

hecla Catholic School



Pre-school Program Handbook 2024-2025



“We, the community of St. Thecla Catholic School, dedicate ourselves to serving God through our growth in faith, education, and love for one another as members of God’s Family.”

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St. Thecla Preschool Handbook

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Educational Environment	4
School Year/Daily Schedule	7
Participation... ..	13
School Policies.....	14
Community Wellness	20

Welcome to St. Thecla Catholic School!

Welcome to the St. Thecla Preschool Program! Our primary purpose is to be an extension of the educational ministry of the Church, which continues the teachings of Jesus. Each child, created by God, is a unique individual with his/her own pattern of growth and development. We invite each child to play, learn, and grow through Jesus Christ. Throughout your time at St. Thecla Catholic School, we will encourage and support each child's spiritual, cognitive, social-emotional, and physical growth.

We welcome you and your child to the program and trust that, with your participation, we can create a successful experience for your child's spiritual and educational growth through St. Thecla Catholic School.

Educational Environment

Professional Faculty

The faculty members at St. Thecla Catholic School are qualified, professional teachers. St. Thecla is blessed to have experienced educators with appropriate credentials and certifications in Early Childhood Education. Our teachers supplement their skills yearly by attending workshops, in-service hours, and conferences. Our program demonstrates appropriate positive guidance with reasonable guidelines for the students. Encouragement, good role modeling, redirection, logical consequences, and problem-solving techniques guide and teach the students the appropriate words and skills needed to handle situations positively.

Spiritual Component

Our goal is to instill in young children the values of Catholic principles within an academic setting. Religious education is part of our daily lessons and routines. Our school observes Catholic traditions of faith and service through community prayer, weekly mass, and daily routines. Students enrolled in the preschool programs begin attending weekly mass in September. Likewise, Catholic holidays are celebrated throughout the school year. All religious activities are part of the total academic curriculum. The loving care received by each child models a Catholic way of living and learning with others.

Curriculum:

The Early Childhood Program is designed to provide developmentally appropriate educational experiences in a Catholic environment, encouraging each child to explore, make decisions, be creative, discover, and solve problems. Our educators strive to provide children with a well-rounded learning environment. Every child's potential is limitless when nurtured in a loving, Catholic environment of learning, prayer, and play. Your child's education is our priority. Weekly communication, including updates and important classroom. Information will be uploaded onto our Seesaw online learning platforms and emailed.

Teachers observe and provide students with opportunities to develop in the following:

Social-Emotional Development:

Speech is understood by adults; speaks in full sentences, willingly participates in activities, works independently on a task, follows a two-part direction or request, takes care of personal belongings, makes transitions easily, shares easily, makes friends easily, maintains friendships with peers, takes turns with other children, plays well with other children, enjoys playing group games, follows rules of a game, works cooperatively with other children, completes assigned tasks, shows pride in completed tasks, and takes appropriate care of other's items and property.

Motor Development:

Holds a pencil or crayon correctly, can dress/undress self, attempts to tie shoes, properly handles eating utensils, holds scissors correctly, cuts simple shapes, buttons and unbuttons, zips separated fasteners, throws a ball, catches a ball, skips with agility, runs well, and walks on a balance beam.

Creative Development:

Development of artistic techniques and expression through visual arts, music, dance, and movement. The four-year-old program has Smartboards in their classrooms for display purposes.

Language Arts:

Letter recognition, letter sounds, letter/name writing, name recognition, reciting the alphabet, enjoys listening to and responding to stories, songs, and poems, follows conversational rules such as staying on topic and taking turns, asks questions and/or makes comments in class discussions, uses pronouns correctly when speaking, uses comparative language in speech, participates in sound play, rhyming, games, songs, and poems, dictates a sentence for a picture, notices the initial letter in words, makes letter-sound matches, and names opposites.

Math:

Number recognition to 10, oral counting to 20 and above, shape identification, showing sets of real objects to 12, and understanding the basic concept of time.

Science:

Inquires and predicts, observes, and experiments; evaluates and infers; identifies basic needs; identifies properties of matter; identifies weather and seasons; explores ecosystems; and explores technology.

Religion:

Grace before snacks and meals, daily prayers, daily religious reading from the Bible, and activities based around religious holidays.

