Front or Pleat Front Pant, Not Cargo Style (NO NAVY)

Sweater or Vest: Classic Navy V neck Drifter Vest or V neck Drifter Sweater - Logo required

Boys Optional Items (may be worn all other days - as well as required uniform)

Pants: Classic Navy or Khaki plain front or pleat front pant

Shirt: White or Navy Polo Shirts, Long or Short Sleeve

Shorts: Khaki or Classic Navy Plain Front or Pleat Shorts, No Cargo Style

GIRLS REQUIRED Uniform (must wear on **Wednesdays**, Special Events, STA Weekend Mass) *SHORTS REQUIRED UNDER ALL JUMPERS AND SKIRTS*

Jumper: Lands' End White Plaid Jumper

*Shorts required under Jumpers/Skirts

Sweater or Vest: Classic Navy Cardigan, V neck Drifter Vest, or V neck Drifter Cardigan - Logo required

Shirt: Solid White, button up collared blouse/polo

Socks/Tights/Leggings: White, Grey or Navy. No accents or embellishments

Girls Optional Items (may be worn all other days - as well as required uniform)

Shirt: White or Navy Polo Shirts, Long or Short Sleeve

Pants: Khaki or Classic Navy Plain Front or Small Pleat Pants, No Cargo

Skirt/Skorts/ Bermuda Shorts: Khaki or Classic Navy. Not Cargo Style

COATS/SHOES/ACCESSORIES/JEWELRY/HAIR ACCESSORIES

Outerwear/Coats (Boys & Girls): Navy, royal, gray or white sweaters, sweatshirts, no embellishments or designs. Winter coats are allowed in any style/color, but may not be worn in the classroom.

Shoes (Boys & Girls): Non-Marking soles, as plain as possible, preferred colors: Black, Gray, Navy, Brown. Athletic/sneaker, loafer or mary-jane styles are allowed. Boots are allowed in the winter. No open toed shoes or flip flops of any kind.

Jewelry

As much as possible, please refrain from sending students to school with jewelry as the school is not responsible for lost or missing items.

Hair accessories

Please choose hair accessories in Navy, White, Plaid, Green, or Silver ~ School colors. The school is not responsible for missing/lost hair accessories.

School Logos

May be applied to items through Lands' End. Lands' End Preferred School # 9001-2028-8 www.landsend.com/school Phone: 800-469-2222

OR—Our Personal Touch located in Redmond. www.digitalthreadart.com
Phone: 541-548-2615

IMPORTANT: Please label articles of clothing such as hats, sweaters, jackets, gym shoes, gloves and mittens. Lunch boxes brought from home should also be labeled.

COUSIN'S CLOSET

There are shelves and hangers located in the hallway adjacent to the school office stocked with gently used uniform clothing. Families may choose to bring outgrown clothing in good condition to donate to the cousin's closet. Any family may choose to take as much clothing as they need at any time from our stock on hand at no charge.

EXTRA CLOTHING/DRESSING FOR OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Please send an extra change of clothes to school enclosed in a Ziploc bag in your child's backpack. Include the following items: underwear, socks, shirt, pants or shorts (IN UNIFORM)** PLUS one complete change of clothing in plain colors in case of more than one accident/soiled outfit in a day. The extra clothing will be stored in the classroom. Please remember to replace soiled clothing as it goes home. **IF** your child does not have an extra set of clothing to replace soiled clothing at school, they may have to be sent home for the day. We cannot allow any soiled clothing, whether from a potty accident or mucus etc. in the classroom per COVID-19 requirements.

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

At STA we know outside play is vital to the positive development of our students. As long as it is safe weather (not too hot/cold or smoky) to go outside, we will go out daily. Send your child prepared for the weather of that day, including layers of clothing and sun protection if needed.

BIRTHDAYS + CELEBRATIONS

TREATS

If you pre-arrange with the classroom teacher, you may bring cupcakes or cookies to school for your child's birthday. The cookies or cupcakes will be distributed during the last half hour of the school day. These items must be pre-packaged, purchased items and CANNOT be home-baked.

We do not allow birthday cakes or parties in the classroom due to lack of time and space limitations. Please check with your student's teacher a week in advance to plan ahead for the birthday treats and to receive an accurate student count and any allergy needs.

