

HANDBOOK FOR THE STUDENTS AND PARENTS
OF
ST. THOMAS HELLENIC AFTERNOON SCHOOL

2012-2013



Greek Language * History * Civilization * Geography * Mythology
Folk Dances * Cultural Events

615 Mercer Street
Cherry Hill NJ 08002

856-665-1731church
<http://stthomasgoc.org/>

The Philosophy and Objectives

The Hellenic Afternoon School of Saint Thomas Greek Orthodox Church offers a comprehensive language program and instruction of the preservation of Hellenic Education. The school holds classes Mondays and Thursdays from 4:30 to 6:30 in the John N. Balis Education building adjacent to the church.

The curriculum is designed to fulfill the mission of the school. It encompasses an understanding of Hellenic cultural, heritage, geography, history, in addition to conversation and written language proficiency. These objectives are periodically evaluated and modified in accordance with the students' needs.

A significant goal of the school is that each student recognizes the significance and the influence of Greek civilization on World History from ancient to modern times.

The classroom teacher is the most important person assisting the student in the total education process. The teacher, along with the family, is responsible for influencing the education of today's youth. To accomplish the goals and objectives of the school, a serious commitment on the part of the parents is expected in assisting students to prepare for their classes. Greek school attendance is a time intensive undertaking which requires serious commitment on the part of the students and parents and should not be taken casually.

The Pastor and the Parish Council of Saint Thomas invites you to join the Hellenic Education Committee, the principal, the teachers, and the PTO (Parent Teacher Organization) in creating the best environment for our students. At the end of their Hellenic School career, we would like all our students to be able to say they took advantage of the opportunities the school offered. They worked hard to obtain a personal in-depth knowledge of their Hellenic language and heritage and graduated with an enjoyable Hellenic experience.

HELLENIC LANGUAGE PROGRAM

The Hellenic Language program is divided into three phases. Each phase consists of three to four levels of instruction, carefully designed to provide a high quality education, meeting the needs of the students. The Education Committee annually evaluates and enhances its curriculum, instructional material and teaching methods. All classes are structured around a series of reading books and corresponding workbooks that are age appropriate for all the grades. Teachers also enhance their lesson plans by interjecting other age appropriate reading writing material. Religion lessons will be taught by the Pastor across all grade levels throughout the year.

1 – Preparatory Studies

Level: Kindergarten, First and Second Grade

OBJECTIVE: In this phase, the student is exposed to a variety of learning activities and games. The education is interactive and designed to contribute to the development of perceptual, motor, verbal, and listening skills.

Kindergarten

The student must be, at minimum, enrolled in the First Grade of elementary school. This class is mandatory before moving to First Grade. After completion of the class, the student should be able to identify the Greek letters of the alphabet, and identify pictures with Greek words. Simple oral comprehension is emphasized throughout the year. They also learn basic Greek dances.

First Grade

This grade takes the teachings of kindergarten and enhances the reading, writing, and spelling, aspects along with everyday conversational dialogue. After the completion of this grade, the student should be able to read basic Greek text, participate in everyday conversation, and comprehend the language. They learn to recite Greek poems and songs as well as perform Greek dances.

Second Grade

Students are promoted to this grade upon successful completion of the first grade. The emphasis in this grade is solidifying the concepts of reading, writing and conversational Greek. Spelling and basic rules of grammar are integrated through out the curriculum. They learn to recite Greek poems and songs as well as perform several intricate Greek dances.

2 – Foundation Studies

Level: Third and Fourth Grade

OBJECTIVE: In this phase, the student should be able to read Greek fluently, comprehend texts of average complexity, and actively participate in everyday conversation.

Third Grade

Students are promoted to this grade upon successful completion of the second grade. The ongoing emphasis is in reading, writing, spelling, and conversation. Enhanced concepts of grammar are emphasized. Mythology is introduced and taught with its own reading materials. They learn to recite Greek poems and songs as well as perform more complicated Greek dances.

Fourth Grade

Students are promoted to this grade upon successful completion of the third grade. The ongoing emphasis is in reading, writing, spelling, and conversation. Ancient Greek History is introduced with its own reading material. A systematic course in grammar is covered throughout the curriculum. Students apply the grammatical rules to sentence structure. They should be able to recite Greek poems and songs as well as perform a more complicated Greek dances.