Assessments:

An Early Childhood Assessment Report will be conducted multiple times a year. Students will be assessed in all areas of development. Conferences will be held in November and March with the classroom teacher.

School Year

Daily Schedule

The daily schedule is extremely important because young children feel more secure when a daily routine has been established. The daily schedule is posted in the classroom with pictures for the students to see. Small changes may be made within the normal schedule to accommodate the needs and interests of the students and special events.

Half-Day Schedule | 8:15 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Arrival at 8:15 a.m.

Table Toys & Circle Time Teacher-Led Learning Centers Story/Transition
Bathroom Break/Snack Free Choice
Closing Circle Time Preparing for Dismissal* Dismissal at 12:00 p.m.*

Full-Day Schedule | 8:15 a.m. – 3:15 p.m.

Active Play Outside Lunch/Bathroom Break Nap/Rest
Learning Centers Small Group Activity
Music and Movement/Finger Play
Preparing for Dismissal at 3:15 p.m.

The Preschool Program follows the St. Thecla School calendar for holy days and holidays. **Only on half days for the entire school**, all preschoolers will be dismissed at 12:00 p.m. from their assigned arrival doors. However, the preschool half-day program dismisses at 12:00 p.m. Parents will be notified about any events pertaining to the Preschool Program and any changes in daily scheduling.

Arrival | Dismissal

Signs clearly marking the teachers' line-up area will be posted on each of the Gathering space doors. Parents/guardians are asked to wait outside the gathering space doors with their four-year-old preschoolers while waiting for the teachers to arrive. At 8:15 a.m., the classroom teachers will open the doors of the Gathering Space and bring the students into the school to begin their school day. *We ask that if a parent needs to enter the school for ANY reason, once their student has been released to their teacher, they go to the school office. For the safety of our students, we will not allow parents into the building through the Gathering Space. Three-year-old preschoolers will enter through the front door of the school. The classroom teachers will open the front door and bring the students into the school to begin their school day.

The students who attend the half-day program are dismissed from the Gathering Space doors at 12:00 pm. Students who are not picked up by 12:10 p.m. will be sent to the school office, and you will be billed for the Extended School Program (ESP) accordingly. The students who attend the full-day program are dismissed at 3:15 p.m. from their arrival doors. Students who are not picked up by 3:20 p.m. will be sent to the Extended School Program (ESP), and you will be billed accordingly.

If another family member will pick up your child, please notify the teacher promptly with the person's name and relationship. Students will only be released to those parents/guardians who are listed on the child's information record. Students are not allowed to be released to siblings/family members under the age of 18. Proper identification will be needed and checked by your child's teacher when applicable. If a substitute teacher is dismissing the children, please bring your ID for your child to be released.

Extended School Program | ESP

The Extended School Program (ESP) is available for parents who need before- and after-school childcare for preschool to eighth-grade students. Parents may use the St. Thecla Extended School Program (ESP) for an additional fee. Parents must register any child before they may use this service. The program is available only on school days and is closed when the school is closed due to weather, holidays, etc. Afternoon ESP is not offered for students enrolled in the half-day program. Parents must plan with the ESP director to participate. Further information regarding admission, schedule, etc., is available in the ESP Parent-Student Handbook. If you have any other questions regarding enrollment for ESP, please contact:

Ms. Erin Callis callise@stthecla.com

Snack, Lunch & Supplies

Please be sure to provide your child with a well-balanced breakfast before the school day. Outside food will not be permitted upon entering the classroom.

Due to allergies, all preschool classrooms are **Allergy Aware**. Peanut butter, Nutella, or other nut products are prohibited from being sent in your child's snack and lunch. Your cooperation is appreciated. Please notify your child's teacher of any and all allergies to ensure that all personnel and staff can make proper accommodations. Parents must provide the school with appropriate paperwork documenting the child's allergies.

A healthy snack must be sent in and labeled daily with your student's name and the date. Snack time is typically scheduled between 10:00-10:30 a.m. Acceptable snack options are fresh cut or peeled fruits/vegetables, a small bag of crackers (Goldfish, Cheez-Its, Graham, Ritz, Club, etc.), dry cereal such as regular Cheerios, applesauce, cheese sticks, yogurt, granola/cereal/breakfast bar, or muffins. No sugary (candy) or salty (chips) snacks, please.

