



The Dominican

COMMUNITY *of* SCHOOLS

Davis Early Childhood Center

2023-2024
Parent Handbook

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Mr. Tom Hood, President
Mrs. Jenny Escamilla Howell, Director

St. Agnes Academy-St. Dominic School **Early Childhood Program**

Philosophy Statement

The St. Agnes Academy-St. Dominic School Early Childhood Center (The R.D. “Johnny” Davis Early Childhood Center) is committed to providing a nurturing, faith-based educational setting for young children and their families. In a safe environment, children learn, explore, and make choices as they experience their world and its challenges. Our engaging, play-based programs develop each child’s unique potential and inspire life-long learning. Laying the foundation for our Catholic and Dominican traditions, the early childhood experience fosters prayer, study, community, and service.

We believe:

- Children learn best in an environment based on respect that fosters self-esteem and builds confidence.
- Children learn best when encouraged to learn and grow within a foundation of developmentally appropriate experiences.
- Children learn best when the needs of the whole child are met.
- Children learn best through play, which encourages curiosity, discovery, and problem solving.
- Children learn best when activities are designed to allow them to make choices and to solve problems.
- Children learn best when we create a partnership with their family.

Our goals for our early childhood classrooms:

- Each child will be respected as an individual, learn to respect others, and learn to embrace differences and diversity.
- Each child will be an important contributor to the learning process.
- Activities will build knowledge by making connections to previously learned concepts through exploration and creative thinking.
- Children will feel a sense of community in the classroom.
- Children will feel safe to make mistakes and to learn from them.
- Children will develop global awareness through their learning of other languages and cultures, as well as through experiences with 21st Century technologies.

Mission Statement

St. Agnes Academy-St. Dominic School is a Catholic independent school, ecumenical by charter. The school was founded to educate young people in a principle-based program designed to prepare them for advanced formal and personal studies while deepening their faith and relationship with God.

In the Dominican tradition, the School actively encourages academic excellence and promotes spiritual and moral growth, social and ecological responsibility, leadership skills, multicultural awareness, emotional maturity, artistic expression, and physical fitness.

St. Agnes Academy-St. Dominic School Prayer

Loving God,
Let Thy blessings be upon
St. Agnes Academy-St. Dominic School.

Help us to seek the truth, to stand up for the rights of
others and to promote justice, respect, and peace
in our school and world communities.

Inspire with love and goodness
both those who teach and those who learn.

Give us the grace to walk in the footsteps of Jesus,
loving and forgiving of others.

We ask these gifts in Jesus' name
through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

2023-2024 Bible Verse

*"Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth."
Col. 3:2*

School Motto
Veritas – Truth

Program Overview

The **PK2 “Littlest Stars & Suns”** program embraces busy, active, energetic two-year olds. With a focus on social and emotional aspects of their development, the program seeks to provide these students with a positive initial learning experience, laying the foundation for future success. Two-year olds are naturally curious about their environment and ready to absorb new language skills, develop motor skills and begin to understand the concept of cooperative play. Building a positive self-concept, developing a sense of belonging, and beginning a life-long love of learning are major goals of the program.

The **Pre-Kindergarten** program fosters the joy of learning through nurturing and recognizing the uniqueness of the individual child. The children learn through play and are given opportunities to be creative individuals. Their active learning is enhanced through child-directed activities and theme-based units of study. Learning centers foster language development, pre-academic skills, and responsibility. Building a positive self-concept, developing a sense of belonging, and a life-long love of learning are the goals of our program.

The **Junior Kindergarten** program emphasizes the importance of play as the way young children begin to acquire the skills necessary for cognitive, social, emotional and motor development. The classroom environment is structured so children actively explore and experiment with concrete learning materials. The learning centers provide opportunities for children to work in small groups, and build on previously learned concepts. Learning centers include math, science, art, blocks, dramatic play, books, games, puzzles, sensory table, and materials to facilitate early literacy and writing skills.

At every level, learning is enhanced through technology with the use of computers, smart boards, iPads, and programs presented in the Distance Learning Center (DLC). In addition, we offer educational experiences through visiting programs such as the Memphis Botanic Garden, Theatre Memphis, Memphis Fire Department, National Weather Service and Opera Memphis.