INVITATIONS TO PARTIES

If you choose to distribute birthday party invitations at school, you must include every student in the class.

CELEBRATIONS

Teachers will notify families ahead of time when we have classroom celebrations. If you would like your child to opt out of the celebration or refrain from any food provided, message the teacher directly after receiving the notification. Students that opt out of having the treat/food at the celebration, but choose to stay in the classroom should pack extra food from home that day. If a family is opting out of the celebration activities completely, they can be supervised in the office, if staffing allows, or families can choose to arrange an early pick up for that day.

VOLUNTEERING/COMMITMENT TO SCHOOL

VOLUNTEERING

Every STA family from PS-8th grade is required to volunteer 20 hours per school year. Families receiving scholarship assistance are required to volunteer for 40 hours per school year. Upon enrollment, every family will be required to sign an acknowledgement of this commitment. There is an opportunity to “buy-out” this requirement at that time, choosing this option will generate an invoice payable upon receipt.

There are many wonderful opportunities to get involved and help make STA a vibrant community. Teachers and the school office will often email/message out opportunities to help with events, tidying up the school, construction or assembly projects or for classroom help. We also have an active Advisory council with committees dedicated to strategic growth and visioning projects and a Parent-teacher association called P@STA (Parents @ STA). Both groups meet once a month and have great projects stemming from our discussions and planning.

SCRIP

Every STA family is required to purchase \$1500 in scrip per school year. Our scrip program is an important part of our fundraising program at the school. Families purchase gift cards at face value and a percentage of each purchase is donated to the school. You can purchase from our stock on hand in the school office, order ahead in the office monthly or purchase online. Family and friends may also purchase toward your commitment total on your behalf if they record it under your name.

FUNDRAISERS

Our school strives to offer families the most accessible tuition rates we can provide. In order to keep tuition affordable, we plan fundraising events and benefit sales throughout the year. A fundraising calendar is provided at the beginning of each school year so that our families can plan ahead and support in any way possible. These are great ways to get volunteer hours in for the year!

EMERGENCIES

In the event of an emergency where STA has the ability to communicate with parents, there will be an electronic communication issued through Brightwheel, via email and/or a phone call to all families. This communication will be situation-dependent and safety will be the first priority.

Planned evacuation sites are as follows and are situationally-dependent:

- Grass area near electronic reader board sign
- South parking lot
- Playground area
- Grass area near school garden
- Church

Should there be a shelter in place situation, the STA gymnasium and classrooms are planned locations.

STA holds monthly fire drills, bi-monthly earthquake drills and two annual intruder drills as a school. Preschool and Pre-K also practice a number of other drills including: missing child, sick or ill teacher and broken glass/safety hazard management.

HELPING YOUR CHILD/KINDERGARTEN READINESS

Preschool and Pre-K students are learning many things socially and academically during these first school experiences. You can support your child by working on the following skills at home and sharing a positive message about school with them each day:

- Turn-taking
- Cleaning up
- Recognizing colors/shapes
- Recognizing/ identifying numbers and letters
- Independent practical life skills like: dressing, toileting, using utensils at meal-time and putting on shoes and brushing hair.
- Cutting with scissors safely

- Fine motor skills including: buttoning, snapping, zipping, and tying
- Enjoying books together, turning pages in order, pointing to words, observing pictures in stories.

We believe that our Preschool and Pre-K students at STA will have ample opportunities to prepare for kindergarten through dedicated play at school. Our priority is to grow confidence, independence and social language skills in our youngest learners. This foundation will prepare them for longer days, increased stamina and academic success as they start kindergarten.

STA SCHOOL-WIDE PARENT HANDBOOK

Please also see the STA PS-8 grade parent handbook available at www.redmondacademy.com . There you will find additional information regarding the operation of the school, a notice from the Bishop and confirmation of the volunteer/scrip and commitment to our uniform policy. All families will be asked to sign an acknowledgement form after reading through both handbooks.

THANK YOU!

We thank you for choosing St. Thomas Academy for your child's education. We look forward to our partnership as your child begins his or her educational journey! If you have additional questions about your child's classroom, please contact your child's teacher via Brightwheel or email. If you have school-wide or program questions, please contact the school office.