



Saint Theresa **Little Flower Early Childhood** **Center**

**PRESCHOOL, PreKINDERGARTEN &
TRANSITIONAL KINDERGARTEN
CDC #14970**

**Parent Handbook
2026/2027**

Saint Theresa

Little Flower Early Childhood Center

PRESCHOOL, PRE-KINDERGARTEN & TRANSITIONAL KINDERGARTEN

**5001 EAST THOMAS ROAD
PHOENIX, ARIZONA 85018**

SCHOOL TELEPHONE: 602.840.0010 ext 200

SCHOOL FAX: 602.840.8323

WEBSITE: www.stcs.us

School Hours are 8:00 a.m. - 2:45 p.m. Monday through Thursday
and 8:00 a.m. - 12:20 p.m. on Fridays and Early Release Days; 12:00 p.m. for early release students.

Extended Care is contracted through Innovation Learning:
After School - 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

PRINCIPAL: Mrs. Mary Pivonka

Mpivonka@stcs.us

ECC DIRECTOR: Mrs. Erin Fitzgerald

Efitzgerald@stcs.us

REGISTRAR, TUITION AND SCHOLARSHIP COORDINATOR: Mrs. Kathleen Peterson

Kpeterson@stcs.us

ADMISSIONS COORDINATOR: Mrs. Alex Read

Aread@stcs.us

HEALTH & WELLNESS COORDINATOR: Mrs. Beth Rons

Brons@stcs.us

Saint Theresa Little Flower Early Childhood Center is licensed by the State of Arizona
Department of Health Services, Bureau of Child Care Licensing.
All inquiries may be made at the following address or telephone numbers:

Arizona Department of Health Services
Division of Licensing Services
Bureau of Child Care Licensing
150 N. 18th Avenue, Suite 400
Phoenix AZ 85007-3244
602.364-2539, FAX: 602.364-4768
WEBSITE: www.azdhs.gov

Please refer to CDC # 14970 (Saint Theresa Little Flower Early Childcare Center, Phoenix)

MISSION STATEMENT

Saint Theresa Catholic School builds academic excellence on a foundation of spiritual and moral development in the Roman Catholic tradition. We strive to form witnesses of Christ who lead joyful, virtuous lives, serving God and others as members of a welcoming community rooted in the three pillars of family, faith, and formation.

PHILOSOPHY

At St. Theresa Catholic School, our community is guided by the belief that parents are the primary educators, and is dedicated to providing an education that forms the whole child within a Christ-centered Catholic environment. We are committed to offering opportunities for balanced growth in all areas: social-emotional, cognitive, physical, creative, and spiritual. Understanding that children learn through play, our daily routines are designed to encourage active involvement, meaningful experimentation, and positive reinforcement.

PROGRAM

The Saint Theresa Little Flower Early Childhood Center offers a variety of options for our little learners. *Students must be 3 years of age by August 30, no exceptions, and toilet-trained for preschool, and 4 years for PreK 2 and TK.*

- Preschool and PreK 1 have the option of ½ day or full day, 2 day, 3 day, 5 days a week.
- PreK 2 and TK attend full day M-F.
 - Both PreK 2 and TK feed into Kindergarten, unless an additional year is needed after PreK. Admission to Kindergarten is based on the Kindergarten readiness screening and teacher recommendation.

ADMISSION

All new students applying to Saint Theresa Catholic School are asked to complete and submit the following prior to the admittance process:

1. Application Form and Fee
2. Copy of Birth Certificate
3. Original Baptismal Certificate (if baptized)
4. Current Immunization Record and Health Form
5. Enrollment Form and Fee (after application has been accepted)

BATHROOM READINESS POLICY

In the best interest of our students, St. Theresa Catholic School has established a policy regarding bathroom readiness and independent potty training. In accordance with Arizona state licensing requirements, all children enrolled in St. Theresa Catholic School Preschool and Pre-Kindergarten must be fully and independently potty trained. “Fully potty trained” means that a child does not have consistent bathroom accidents and is able to use the restroom independently.