School Addresses and Phone Numbers

St. Agnes Academy
4830 Walnut Grove Rd.
Memphis, TN 38117
Phone: (901) 767-1377
Fax # 901-684-2392

St. Dominic School
30 Avon Rd.
Memphis, TN 38117
Phone: (901) 682-3011
Fax # 901-681-0047

Faculty and Staff

Early Childhood Center (ECC)

Mrs. Jenny Escamilla Howell, Director
(901) 435-5877 jhowell@saa-sds.org

Ms. Renee Pirkey, ECC Admin. Assistant
(901) 435-5893 rpirkey@saa-sds.org

St. Agnes Academy

Ms. Jenn Wojcik, Dean
(901) 435-5829 jwojcik@saa-sds.org

Mrs. Tammy Brooks, SAA Admin. Assistant
(901) 435-5800 tbrooks@saa-sds.org

St. Agnes Academy Counselor
Mrs. Britney Dedmon
(901) 435-5806 bdedmon@saa-sds.org

St. Dominic School

Mr. Adam Woods, Dean
(901) 435-5821 awoods@saa-sds.org

Mrs. Diane Pirozzi, SDS Admin. Assistant
(901) 435-5801 dmpirozzi@saa-sds.org

St. Dominic School Counselor
Ms. Talia Sowell
(901) 435-5821 tsowell@saa-sds.org

ECC Admissions Director

Mrs. Lisa Jones
(901) 435-5818
ljones@saa-sds.org

Junior Kindergarten

Renee Price, Lead Teacher
rprice@saa-sds.org

Amy Shoaf, Lead Teacher
ashoaf@saa-sds.org

Pre-Kindergarten

Kathi Davidson, Lead Teacher
kdavidson@saa-sds.org

Sarah Joyner, Lead Teacher
sjoyner@saa-sds.org

Pre-Kindergarten 2

Melanie Truitt, Lead Teacher
mtruitt@saa-sds.org

Lindsey Holton, Lead Teacher
lholton@saa.sds.org

Karen Leone, Assistant Teacher

Jennifer Alexander, Assistant Teacher

Baylee Steward, Assistant Teacher

Libby Lynn, Assistant Teacher

Cindy Natera, Assistant Teacher
Franny Pandola, Assistant Teacher

Charise Leemis, Assistant Teacher
Kelsey James, Assistant Teacher

Policies and Procedures

Communication

Ongoing communication is essential for keeping home and school connected. Sharing information about what is important to your child occurs on a regular basis. To support this, a daily folder will be sent home. Your child's teacher will inform you of its contents and the importance of returning it each day. Parents are encouraged to send notes to school in the daily folder about changes in their child's schedule or important events (i.e. new puppy, trips, moving, family birthdays, illnesses, etc.) Additionally, teachers post a weekly newsletter each Friday. All teachers may be reached via email. You can also call the ECC front desk to leave a message for the teacher (901-435-5893). Current school news and general information should be accessed weekly via the Wednesday Wire on the school website (www.saa-sds.org).

Additional forms of communication throughout the year include the following:

- SAA-SDS Summer Spotlight (in June and July)
- Wednesday Wire
- Teachers' Daily Reports and Weekly Newsletters
- See Saw App
- Parent-Teacher Conferences-3 times per year
- Progress Reports-Each Trimester

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

Arrival:

Morning routines, such as center play, circle time, morning meeting, and special classes, occur regularly within the first hour of the school day. Therefore, it is important to arrive on time each day. Students arriving to school tardy more than 10 times in a year will receive a note home reiterating the importance of arriving to school on time.

School begins promptly at 8:00 a.m. for all PK2-JK students. If you arrive late, please sign in at the ECC Front Desk and walk your child to the classroom door. Please do not disturb class. Be sure to leave any lunch orders at the front desk when your child is dropped off late.

Arrival Procedures, PK2:

- **Between 7:00 and 7:45 A.M.** parents may park in the circle drive and walk their child directly to the PK2 classroom for early morning care. Please be sure your car is moved before 7:45 so we can begin car pool.
- **From 7:45 to 8:00 A.M.** parents should park in the Independent Presbyterian Church parking lot and walk their child directly to the PK2 classrooms.
- **After 8:00 A.M.** students must be checked in at the ECC front desk. It is school policy for parents to sign children in when tardy. Parents will need to walk their child into the main entrance of the ECC. After checking in, parents should escort their child to the classroom door.

Arrival Procedures, PK and JK:

- **Between 7:00 and 7:45 A.M.,** students should report to early morning care, which is monitored by ECC Teacher Assistants. You must escort your child to the classroom

door. PK2 morning care will be held in Room 120 and PK and JK morning care will be held in Room 160. Please do not allow your child to bring toys from home.

