



ST. GREGORY THE GREAT ACADEMY

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why is St. Gregory the Great an “Academy?”

St. Gregory the Great Academy’s designation recognizes its firm Catholic identity, the depth of its academic programs, its sustainability, and its commitment to being on the forefront of educational data collection and application.

2. Typically, how many children are in each class?

Preschool classes generally have a 6:1 ratio of students to adults for Preschool 3 and an 8:1 ratio of students to adults for Preschool 4. Kindergarten classes are capped at 22 students, while grades 1-8 can have between 25-30 students per class.

3. Are there teacher assistants in the classrooms?

There are teacher assistants in the Preschool classes and in grades K-2 in order to maintain appropriate student to teacher ratios.

4. Does the Academy have advanced placements classes?

Students in grades 5 through 8 who qualify may be placed in Accelerated Math, Pre-Algebra, and Algebra. This placement is contingent upon qualification based on report card scores, standardized test scores, and placement test score. It is important to note that teachers in all grades are required to differentiate classroom instruction to meet student learning needs. More information on the curriculum is available on our website: <http://www.stgregorythegreatacademy.org/curriculum>.

5. How does the Academy stay at the forefront of technology?

All classrooms, Preschool 4 and up, have Star Boards (interactive whiteboards). The entire school and parish center are covered by robust WiFi. There are iPads deployed Preschool through grade 3. All students grade 4 and up have an account on the Academy’s Google Drive domain, which allows them to complete assignments electronically from any web-enabled device. Grades 5-8 will be issued a Chromebook on a one-to-one basis for the year. We also have a Visual Arts club which produces weekly news videos and videos for special events in our school studio. Past videos are available for viewing on our Vimeo channel: <https://vimeo.com/user47725520>.

6. How often do the children have religion?

Religion is taught daily for all grade levels, Preschool through grade 8. The Academy welcomes students of all faiths, however, all students will take religion classes. There is no option to “opt-out” of religion instruction.

7. How often do the children attend Holy Mass?

The entire Academy attends Mass every Friday, on days of obligation, and for special intentions.

8. Is there before and after care programs?

There is supervised care in the morning beginning at 7:20am for K-8 students and 7:30am for Preschool students. There is an Extended Day Program (EDP) from dismissal until 6:00pm for students Preschool 3 through 8.

9. Does the Academy have a lunch program?

There is a hot lunch program provided under contract with CaféTerias Food Service, which is offered 5 days per week, except on half days. Students in Preschool 3 through 8 may purchase lunch.

10. Does the lunch program provide a voucher or cash card?

You can purchase a card with a certain number of lunches or your child can pay cash.

11. Is there a full time nurse?

Yes, there is a nurse at the Academy 5 days a week from 8:30am to 2:30pm. The Academy complies with New Jersey state regulations regarding required immunizations, automatic external defibrillators (AEDs), and stock epinephrine availability.

12. What clubs or activities are offered?

There are a variety of different clubs and activities available to students. They include Student Government, Coding and Photography Club, Altar Servers, Garden Club, Instrumental Music Lessons (additional fees apply), Choir, Student Ambassadors, Crusader Service Club, STEM Club, the Spring Musical, CYO sports (basketball, soccer, softball, track and cheerleading), Youth Group, and Scouts.

13. Do you have physical education taught in the Academy and is there a gym uniform? All children have physical education class once a week and students in grades 1-8 wear their gym uniform on their assigned day. Kindergarten students wear the gym uniform five days per week; preschool students do not wear a uniform.

14. What other co-curricular classes are provided?

Co-curricular classes are taught by specialist teachers, and include Spanish (grades K-7), Chinese (grades 5 and 6), Latin (grades 7 and 8) Library, Music, Art, Science Lab, Physical Education, and Computers for grades K-8. Preschool classes are instructed by specialists in Music, Physical Education, Art, and Spanish.

15. What accommodations are made for special needs children?

Students who may have special needs are referred for a Child Study Team Evaluation. This can happen as early as kindergarten. If a child is found to be eligible for special services, the Academy works through Hamilton Township to use non-public federal and state funds, to their established

limit, to provide accommodations and special programs as noted in the child's service plan. Resource Room, Supplemental Instruction, Compensatory Education, and Speech Therapy are all available to students who qualify. In-class support teachers assist students in grades 5 through 8. It is important to note that the programs which are funded from federal and state sources are contingent on the allocation of federal and state funding each year. Depending on specific needs, other services may be arranged through the school for additional fees. Examples of these services are Occupational Therapy, additional Dyslexia support, additional supplemental instruction, and additional speech services.