Preschool and Pre-Kindergarten staff rely on parent partnership to ensure children are developmentally ready for independent bathroom use. Pull-ups are not permitted. We recognize that children develop at different rates, and that some may not yet be emotionally or physically ready to manage bathroom needs independently. This policy is intended to reduce frustration for children, minimize disruptions in the classroom, and support a positive learning environment.

To help achieve this goal, expectations are outlined below:

1. The ability to tell a teacher when they need to use the bathroom.
2. The ability to pull their underwear and other clothing up and down within reason when using the bathroom.
3. The ability to wipe themselves within reason.
4. Proper bathroom usage.

Starting September 1 in the event of a student having 4 or more accidents within a 30-day period, an action plan will be put into place to determine the child’s readiness for our program. The preschool reserves the right to withdraw the student from the program if the child is not demonstrating that he/she is fully potty trained.

CURRICULUM - LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Saint Theresa Little Flower Early Childhood Center provides a developmentally appropriate, play based learning curriculum and follows guidelines provided by the Diocese of Phoenix Catholic Schools Office. We foster a child’s love of learning by instilling activities and lessons that encourage development of the whole child. This includes: spiritual, cognitive, social, emotional, and physical growth in a spirit of gospel values.

Religion – Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd – sometimes referred to as “Atrium” class – is a Montessori-based religious education experience which began in Rome in 1954. Its primary aim is to provide each child with personal time and reflective opportunity to encounter God through contemplative “works.” Materials are very hands-on. The class is not taught, per se, but rather facilitated by catechists who have received specialized education and training in the method unique to the program. In the Atrium, each child is free to explore, reflect, and discover God in his or her

own way. Seeds are planted along the way, but it is the Holy Spirit that nurtures and directs their growth.

Social/ Emotional – Children will learn skills necessary for positive, Christ-like interactions with others such as identification of feelings, developmentally appropriate problem solving skills, empathy for others, cooperation, independence, and self care.

Language and Literacy – Children will develop early reading, writing and verbal skills that enable the child to share their world with others, while enjoying stories, classic nursery rhymes, poems, and parables of Christ's life through creative lessons and activities connected to weekly lesson themes and built on the alphabetic principle. Handwriting without Tears is used to develop pre-writing and writing skills. Heggerty Phonics is used in PreK and TK as part of the phonics curriculum.

Mathematics – Children will develop cognitive skills and explore numbers related to counting, one-to-one correspondence, cardinality, sequencing, comparison, patterns, sorting, classifying, data analysis, nonstandard units of measurement, spatial reasoning, and basic addition and subtraction concepts.

Science – Children will observe, discover and experience the wonder of God's creations through His gift of our senses therefore promoting the child's inquiry and exploration.

Social Studies – Children will experience a sense of belonging to a community including our Catholic community, while learning how to respect and care for self, others, and the world which God has gifted us with.

Physical Development, Health and Safety – Children will develop fine and gross motor skills, self care habits, and identify the importance of following rules for safety and prevention of injury.

Creative Art Experiences – Children will express their creativity through the use of a variety of tools and techniques including teacher directed lessons and independently created pieces.

Music – Children will appreciate music through learning songs and prayer filled hymns by listening, singing, dancing and movement, rhythm skills, and instruments.

Physical Education – Children will develop large motor skills through physical activities that promote health, wellness, and cooperation with others.

Spanish - Children will be introduced to simple, spanish words and phrases. This will include: colors, days of the week, numbers, months, and simple songs.

TUITION AND FEES

Preschool and PreK 1

Full Day M-F	\$10,610	½ Day M-F	\$7,590
Full Day M/W/F	\$7,710	½ Day M/W/F	\$5,930
Full Day T/TH	\$4,780	½ Day T/TH	\$3,950

PreK 2 and Transitional Kindergarten (TK)

Full Day M-F	\$10,710
--------------	----------

Registration fees and tuition are set for the following year in the spring.