- **From 7:45 to 8:00 A.M.**, students may be dropped off in the morning carpool line at the front doors of the ECC. ECC staff will be on duty to escort them into the building. Please unbuckle your children from their car seats. Children should remain completely in the car until greeted by a teacher. Please do not allow your child to hang out of the windows or sunroof. Cars are not to be left unattended in the carpool lane. Should you choose to walk your child into his/her classroom, please park in the Independent Presbyterian parking lot.
- **After 8:00 A.M.**, students must be checked in at the ECC front desk. It is school policy for parents to sign children in when tardy. Parents will need to walk their child into the main entrance of the ECC.

Dismissal:

Half-Day dismissal time for PK2 students is 11:30 A.M. and 11:45 A.M. for PK and JK students.

Full-Day dismissal begins at 2:30 P.M. for PK2 students and 2:45 for PK and JK students.

Dismissal ends promptly at 3:00 p.m. On Wednesdays, dismissal begins at 2:00 and ends promptly at 2:15.

All students not picked up 10 minutes after dismissal time will be checking into Extended Day Activities and drop in fees will apply.

- **PK2 parents must walk in to pick up their children.** Please park in the Independent Presbyterian Church parking lot and walk in to the ECC foyer. Your child will be waiting on the blue cloud for pick up.
- **PK-JK** parents may proceed through the carpool line. The carpool line takes place in the circular drive in front of SDS and the Davis Early Childhood Center. All PK and JK families will be issued a carpool card. Please mount this card on the passenger side of the car on the sun visor. A rubber band can be used to hold it in place. Carpool cards allow the teachers to identify the car easily, so that children will be ready and waiting when parents drive to the front entrance. The circular drive is for carpool pick-up only. Please notify teachers through email before 1 P.M. of any carpool changes **and** call the ECC Front Desk (901-435-5893).
- **PK-JK** parents are welcome to park and walk to pick up their child. However, parking is limited to the visitor spaces on campus or across the street at Independent Presbyterian Church. Parents may wait under the awning, and the teachers will bring out their children. Please do not stand in front of the entrance during carpool.
- **Note about Safety Cones:** The orange safety cones are placed outside the SDS entrance at **2:55 P.M.** for the SDS carpool. If the cones are already out, please go through the SDS pickup line. **DO NOT** enter through the exit. The driveway is **ONE WAY ONLY**.

Change of Clothing

Please send in a complete change of clothing, including socks, underwear and long pants for cooler weather. We will keep these on hand for your child. Place clothes in a zip-lock bag and label with your child's name. Please make sure to replace clothes as needed.

Potty Training

Our PK2 faculty is experienced at meeting your child at his/her particular stage of potty training when they enter our program. They will work with you to promote success in this area of development. Please communicate frequently with the teachers about potty training experiences at home. Children must be fully potty trained and in regular undergarments for PK and JK. Please read the full ECC Bathroom Policy on page 13 of this handbook.

Biting

Biting, unfortunately, is a behavior that can occur among toddlers. While occasional incidents may occur, it is taken seriously. Please read our full ECC Biting Policy on page 13 of this handbook.

Recess

Children go outside for playground time every day that the weather permits. Please dress your child appropriately for outdoor play. The Early Childhood faculty will assist in helping parents “sunproof” their child. Please let us know if you wish for your child to wear a hat or sunglasses for recess. Because playtime is early in the day, it is recommended that sunscreen be applied prior to coming to school.

Lunch

Food service and milk are available 5 days a week. Parents must set up a My School Bucks account for purchasing food and drink items. Weekly menus will be posted on the *Wednesday Wire*. All orders will be placed online weekly. Orders will be due by 5:00 p.m. on Saturdays for the upcoming week. For specific dining services questions, please contact our kitchen manager at dininghall@saa-sds.org.

If you are providing your child’s lunch, please send it in the reusable container provided by the school. The container should be packed in a thermal lunchbox. **Please remember SAA-SDS is a peanut-free campus.**

Snack

All students must pack a morning snack daily. Students staying for after school care (EDA) must also pack an afternoon snack.

Rest Time

All PK2-JK children will have a rest time, the length of which varies by age. The children are not required to sleep. However, they must recline on a rest mat quietly during this time. This is in accordance with Tennessee law and developmentally appropriate practices outlined by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. All PK2-JK students use a 2” rest mat as required by the Tennessee Department of Education. The school provides this foam rest mat. All new students will receive a rest mat cover at their Meet the Teacher meeting. The cost is covered by your New Student Fee. Please do not send in any nap materials that are too large for the cubbies or for your child to carry alone.

Tote Bags

Due to the size of the ECC cubbies and lockers, students must use the ECC tote bag provided by the school. All new families receive this tote bag as a part of their class fees. Should you need to replace this bag at any time, a new one can be purchased from the school for \$25.00.