3 – Advanced Studies

Level: Fifth and Sixth Grade

OBJECTIVE: In this phase, the student has the opportunity to study Modern Greek Language and Heritage in depth. Students are exposed to a variety of learning material beyond the text books. After the completion of this phase the student should be able to comprehend texts, actively participate in everyday conversation, and express ideas and opinions in writing.

Fifth Grade

Students are promoted to this grade upon successful completion of the fourth grade. The ongoing emphasis is in reading, writing, spelling and conversation. History of Greece is taught in conjunction with Geography of Greece. A systematic course of grammar continues to be emphasized. Students should be able to construct paragraphs on any given subject. They recite Greek poems and songs and perform more complicated Greek dances.

Sixth Grade

Students are promoted to this grade upon successful completion of the fifth grade. The major subjects are reading, spelling and conversation. Advanced grammar skills are integrated. Essay writing is taught using a Greek composition book. Modern Greek History is introduced and explored throughout the year. They recite advanced Greek poems, perform Greek dances from more parts of Greece and increase their knowledge in Greek customs and traditions.

GRADUATION AND PROMOTION REQUIREMENTS

Students at each grade level must pass all subjects. A failing grade in any subject will require a re-examination of the subject, during review week in May.

CONSULTATIONS

The teachers have the responsibility for maintaining all academic records for the school year, evaluating the students' progress and behavior, and distributing report cards. An Open House will be held in the classrooms on the first day of school after the official opening of school year. This will provide an opportunity for the parents, students, and teachers to get acquainted. The teachers will outline their expectations of the students for the upcoming year. Parent-teacher conferences will be scheduled in November. Parents are invited to contact the teacher with concerns that may arise during the school year. Contact of teachers can occur before or after class, but not during class time.

Parents may contact the School Principal with their suggestions and concerns in writing, to:

Greek School
St. Thomas Greek Orthodox Church
615 Mercer Street
Cherry Hill, NJ 08002
Attn: Principal

They may also set up an appointment with the Principal during school hours.

They may also attend the Educational Committee Meeting which meets once a month during school hours in the library of the Balis Center. All concerns and comments will be reviewed by the Principal and discussed with the Committee members.

ATTENDANCE / ABSENCES / LATENESS

Classes are conducted on Mondays and Thursdays from the first week in September to the first week of June. They are from 4:30pm to 6:30pm. Students should be brought to school no earlier than 4:15pm. At the end of the class, students should be picked up by 6:30pm.

Please note: the school is not responsible for children not picked up by 6:30pm.

Regular attendance is a prerequisite for receiving a thorough and efficient education. If a child must be absent, the student and parent must comply with the provisions of the School's attendance policy.

Attendance Policy: If a student is absent, a call should be placed to the school office from the parent notifying the absence. If a student has missed 3 consecutive classes or 6 classes total, a letter from the School will be sent to the student's home to verify absences. 10 or more absences will require a grade level test given by the teacher to determine if the student can continue with the studies. If the student does not pass the test, the student may be removed from the grade and denied promotion to the next grade level.

Lateness Policy: All students should attempt to arrive prior to 4:30 pm to prepare for class. A student is considered late after 4:45 pm and should have a written note submitted to the teacher. After 3 consecutive late arrivals or 7 late arrivals in total when no explanations and notes are provided, a letter from the School will be sent to the student's home.

Attendance to the March Greek Independence Day Parade in Philadelphia is mandatory. A school bus will transport students from the Church to Philadelphia and back to the church. Parents attending the parade may transport their own children.

HOMEWORK/ REPORT CARD

Homework is an important extension of the classroom instruction. Accordingly, students are expected to complete homework assignments on a timely fashion. Teachers will average homework grade when grades are determined.

All test papers will be sent home for the parents to review, sign and return to the teacher. There are three marking periods during the school year. Each marking period a report card is distributed and needs to be signed by the parent and returned to the teacher. Grading is based on class participation, homework and testing.

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

The list of school supplies required for each student is given by the teacher during the first day of class. The student is expected to have the supplies by the next school day.

EMERGENCY CLOSING

If it is necessary to close the school because of inclement weather, a decision will be made by the Principal by 12 Noon. All parents will receive e-mail notification in the event that school is canceled due to snow. You may also call the church office (856) 665-1731.

All scheduled school closings are listed on the School Calendar distributed to the students at the beginning of the school year.