16. As a parent, what kind of service can I give that will enable me to be involved in the Academy?

All families are asked to complete a total of 30 service points each year. There are several things that you can do to receive your service points while working to improve the school environment. There is a list of all point activities available upon request. Also, a sign-up sheet listing all needed volunteers is posted in the September Welcome Back Packet each year.

17. When my child reaches the Lower Elementary School level, will the classroom environment change?

Students in grades 3 and 4 change classes with the other homerooms of the same grade level. Beginning in grade 5, the students will have different teachers for different subjects and will be moving around the school for each class. Also, when your child reaches middle school, ILA and Math classes decrease in size.

18. Is bus transportation provided for all districts?

Bus transportation decisions are made by your local school district and each district will re-evaluate the decision on providing this service during summer break. This follows the tenets of state law regarding transportation of non-public school students, which provides a set dollar amount per non-public student. Currently Hamilton Township, Robbinsville Township, East Windsor Regional, and Upper Freehold Regional all provide transportation for our students. If your district does NOT provide busing and you live within 20 miles of the non-public school, you will be reimbursed this state determined set dollar amount by the school district for providing your own transportation.

19. What sports are offered?

We offer basketball, soccer, softball, cheerleading and spring track through the parish CYO programs.

20. Is the building secured?

The only way to get into the Academy is to ring the bell and the office will let you in. All doors are always locked. No one is permitted to walk around the Academy unless they have a Visitor Badge provided by the office. The school and the parish center have 32 security cameras to provide perimeter and interior security. A panic system to summon the police and initiate a "lock down" in the event of a major crisis is in place, and can be activated from several locations on the campus.

21. Do the Preschool classes offer scheduling flexibly?

The Preschool application form lists suggested weekly frequency schedules for you to choose from. We also honor special requests as space is available. Note that preschool sections fill quickly, so early registration is suggested.

22. Is there a Summer Camp Program available?

St. Gregory the Great Academy offers a summer camp program for eight weeks in the summer for students who are entering grades Preschool 3 through 5 the following September. The camp has two divisions, the Cubs (Preschool and Kindergarten) and the Lions (grades 1-5). Preregistration is required.

23. Do the students wear uniforms?

Preschool students do not wear uniforms, and are asked to wear comfortable play clothes to school. The Physical Education uniform is worn by Kindergarten students every day and by students in grades 1-8 on their assigned Physical Education day. Students in grades 1-8 wear the regular school uniform on all days outside of their Physical Education day.

24. How can I monitor my child's progress?

There are opportunities for parent/teacher conferences at the middle point of the first two trimesters. Teachers are available by email and telephone regularly to discuss concerns. Beginning in grade 3, parents have access to Parent Portal, which is an electronic system for reviewing student grades as they are posted.

25. Do students take standardized tests?

Academy students in grades 2 through 8 take the diocesan selected standardized assessment, which is currently the Iowa Assessment, each year in March. The Iowa Assessment is used in all Catholic elementary schools in the Diocese of Trenton. Students are prepared for this assessment throughout the school year during the course of their regular instruction; teachers do not “teach to the test.” St. Gregory the Great Academy scores on the Terra Nova Assessment from March 2017 were in the top 15% of all schools in the United States which used the program which we used at that time, namely the Terra Nova Assessment. A summary of these scores are available on our website.

26. What opportunities for the performing arts are available?

Our Academy choir is composed of students who express an interest in singing. The choir performs in a yearly concert, sings at Academy masses, and has been invited to perform in venues including Carnegie Hall and St. Patrick's Cathedral. There is also a Drama Club, which puts on the Spring Play each year. All students in grades 1-4 participate in the yearly concert, usually held in the winter.

27. Does my child need to be immunized?

Yes, St. Gregory the Great Academy follows all New Jersey laws regarding immunizations. This includes requiring a yearly [influenza vaccine for preschool students](#). Please note that religious exemptions are NOT accepted at St. Gregory the Great Academy.