All tuition payments will be made through FACTS beginning on August 5 and are due each month for 10 months, semi-annually (August 5 and January 5), or paid in full by August 5. An additional fee of \$30 will be charged to your account for returned payments due to insufficient funds. Extended Care, used uniforms, etc., fees will be posted to your FACTS account.

CLASS SIZE

Age Group	Staff:Children
Preschool (3 year olds)	1:13 for 3 year old
PreK 1 and 2 (4 year olds)	1:15
Transitional Kindergarten (5 year olds)	1:15

CLASS HOURS

Classroom doors open at 7:55 a.m. Class will begin at 8:20 a.m. Due to parking challenges, ECC students are permitted to arrive at 8:15 a.m.

Students enrolled in **half day Preschool or PreK 1** dismissal is at noon daily including Friday. Please be aware that this time will be strictly enforced.

Students enrolled in **full day Preschool, PreK or TK**, dismissal will be promptly at 2:45 p.m., Monday - Thursday and every Friday at 12:20 p.m. after Closing Prayer. Periodically there will be half days with a 12:20 p.m. dismissal.

If a child arrives after 8:20 a.m., a parent or responsible adult must obtain a **Tardy Pass from the School Office** and return it to the teacher and the student will be marked tardy.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Before and after school Little Flower ECC parents may park in the north lot off of Thomas Rd. The pedestrian gate will be unlocked at 7:50 a.m. and 2:35 p.m. If you need to enter campus during the school day, please press the call button on the pin-pad near the gate to be buzzed in, then proceed to the main school front office to sign in.

Students will be dropped off and picked up at their classroom door. Upon arrival and dismissal the parent is required to sign the child in/out using the Procure app. An email to create an account will be sent after enrollment from Procure.

If someone other than the parent is picking up the child, a code will be provided in the Procure app. ***This person should be listed on the blue Emergency Information and Immunization Record Card in the authorized individuals to collect the child if the parent cannot be contacted. Preschool staff will not allow a child to go home with any person other than the parent or the adult that has been authorized by parents.***

If prior notice was not given, staff is directed to call parents for authorization. ID will be required to show at the door before the child is dismissed. Parents must be on time to pick the children up at the end of class. If an emergency situation arises, Extended Care is available from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. This service does require an enrollment application before the student's first date of attendance.

Please do not send toys to school. If a toy is lost or broken at school, it may be very upsetting for the child. There will be days when the teacher(s) will have "Show and Tell." At that time, your child may bring toys as part of the academic program. If a book is brought to school please put the child's name on the book.

REPORTING AN ABSENCE

A parent must notify the school front office, and the child's teacher or preschool director, if their child will be absent or tardy. **Student absences must be reported as soon as possible by visiting the website and filling out the attendance form found at the top right corner of the school home page at <https://www.stcs.us/>.**

SICK POLICY

The health and well-being of our students, families, and staff is a priority at St. Theresa Little Flower Preschool. To maintain a safe and healthy learning environment, children who are ill must remain at home. Preschool is not equipped to care for sick children, and children recover best when resting at home.

When Children Must Stay Home

Children should not attend school if they have any of the following:

Fever

- Temperature of 100°F or higher
- Must be fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication before returning

Gastrointestinal Symptoms

- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Must be symptom-free for 24 hours before returning

Respiratory Symptoms

- Persistent, uncontrollable coughing
- Difficulty breathing, wheezing, or shortness of breath
- Severe congestion that interferes with participation

Other Symptoms

- Undiagnosed rash
- Severe sore throat
- Red or swollen eyes with discharge (possible pink eye)
- Ear discharge
- Any illness preventing comfortable full day participation in school activities

If a Child Becomes Sick at School

- Parents or emergency contacts will be notified immediately
- The child will be isolated and comforted until pickup
- Prompt pickup is required (typically within 30–60 minutes)

Return-to-School Requirements

A child may return to school when:

- Fever-free for 24 hours without medication
- No vomiting or diarrhea for 24 hours
- Able to participate fully in classroom activities

Communicable Diseases

Parents must notify the school within 24 hours if their child is diagnosed with a contagious illness, including:

- Strep throat
- Pink eye (conjunctivitis)
- Chickenpox
- Influenza
- COVID-19

Families will be notified of potential exposure, when necessary, without identifying the child.