Parents will need to provide a healthy lunch for full-day students. Using a microwave to warm up food is prohibited per our license. Please send food that needs to stay warm in thermoses and a cooling pack with food that needs to stay cold.

Supply fees are due before the start of the school year. This Fee will be billed through incidental billing on your FACTS account in August.

All supplies purchased for the students will be sent home at the end of the year.

Supply fee for the school year:

5-day students	\$120
3-day students	\$110
2-day students	\$100

The following list is what is purchased for each student with the provided supply fee:

24ct. Crayola Crayons. We will replace it with a new pack after Christmas.
10ct. Crayola Markers. Replaced as necessary throughout the year. We are constantly replacing ones whose lids weren't put back on or are damaged.
12ct. Crayola Colored Pencils. Replaced as necessary throughout the year.
Crayola Watercolor Paint Set. Most end up needing a second set before the end of the year.
One kid scissor
8 Elmer glue sticks
Two bottles of Elmer's school glue
One art smock
2- 4-5oz containers of playdough. Replaced as necessary throughout the year.
Two plastic folders with pockets
One art box
2 Zipper Pouches for Colored Pencils and Markers
One plastic legal-size envelope for dry-erase practice
Two dry-erase markers
Two highlighters
One dry eraser
Two beginner pencils

*All of the above items are estimated and sometimes get replaced a few times throughout the year

Additional Classroom Supplies that may be purchased

Paper towels
Disinfectant Wipes
Baby Wipes (for hands and faces)
Band-Aids
Ziplock sandwich bags
Ziplock quart bags
Ziplock gallon bags
5 oz. cups
3 oz. cups
Napkins
Small bottles of water
Dish Soap
Rubber Gloves
Bleach
Bubbles
Chalk
Paper plates
Art Supplies
Sensory Bin Items- Orbeez, Sand, Beans, Fake Snow, Kinetic Sand, etc.
Holiday Party Supplies
Holiday/Special Snacks
Broken Toy Replacement
Kinetic Sand, etc.

*The above items are in constant use in our classrooms, and we try to buy as many items as we can in bulk to save money when possible.

The only supplies your child will need to bring are:

- A full-sized backpack
- Lunchbox/bag
- Small blanket for naptime
- Reusable, spill-proof water bottle

Nap | Rest-Time (Full-Day)

Following lunch, full-day preschool students will have an afternoon rest period. St. Thecla Catholic School shall designate each child with a specified cot labeled with each child's name. Parents will provide a small blanket, placed in a pillowcase labeled with your child's first and last name, which will be kept at school and sent home weekly to be washed. Pillows, pillow pets, stuffed animals, and toys are NOT permitted during rest time. Cots will be sanitized daily and cleaned more deeply weekly for proper sanitation.

Outdoor Play | Recess (Full-Day)

The school will provide outdoor play unless prevented by inclement weather or other conditions that could result in children being overheated or excessively chilled, in accordance with the school-wide guidelines. On days when students cannot go outside, the program will provide indoor active play that enhances gross motor development.

Birthdays | Celebrations

Birthdays may be celebrated on or near the child's birthday. No edible treats may be sent in due to allergies. Parents will be notified of celebrations that will take place in the classroom, such as Halloween, Christmas, or any other holiday. It may be possible for parents to join on these occasions. You will be notified (if possible), must have attended the Protecting God's Children Workshop, and must submit a completed criminal history background check form.

Parental Involvement/Field Trip

Any adult over the age of 18 who will volunteer in the classroom, attend special events in the school, and chaperone a field trip must complete a criminal background check and attend the Protecting God's Children workshop through the Archdiocese of Detroit. The teacher and/or the teacher assistant will attend with all volunteers.

The Preschool Program will offer a few field trips per year. A parent/guardian is responsible for each child's transportation and must accompany the child for the duration of the field trip. Medical documentation is required if specific accommodations need to be met by all staff and personnel.

All parents chaperoning a field trip will need to check into the Gathering Space before departure.