Guiding Your Child's Behavior

The Early Childhood faculty is sensitive and responsive to the specific needs and situations of each individual child. The foundation of guiding your child's behavior positively is to focus on and praise behaviors that are appropriate and acceptable. Development of self-control is facilitated through modeling, redirection, allowing your child to express his/her feelings, and maintaining consistent behavior parameters within the classroom setting.

School rules common to all classes are:

- Follow directions the first time.
- Keep hands and feet to yourself.
- Use walking feet in the classroom and hallways.
- Use your inside voice in the classroom and hallways.
- Be kind, respectful, and polite.

Ongoing communication between parents and teachers is essential when attempting to resolve behavioral issues. We encourage parents to communicate with their classroom teachers, working together as a team when resolving inappropriate behaviors.

Justice, Respect & Peace

The Justice, Respect & Peace (JRP) Program is the School's program designed to teach students peacemaking and conflict resolution skills. This program is adapted for success at the various grade levels of the school. As a community that holds peace as one of its underlying principles, bullying will not be tolerated at St. Agnes Academy-St. Dominic School.

Bullying occurs when someone with more power unfairly hurts someone with less power repeatedly. Power may be physical strength, social skills, verbal ability, or another resource. Through the JRP Program students are taught the following principles:

- We are kind to everyone.
- We stand up for others.
- We reach out to those who are left out.
- We find an adult who will help if we cannot.

Special Events

- Birthdays-We would like to honor your child's birthday at school. Please let your child's teacher know if you would like to order treats through our dining hall. Treats from home and bakeries are acceptable as long as they are peanut free. Teachers will distribute party invitations only if one is sent for each child of the same gender or the entire class.

- Parties and programs are a memorable and joyous part of your child's preschool years. Throughout the year, your child's teachers and room moms will notify you of special events you are invited to attend.

Communicable Disease and Illness Protocol

School Attendance: Children with any of the following symptoms should not be sent to school:

▪ <i>Acute cold with yellow/green discharge</i>	▪ <i>Temperature of 100.4° or higher</i>
▪ <i>Diarrhea and/or vomiting</i>	▪ <i>Swollen, painful gland</i>
▪ <i>Earache</i>	▪ <i>Headache</i>

Children must be symptom and fever free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication before returning to school after absence.

The Early Childhood Center faculty or the School Nurse will contact you to pick up your child if he or she develops any of the following symptoms or illnesses but are not limited to:

▪ <i>Temperature over 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit</i>	▪ <i>Pain or injury</i>
▪ <i>Persistent cough</i>	▪ <i>Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)</i>
▪ <i>Vomiting or Diarrhea</i>	▪ <i>Head lice</i>

Immunization Policy SAA-SDS

For the health and safety of our students and faculty, St. Agnes Academy-St. Dominic School (SAA-SDS) adheres to the Tennessee State Department of Health (TDH) requirements that each student have a Tennessee Certificate of Immunization on file prior to the student's first day of school. Health history forms must be completed annually with the SAA-SDS registration forms. Each student must have his/her own health history form filled out each school year, regardless of siblings.

All immunizations must be up-to-date and verified by the school prior to the student's first day of class. Immunization requirements generally require updating prior to enrollment in school for the first time, in kindergarten, and in seventh grade.

Other Important Health Information:

- All children enrolled in the SAA-SDS ECC program must have on file a copy of their birth certificate and the most recent copy of their immunization record signed

by their pediatrician in two designated places.

- Each child is required to have an Emergency Contact Form complete with emergency addresses and phone numbers of at least two responsible people who have permission to pick up in the event the parent cannot be reached.
- Children with allergies to foods, medications, insect bites, or other common substances will need to have their physician's protocol on file in the school office, nurse's office, and the child's classroom. The teacher should also be formally notified in writing.
- In the event your child contracts a communicable disease such as strep throat, chickenpox, viral meningitis, covid 19, hand, foot, & mouth, mumps, measles, etc., please notify the school nurse and your child's teacher immediately.
- Our policy on head lice is derived from sources such as the Centers for Disease Control and the American Academy of Pediatrics. Parents of children who are suspected of having live head lice will be notified by school personnel so that appropriate treatment may be started. Parents are asked to communicate the steps taken to the school nurse, and children are allowed to return to school once treatment has been initiated and live lice and nits are no longer observed. The school nurse must check your child before the returning to school.
- We are a peanut-free campus.
- All students who require an epi-pen are required to fill out an Epi-Pen Care Plan signed by a physician annually with your child's epi-pen. This should be turned into the school nurse.
- All students with asthma who require an inhaler, are required to send in an Asthma Action Plan signed by your prescribing provider at the start of every school year. This should be turned into the school nurse.