Parent Responsibilities

- Daily Notification: Call or email the school office if your child is absent due to illness
- Prompt Pickup: Maintain an emergency plan for immediate pickup if contacted
- Medication: All medications must be signed in and administered through the school office with required authorization forms

Thank You for Your Partnership

Keeping sick children home protects the health of our entire school community and supports a safe, nurturing environment for all students.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation is not provided for children in our Early Childhood Center.

FIELD TRIPS

The Little Flower Preschool students will not participate in off campus field trips. We do have outside vendors visit the school such as the Arizona Puppet Theater and The Phoenix Library. Parents will be notified in advance of upcoming events. The gym, church, Fr. Feeney Hall and the Ramada are considered field-trips and a permission form is required during registration.

SNACKS AND LUNCHES

Students will need to come to school everyday with a **water bottle, healthy snack, and lunch**. Drinking water is available in the classroom and water bottles will be filled as necessary. A healthy snack which includes two of the following: protein, dairy, grain, and fruit or vegetable. When providing your child a well-balanced lunch it should include a protein, dairy, grain, and fruit or vegetable. Lunch will be eaten in classrooms, or, weather permitting, outside.

Please send prepared food that does not require refrigeration (ice pack suggested), microwaving, cutting, or difficult peeling. Please limit sugar in the lunches. Candy, soda and chocolate milk are NOT allowed as stated in the Diocese of Phoenix School Wellness Policy (details below).

Purchased lunch is available for a fee from the school's lunch vendor: <https://www.stcs.us/lunch>. Remember that good nutrition enhances learning.

Saint Theresa Catholic School and Little Flower ECC abide by the Wellness Policy of the Diocese of Phoenix and the Arizona Department of Health Services. We are a licensed child care center that is enrolled in the Empower Program implemented by the state. If sending juice in your child's lunch, it is imperative that parents send 100% fruit juice. Flavored water drinks with lower sugar that show water as the first ingredient are acceptable.

UNIFORMS

New uniforms can be purchased at Anton Uniform at <https://antonuniforms.com/>. Used uniforms can be purchased at numerous PTO events or through the main office. Used uniforms are \$5 each.

Shoes are to be athletic-type (tie or Velcro) playground safe shoes black, white, and/or gray only. Closed-toe and heel shoes must be worn at all times. Shoes with flashing lights, sandals, flip-flops, crocs, or boots are not permitted at any time. Socks must be worn at all times.

An extra set of clothes should be available in your child's backpack in case of a bathroom accident. The items should include a full uniform, change of underwear, and socks. If an accident occurs the parent will be made aware and a fresh change of clothing should be sent in the next day. **Please write your child's name on all clothing.

Preschool, PreKindergarten and TK

GIRLS

- Saint Theresa Unisex Polo - Short/Long Sleeve with School Crest/Logo
- Saint Theresa Plaid Jumper or Skirt
(Saint Theresa Girl Bike Shorts or Black Mesh Gym Shorts are required underneath)
- Unisex Youth Elastic Short (Navy Twill)
- Saint Theresa Jersey Polo Dress with School Crest/Logo
- Girls Tights (Black or White) or Girls Socks (Black or White)
- Shoes - Primarily black, white, or gray sneakers.

BOYS

- Saint Theresa Unisex Polo - Short/Long Sleeve with School Crest/Logo
- Elastic or Flat Front Shorts or Pants (Navy Twill)
- Boys Socks (Black or White)
- Shoes - Primarily black, white, or gray sneakers.

SCHOOL SPIRIT DAY

- Students may wear a Spirit Shirt every Friday.
- Spirit Shirts include those ordered from the Spirit Store or purchased for other school-sponsored events. (ie. Spring Musical)

FREE DRESS DAYS

Students are required to follow the dress code on free dress days. Students are permitted to wear free dress on their birthdays. If their birthday falls on a Mass day, we ask that they wear their free dress on the day before or after. Athletic shoes must be worn.

