

# St. Thomas More Catholic Church

## PROCEDURES FOR PARENTS OF CHILDREN IN NURSERY

*This document is to be given to parents utilizing the Nursery who do not volunteer as caregivers.*

1. **Bringing your child to the nursery for the first time:** Each family is asked to complete a "Children's Information Form" concerning their child and family. This form enrolls your child in the Nursery and places you on the Nursery Ministry communication list when necessary. Should any of this information change during the year, you will need to resubmit a new form with the appropriate corrections. Please note on the form that it is an UPDATE. These forms will be kept on file in the Nursery Rooms to be used as reference during your child's time in the nursery. Be sure to include on this form which ministry event you attending while using childcare. If using the Nursery is a "one-time" use, completing this form is not necessary; however, details of your child's care should be included on the sign-in sheet.
2. **Check-in Procedure:** You may bring your child who will utilize the room into his/her assigned room and help them get acquainted with the room, meet the caregiver and sign them in. Please be considerate and limit traffic in the rooms.

At the Sign-In Area in your child's room, please do the following:

- Log your child in on the Sign-In/Sign-Out sheet. Use one line per child and include the information requested. Be sure to include special instructions such as potty training, nap times, feedings, allergies, etc.
- Please make a label with your child's name, also fill out an **allergy/life choices band (if needed)** and place this on their back and arm.
- Give diaper bag with all possessions labeled and child to a staff member.
- Pick up a pager if you do not have a cell phone, if you take a pager please note the pager's number on the Sign-In/Sign-Out sheet. Keep the pager in a place you will be able to feel it and be sure to remember to return the pager when you pick up your child. If pagers are not available, please include a cell phone number that you have on you or note which room you will be located. In this case, be sure to put your cell phone on vibrate.

After check-in, the staff will aid in separation by following your guidance. Long goodbyes often make clingy children become more so, and can upset other children who are already settled in. The majority of children adjust satisfactorily quite quickly; however, some children need to become engaged and then say goodbyes. We will encourage the first approach as much as possible, but will be flexible.

Some children who are experiencing separation anxiety might benefit from shorter stays in the nursery at the beginning. You can gradually increase their time until they are happily staying for the entire service.

3. **Locating a Parent:** If your child cries for 15 minutes and cannot be comforted, or appears sick, the Caregiver will notify you by texting/paging, calling or locating you. This is why it is so important to write your cell phone number/pager or room location on the Sign-In/Sign-Out Sheets. We will never bring a child to you and we encourage you to respond quickly. Please be discreet when coming to your child's room by quietly knocking on the door if you do not see a staff member.
4. **Check-Out Procedures:** Parents are requested to pick up their child **as soon as possible or within 15 minutes after the close of each church activity**. Children can be picked up in the classroom after signing the Sign-In/Sign-Out sheet. Your child will not be released to anyone but the person who dropped off the child unless you note a change on the Sign-In/Sign-Out sheet and after the pager has been returned (if issued).
5. **Nursery Staffing:** Our main focus is to provide quality care and supervision of your child by striving to maintain high adult-to-child ratios. Although we are not required to adhere to the caregiver: children ratios which have been established by the State of Texas for childcare facilities, we have considered their guidelines when establishing our suggested ratios. We will strive and always plan to have a caregiver: child ratio of at least one caregiver to every 6 children. For infants 6 months to 18 months, we will strive and always plan to have a caregiver: child ratio of at least one caregiver to every 4 children. The Diocese also has recommended ratios which we must adhere.

Per Diocesan requirements, we are required to have at least 1 EIM compliant adult over 21 years of age in each classroom and at least one EIM compliant adult supervising and available to assist as needed. The preferred scenario is to have at least 2 EIM compliant adults in each classroom and the 'Supervisor' serving in an overall supervisor capacity over all classrooms, Teen caregivers may serve as helpers and must be supervised by an adult at all times. We also strive to have at least one CPR & First Aid Trained and Certified person and one caregiver who has been trained on the Emergency Management Procedures for STM on the Nursery premise during nursery hours. If the number of children exceeds the ratio, there is a chance the room will be closed to additional children, since additional child care workers are not available unless an EIM compliant volunteer wishes to stay and volunteer. We encourage our caregivers to arrive at the nursery 15 minutes prior to the start of the event so that they may accommodate any early arrivals.

6. **Suggested Diaper Bag Contents:** Please bring the following **labeled** items as necessary for your child:
  - A clearly labeled diaper bag, sack or backpack (labels are provided)

- Extra diapers (disposable only please)
- Labeled plastic baby bottles and/or sippy cups
- Labeled pacifiers if applicable
- Change of clothing (even for the potty training children)
- Your child's favorite comfort item; however, we kindly ask that you do not bring any weapon-like toys (be sure to collect this upon leaving)
- Infants should bring their own snack, formula, or baby food
- Children should also bring their own snack and juices if necessary
- Appropriate outerwear including shoes for the weather (we may play outside)

7. **Policy for Sick Children:** Sick children will not be admitted into the Nursery. No caregiver will give medication of any kind. Some signs of illness are:

- Unusual fatigue or irritability
- Coughing, sneezing, runny nose, watery eyes
- Fever (child should be fever free without medication for 24 hours before returning to nursery)
- Vomiting or diarrhea (any time within the previous 24 hours)
- Inflamed throat
- Rash or cold sores

We appreciate your cooperation in keeping all our children healthy by not bringing a child who may be sick. Caregivers assist in this effort by following strict hygiene procedures and washing and disinfecting toys on a regular basis. Gloves can be found in each room and are also worn by the caregivers whenever changing a diaper.

If a sickness or an accident were to happen during your child's time in the nursery, the parent must be notified. Details of the event must be shared with the parent and an "Improving Training and Facilities" document completed and filed. These documents are located in the Nursery Notebook in each room. First Aid Kits are found in Room 1, 2 and Room 102 and the Family Center Kitchen and the Religious Education Workroom.

8. **Nursery and Playground Rules:** In order to maintain a safe, nurturing environment, all children are required to follow these rules anytime they are in the Nursery:

- No balls of any kind are allowed in the room unless they are rolled on the floor
- No rough-housing, pretend fighting, etc.
- No running in rooms or hallways
- No tree climbing
- No climbing on physical structure of playground equipment
- Bottoms and bellies on the swings
- No throwing of rocks
- Slide down on bottoms
- When using tire swing, two children at a time and no aggressive swinging or spinning
- Children leaving the nursery for any reason, including using the restroom, must be supervised by a caregiver at all times
- Use respectful voices and language
- Do not hurt others
- Listen and obey the staff and volunteers
- Caregivers should position themselves so that they can see all the children

Consequences:

- Warning
- Time out – the time out will last the same number of minutes as the child's age and will occur in an area which can be supervised at all times.
- If the caregiver has followed these procedures and decides that a child is still not under control, the caregiver may page the parent. The child must remain in the direct supervision of the parent and may not be brought back to the nursery for the duration of that day's events.
- Discipline for children under the age of two will consist of a simple statement of the rules and redirection to a more appropriate activity.

Please discuss these rules and consequences with your child and help Nursery staff to enforce them.

9. **Cancellations:** If you know your child will not be attending the nursery, please contact [Linda Lange, STM Nursery Coordinator, at 512-705-8189 or llange@stmaustin.org or your appropriate Ministry Leader.](mailto:Linda.Lange@stmaustin.org)