SAFETY FIRST

During Greek School days, entrance is from the parking lot of the Community Center entrance on Mercer Street. Follow the **one-way traffic** to the main entrance of the John N. Balis Educational Center. Drop off student, and then continue to the front of the church and Mercer Street. Please park away from the main entrance of the school. If parents are picking up students before the 6:30 pm dismissal, they must sign out the student from the Principal's office.

A School fire drill will be organized by the school and will be conducted by the teachers.

PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION

The St. Thomas Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) was founded in 1977 with the main purpose of supporting the Hellenic School by helping to maintain communication and cooperation between parents, teachers and administrators. The PTO also raises funds for supplemental educational materials and learning tools. They also organize cultural and recreational programs and activities that encourage and promote Orthodox Christian family values. The PTO has general meetings on a monthly basis and encourages and welcomes all parents to attend and participate. The Executive PTO board oversees the events planned for the year. Membership applications are distributed in September.

DRESS CODE FOR SPECIAL EVENTS

There are times during the year, the students will be asked to wear blue and white: for OXI day in October, the celebration of Greek Letters Day and the 25th of March Day. Girls are requested to wear white blouses with navy blue skirts; the boys are requested to wear white shirts and navy blue pants. For the 25th of March celebration, the procession to the Municipal Building in Cherry Hill, and the Philadelphia Greek Independence Day Parade, students may wear Greek costumes.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES and CODE OF CONDUCT

All students have the responsibility to:

- ❖ Contribute to maintaining a safe and orderly school environment that is conducive to learning and to show respect to other persons and property.
- ❖ Use language that is appropriate for a school and church environment.
- ❖ Be familiar with and abide by all policies, rules, and regulations dealing with student conduct

- ❖ Unless excused, students will attend school Monday and Thursday and be in class. On time. And be prepared to learn. Please notify the Principal of all absences.
- ❖ Work to the best of their ability in all academic and extracurricular pursuits and strive toward their highest possible level of achievement.
- ❖ Respond to the directions given by teachers, Principal, and other school personnel in a respectful, positive manner.
- ❖ Abide by the bathroom policy and limit disruptions to the class
- ❖ Ask the teachers questions when they do not understand.
- ❖ Seek help in resolving problems.
- ❖ Dress appropriately for school and functions.
- ❖ Accept responsibility for their actions.
- ❖ Not run in hallways or stairways.
- ❖ Conduct themselves to the highest standards of conduct when participating or attending school-sponsored extracurricular events.

Prohibited Student Conduct

The Principal expects all students to conduct themselves in an appropriate and civil manner. They must have proper regard for the rights and welfare of other students, personnel, and other members of the school community, farther more they should care for school facilities and equipment.

The Principal recognizes the need to clarify expectations for student conduct while on school property or engaged in a school function. Students who do not accept responsibility for their own behavior and who violate these school rules will be penalized for their conduct. Students are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including suspension from school.

Personal Property

Toys, radios, electronic games, ipods, MP3 players and all types of electronic devices can not be brought to school. Cell phones should be turned off during school hours. If any of these items are on or found with the student, they will be taken away and parents need to claim them at the Principle's office. At no time will a child bring large sums of money to school. Items which may endanger a child or disrupt normal school activities will be confiscated by the Principal and parents need to claim them at the Principal's office

CONTACTS for SCHOOL YEAR 2012-13

The teachers assigned for the 2012-13 school year are:

Kindergarten	Mrs. Efthemia Lavdas	elavdas@hotmail.com
1 st Grade	Mrs. Elpida Christodoulakis	secretary@stthomasgoc.org
2 nd Grade	Mrs. Katerina Cokonis	ACokonis@yahoo.com
3 rd Grade	Mrs. Eleni Mantagas	hmantagas@verizon.net
4 th Grade	Ms. Dora Gkara	doragkara@live.com
5 th Grade	Mrs. Christina Horiates	Christinahoriates@yahoo.com
6 th Grade	Mrs. Marilena Tyris	MarilenaTyris@hotmail.com
Dance Instructor:	Ms. Irene Gavras	gavrasirene@gmail.com
Pastor:	Father Emmanuel Pratsinakis	priest@stthomasgoc.org
Principal:	Mrs. Panagiota Delimaris	yiotadel@yahoo.com
Chairman of Education Committee:	Mr. Stathis Karadonis	karadonis@verizon.net
President of PTO:	Mrs. Katherine Iliadis	liliadis@aol.com