DISCIPLINE GUIDELINES

Saint Theresa Little Flower Preschool follows the same disciplinary procedure along with the larger Saint Theresa Catholic School community. Discipline With Purpose (DWP) is a developmental approach to teaching children to be self-disciplined.

Refer to our STCS Student/Parent Handbook for a detailed description of DWP. Along with the DWP lessons, teachers are to model cooperative behavior and use kind language with others. Classroom instruction will also provide students with problem solving strategies and self-regulation tools to foster strong social-emotional skills.

Suspension and Mandatory Withdrawal Policy

Our preschool is committed to providing a safe, nurturing environment for all children. We maintain clear, age-appropriate, and consistent behavioral expectations, and we work closely with families to support each child's success. Suspension or mandatory withdrawal will only be considered after all appropriate prevention strategies have been implemented, including teacher, parent and director conferences, Preschool individualized behavior support plans, and if needed, referrals to specialists,

Decisions regarding suspension or mandatory withdrawal will be made with careful consideration of the child's needs, the safety and well-being of the classroom community. Our goal is to exhaust every reasonable option to help the child remain in the program and thrive. However, if a child is posing a serious safety concern, the director has the right to suspend or withdraw a student immediately.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

Parents are invited to participate in many activities throughout the year. In order to do so, parents must undergo our Diocese of Phoenix Safe Environment Training (SET). This training is provided throughout the year at a number of locations as well as Saint Theresa Catholic School at the beginning of the school year. Parents of Saint Theresa Catholic School students are reminded to first complete the *Foundation Training*, and then yearly renew their training. Information on the Diocesan requirements can be found at: <http://websites.web4uonline.com/editor/main.php#/>

For additional information, please contact Mrs. Beth Rons, Saint Theresa Catholic School's SET Coordinator, at (602) 840-0010 extn. 209 or by email at brons@stcs.us. If you are *renewing* your SET compliance (due each year on July 1) please follow these instructions: [Renewal Instructions](#). Thank you for your commitment to our students' safety. A list of scheduled events will be provided at the beginning of the school year by your child's teacher. Parents have access to the areas on premise where their child is receiving child care services.

PROGRESS REPORTS

The following grading scale is used to indicate the level of achievement in individual skills within each subject area:

Mastering- does not need teacher's support

Developing- requires some support from teacher

Emerging- still required a lot of support from teacher

WITHDRAWAL

Parents of students transferring to another school are to notify the admissions coordinator of their child's withdrawal. Before records will be forwarded to a new school or refunds given, the following is to be completed. The school requests the parent to:

- Return any school property
- Pay all fees and tuition, if there is a balance due
- Complete an exit interview
- Complete a withdrawal form

EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE AND CRISIS PLAN

Fire and/or emergency lock down drills are held every month. Exit directions are posted in the classrooms. No one may remain in the building during a fire drill. Immediate evacuation of the building must begin when the fire signal sounds. Students are to leave the room quickly and silently in a single file line. Students will remain outside with their teachers until the all clear signal is given.

For any other emergencies, the children must follow the directives of the teacher. Saint Theresa Catholic School has a Crisis Plan that dictates procedures followed in emergencies. Attempts will be made to notify all parents in the event an evacuation is necessary. 911 will be contacted in the event of an emergency.

STUDENT ACCIDENT INSURANCE

Any student enrolled in a Diocese of Phoenix, Preschool, Kindergarten, Elementary or Secondary School (including Saint Theresa Little Flower Preschool) will be provided accident insurance while on school grounds when school is in session, while taking part in a school-sponsored and supervised activity, or while attending school-sponsored and supervised religious services or instruction.