Preschool Bathroom & Self-Care Policy

St. Agnes Academy– St. Dominic School’s PK2-JK program is licensed by the State of Tennessee. Because we are not a diapering facility (according to Department of Education stipulations), all PK and JK students must be fully potty trained before starting PK and JK classes*. We recognize that accidents may occur, but the school may also deem an excessive number of accidents as reason to ask parents to keep a child home until he/she is fully potty trained. A series of three (or more) bathroom accidents within a week period indicates that the child is not yet fully potty-trained. In this case, the child will be asked to remain home until they can demonstrate independence of their toileting needs. Pull-ups are not to be worn at school. Parents may set up a meeting with the lead teacher and the director to go over notes from doctors.

With regards to self-care, the child must be able to wipe independently. If an accident should occur, the teacher will verbally walk the child through the wiping and changing process to ensure he/she is adequately clean.

*These six elements need to be present in order for your child to be considered fully potty trained.

Your child is able to:

- Recognize the physical urge to go to the bathroom.
- Control the urge until notifying the teacher.
- Continue to control the urge until the teacher and child reach the bathroom.
- Independently pull up and down undergarments and pants, skort, etc.
- Use the restroom in the toilet without the assistance from a teacher.
- Independently clean himself/herself with toilet paper.

ECC Biting Policy

When biting becomes excessive:

1. If a child inflicts 3 bites in a 30-day period, a conference will be held with the parents to discuss the child’s behavior and how the behavior may be modified. A speech evaluation may be requested or a behaviorist may be asked to make observations; both of these are at the parent’s expense.
2. If a child bites twice in a 4-hour period, the child will be required to be picked up for the remainder of the day.
3. If a child continues to bite, the school may decide they can no longer meet the needs of the student and request the family find a new school.

2023-2024 ECC Boys Uniform

YEAR ROUND UNIFORM

Required:

PANTS	Khaki Pull-on pants
SHORTS	Khaki Pull-on shorts
SHIRTS	Short or long sleeve purple knit shirt with SDS logo
SOCKS	Any white, tan or black socks
SHOES	Any all gray New Balance shoes with Velcro Sperry Lanyard Boat Shoe
OPTIONAL	White turtleneck with purple SDS monogram Grey sweatshirt with purple sds (please order through the SPIRIT SHOP) Grey quarter zip pullover sweatshirt with school name (please order through the SPIRIT SHOP)

2023-2024 ECC Girls Uniforms

FALL/SPRING

Fall: The first day of school until Fall Break in October

Spring: The week following Spring Break until last day of school in May

Required:

JUMPER	Blue or Pink pin cord A-Line jumper with logo Shorts/bike shorts must be worn under the jumper
BLOUSE	White short sleeve peter pan collar blouse
SOCKS	White ankle or crew socks
SHOES	1. White Keds with Velcro 2. Any all gray New Balance with Velcro 3. Cienita 56000 White Mary Jane

Optional:

SKORT	Pink Skort (must place order with the SPIRIT SHOP)
POLO	Banded bottom shirt to wear with skort
SWEATSHIRT	Pink sweatshirt with white SAA letters (must place order with the SPIRIT SHOP)
TIGHTS	White tights or leggings

WINTER

Winter: The week following Fall Break until the beginning of Spring Break

Required:

JUMPER	Grey and red plaid drop waist jumper
SKORT	Pink skort (must place order with the SPIRIT SHOP)
BLOUSE	White short sleeve peter pan collar polo
SHIRT for SKORT	Short sleeve banded bottom polo
SWEATER	Red cardigan with Monogram (winter only)
SOCKS	White ankle/crew socks
SHOES	1. White Keds with Velcro 2. Any all grey New Balance with Velcro 3. Cienita 56000 White Mary Jane

Optional:

TURTLENECK	White turtleneck with red monogram on collar
TIGHTS	Red or Black tights or leggings – No white please
SWEATSHIRT	Red sweatshirt with SAA letters (must place order with the SPIRIT SHOP)
PULL OVER FLEECE	Grey quarter zip with school name (must place order with the SPIRIT SHOP)

Miscellaneous:

JEWELRY	Jewelry is to be limited to the following: 1. a simple chain necklace with a cross or other religious symbol 2. a pair of post earrings worn in the lobe
ACCESSORIES	Accessories should not be distracting or a choking hazard 1. Hair accessories should not be a source of distraction 2. Nail polish, including French manicures, is not permitted