Protecting God's Children Workshop

St. Thecla Parish and other parishes in the Archdiocese of Detroit offer this workshop. Registration is required to attend the workshop. The schedule of workshops offers can be found at www.virtusonline.org. If you have any questions, please contact the school office:

Mrs. [Maloney 586.791.2170](tel:586.791.2170) maloneyd@stthecla.com

Special Programs

The following activities are offered throughout the school year, which help enhance our program, are Christ-Centered, and provide opportunities to bring the student body together: Student of the Week, Science Alive, Thanksgiving Food Drive, Holiday Celebrations, Secret Santa Shop, Catholic Schools Week, March is Reading Month, Mystery Reader, and the Scholastic Book Fair.

School Policies

Preschool Forms

A copy of each child's Birth Certificate and Baptismal Certificate must be on file before the first day of school. A current copy of the child's immunization records must also be completed and kept on file before the first day of school.

Each child must submit a health appraisal form. The child's physician must complete and sign the health appraisal form. **This form must be completed and on file within 30 days of the first day in the program.** The health appraisal expires two years from the date of the physician's signature.

Several times a year, a report of student immunization records must be sent to the Macomb County Health Department. Any students who are not up to date on their immunizations, according to the Health Department, will receive a letter detailing what immunizations are needed. Once the child's immunization records are updated, please bring the updated records to the teacher.

Each child must complete Information and emergency cards in full every year. Students will only be released to persons specified on the card. Custody arrangements will be addressed through court documents that are kept in the main office.

All necessary forms must be submitted to the classroom teacher by August 17th. Please see the Early Childhood Handbook Documents Packet for the complete list of the required information.

Dress Code

Please ensure that the children are dressed in simple, comfortable clothes that they can manage in the bathroom, recess, and nap time. For example, pants with an elastic waistband are easier than pants with a zipper, button, and/or belt.

Sturdy shoes with socks must be worn, even on special occasions such as classroom celebrations, picture day, etc. **Sandals, flip-flops, and Crocs are NOT permitted. No tie shoelaces, please.** Jewelry should not be worn at school, as it could be lost or cause injury.

Children must be dressed appropriately for weather conditions. During winter, if your child wears boots to school, please be sure to pack a pair of shoes in their backpack. Please keep an extra set of clothes (underwear, pants, shirt, and socks) to remain in the classroom in case of emergencies and replenish if used.

Preschool Behavior Policy

The safety and education of your child are of the utmost importance to all involved in their growth and development. We have set up specific guidelines that will always be in effect in our classrooms.

These are as follows:

Follow directions the first time given.

Keep hands and feet to yourself.

Be kind to one another. We try never to hurt anyone on the inside.

Clean up and put things away.

Be a good listener-raise your hand.

Use walking feet in school.

Use "inside" voices.

Be polite. Only one person speaks at a time.

We will use a logical consequences approach to discipline to guarantee your child and all the other students the positive learning climate they deserve. For example, if a child misuses a toy, the logical consequence would be that the child would lose the privilege of using that toy. If a child is having a difficult time interacting with others, he/she will be asked to spend some time away from the group. Often, this is so the child can calm themselves, re-group, and, within a few minutes, join their classmates again. If this system is ineffective for your child, we would like to sit down with you and set up an alternative discipline plan. **We believe positive reinforcement to be an effective alternative to discipline.**

15 Second Intervention

Pull the student aside privately. Use a calm voice. Don't argue. Stick to the points below.

- * I saw you _____. (Repeat to them what you saw and heard.)
- * This is mean behavior.
- * I would never let someone disrespect you, and it's not okay to do what you did to _____ (other students).
- * We don't do that here.
- * This needs to stop.

Withdrawal Policy

Students enrolled in the Preschool Program are expected to remain for the entire school year. However, if it should become necessary for you to withdraw your child,

The administration requires written notification. (See the current year's Tuition and Fees for the St. Thecla Tuition Refund Policy).

If the teacher feels that a child should be withdrawn from the program, a meeting with the parent(s), teacher, and administration will be scheduled for a determination to be made.

Special Needs

Admission of children with special needs shall comply with state regulations, and reasonable effort shall be made to accommodate the children's needs and to integrate the children with other children. Students with special needs will be assisted according to their specific needs and/or conditions. Medical documentation is required to meet specific accommodations.