If a student suffers a covered "accidental injury," he/she will be eligible for benefits by completing the proper claim documentation which will be available in the school office. Our insurance is provided by Catholic Mutual Insurance who also provides liability insurance. Their address is as follows:

The Catholic Mutual Insurance
Roman Catholic Diocese of Phoenix
400 East Monroe Street
Phoenix AZ 85008

PEST CONTROL

The pest control company applies pesticides to the entire school and parish campus on the 4th Saturday of each month. Extermination notification is posted 48 hours prior to application near the school office, at the entrances to the Preschool classrooms and the east entrances of the school. Chemicals used information is available in the School Office.

All inspection reports are available for review upon request. Please see the Preschool Director or individual designated to act on behalf of the director.

MEDICAL ADMINISTRATION PROCEDURES

The Little Flower ECC follows the guidelines for the administration of medications as directed by the State of Arizona Health Services, Bureau of Child Care Licensure and the Child Care Facility Rules and Regulations in addition to the guidelines in the STCS Student/Parent Handbook. It is required that a student complete a state required medication consent form that gives permission for an authorized staff member to administer medications to students, including a signed doctor's authorization for injections. In the case of rescue medications, i.e. Epi-pens, inhalers, antihistamines, left in the Health Care office, parents will be required to supply a second set for Preschool. All medication, which includes but is not limited to, sunscreen, lotions, antibiotic or anti-itch cream are administered by the authorized staff member. During Extended Care hours, the Program Director will administer medications. All medications (prescription and over-the-counter) must be in their original container with the child's name on the packaging.

IMMUNIZATIONS

Arizona Law (Arizona Administrative Code, Title 9, Chapter 6, Article 7, and Vaccine Preventable Disease) requires that all students be immunized against certain diseases before entering school. Your child's healthcare professional is aware of these requirements, or you may contact the school Health and Wellness Coordinator for further information. Students who cannot produce immunization records, except those who cannot be immunized for health or religious reasons, will not be allowed to remain in school. If your child is to be exempt from the immunization requirements, a form must be signed and returned to the school. A doctor's signature is required if the exemption is for medical reasons.

In the event of an outbreak of a vaccine preventable disease for which you cannot provide proof of immunity for your child, your child will not be allowed to attend school until the risk period per CDC guidelines ends.

EXTENDED CARE (OPTIONAL)

Extended Care and Preschool services are licensed and meet all standards established by the State of Arizona Health Services, Bureau of Child Care Licensure, and the Child Care Facility Rules and Regulations Bureau of Health Services, Child Care Facilities.

BEFORE SCHOOL CARE (morning care) provided by STCS staff

Morning Care is offered from 7 a.m. to 7:45 a.m. Parents may enroll students in the Morning Care program on the first day of use. Due to the increase in minimum wage requirements, the Morning Care program will follow the following fee schedule:

- Daily Rate (any part of the time from 7 a.m. to 7:45 a.m.) is \$5.00.
- Weekly Rate (for any 5-day week) is \$20.00.

Signing in students to Morning Care will result in a charge billed through the student's FACTS agreement and account.

AFTER SCHOOL CARE PROGRAM

Serving students from Preschool (3 year olds) through 8th grade. The program includes:

- Bridge Hour (3 p.m.–4 p.m.)
- P.M. Program (3 p.m.–6 p.m.)
- Early Dismissal Fridays (12:30 p.m.–6 p.m.)

Saint Theresa's after school care is provided by Innovation Learning.

<https://www.innovationlearning.com/locations/st-theresa-catholic-school>

The link for online registration is also found on the school's website under the Parent tab and selecting After Care.

***Please note: Due to licensing requirements, Innovation Learning will not accept students under the age of 3.**

PLEASE NOTE: Children who are sick will not be allowed to stay at Extended Care.



SAINT THERESA

Little Flower Early Childhood Center

PARENT HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

This handbook attempts to address all issues concerning the educational welfare of our students and the good order of our school. However, the pastor, principal, and director reserve the right to amend this handbook for just cause or to make final decisions for the betterment of the school. All parents or guardians of students attending Saint Theresa Catholic School must sign the agreement below and submit it to the homeroom teacher.

In agreement:

I have read, understand, and agree to cooperate and support the policies and guidelines set forth in this handbook.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date