Accidents | Injuries | Incidences Policy

If a child sustains a minor injury (scraped knee, etc.), parents will receive a report outlining the incident and the course of action taken by staff. Parents will be contacted immediately if the injury produces any swelling or needs medical attention. The staff will call 911 for more serious injuries and then contact the parent. Parents will also be made aware of any incident during school hours.

Health | Illness Policy

Illness and Absence:

If a student misses school for a doctor's appointment or medical treatment, they must submit a clearance note signed by a physician before their return. Children, staff, and volunteers with signs of illness, such as high temperature, vomiting, diarrhea, etc., should be kept at home for a minimum of 24 hours to ensure the health and well-being of others. If any child becomes ill during the day, parents will be contacted to pick up the child in a timely manner, and they will be removed from the classroom.

The teachers reserve the right to refuse admittance to any child who appears ill. A child must be **fever and symptom-free for 24 hours**, without medication, to return to school. If your child has diarrhea, an undiagnosed rash, discharge from the eyes, nose, and/or ears, or head lice, they must be kept at home.

If your child develops a contagious disease or rash of any kind during the school year, please call the office at (586) 791-2170 if any child exhibits symptoms of any contagious disease, i.e., Conjunctivitis or Strep Throat. In that case, state licensing requires that the child does not return to school for 24 hours from the time he/ she takes medication for the condition. Additionally, **a physician's note is REQUIRED**, stating the child has been medically cleared to return to school in the event of any office visits or hospital procedures.

Absences | Late Arrivals | Early Dismissals

If your child will be absent or late, please notify the teacher and include the reasoning. If you are arriving late, please be mindful of our classroom environment and drop off your child at the door. If your child will be dismissed early, please notify the teacher in a timely manner and sign out your child in the school office before leaving. Please wait by the main office, and your child will be walked down at the time of their arranged early dismissal.

Emergency School Closing | Emergency Evacuation

The Preschool Program will follow the procedures of St. Thecla School regarding school cancellations due to weather conditions, mechanical failures, etc. School closing information can be found on the St. Thecla social media sites, radio station WJR-760 AM, or TV channels 2, 4, or 7.

If there is a need for an emergency evacuation, all students and staff will be relocated to St. Luke's Church located at 21400 S. Nunneley Road, Clinton Township, MI 48035 586-791-1151. Parents will be contacted, and staff will bring all necessary medications and designated crisis backpacks located in each classroom.

Volunteer Hours

Each school family is required to fulfill volunteer hours in accordance with school policy. All families are required to volunteer for 20 hours throughout the school year based on your enrollment agreement. We offer numerous opportunities to satisfy your obligation of volunteer hours; those events will be advertised, emailed, and listed under events on the website. Preschool field trips may not be counted towards volunteer hours. All volunteer hours will be logged into the FACTS program.

Community Wellness

Hand Washing

The following procedures will be used for hand washing:

Have disposable paper or single-service towels available. Turn on the water to a comfortable temperature between 60 and 120 degrees.

Moisten hands with water and apply soap.

Rub areas between fingers, around nail beds, under fingernails, jewelry, and the back of hands.

Hands shall be washed with soap under running water.

Dry hands with a clean, disposable paper or single service towel.

Turn off the tap with disposable paper or a single service towel.

Handling Bodily Fluids

Precautions will be used when handling bodily fluids as instructed in the blood-borne pathogen training.

The steps used will include:

Staff will put on gloves and Clean up bodily fluids

Wash the area with soap and water, and rinse and sanitize the area

Wash the hands of the child

Take off gloves and wash your hands

Cleaning | Sanitizing

The following steps are to be followed for cleaning and sanitizing: Wash the area/surface with warm water and soap/detergent.

Rinse the area/surface with clean water.

Submerge, wipe, or spray the article or surface with a sanitizing solution.

* Let the area/surface air dry*

The sanitizing solution is made of water and non-scented chlorine bleach solution with a concentrate of 1 tablespoon of bleach per one gallon of water. Commercial sanitizers are specified on the label to be safe for food contact surfaces and used according to the manufacturer's directions.

Controlling Infections

Mouthed toys will be removed, washed, rinsed, and sanitized. Other toys and equipment will be washed immediately if dirty. Children who become ill will be moved away from the children until they are picked up. Children who have any communicable disease/condition will be removed from care and may return to care only with a physician's note.