



# ***St. Thomas More Catholic School***

Joy in Faith, Joy in Academics, Joy in Community  
Shaping minds, hearts and souls since 1964.

## **Family Handbook 2020-2021**

**\*\*\*PLEASE REFER TO 2020-2021 RETURN TO SCHOOL PLAN FOR  
CHANGES DUE TO COVID-19**

# **Table of Contents**

## **Introduction:**

Welcome/Preface  
School Mission & Vision  
Parish Mission  
School Accreditation

## **Registration:**

Non-discrimination Policy  
Admission  
Age Requirements  
Admission Policies  
Registration  
Probationary Period of Admission

## **Finances:**

Tuition  
Payment Policy  
Tuition Assistance  
Delinquent Accounts

## **School Hours & Attendance:**

Office Hours  
Instructional Hours  
Tardy & Absent (defined)  
Attendance  
Tardy Policy  
Withdrawal  
Leaving During School Hours  
Arrival Procedure  
Dismissal Procedure

## **Student Life:**

Curriculum  
Resource & Guidance  
Media Center  
Textbooks

Sports Program  
Creative Arts Programs  
School Masses  
Altar-Serving  
Student Attendance at School Performances  
Cafeteria & Food Allergy Considerations  
Playground  
Field Trips & Chaperones  
Student Council  
Yearbooks  
Lockers  
Lost & Found  
Birthdays  
Invitations to Parties

### **Grading Policy & Academics:**

Diocese Standards-Based Grading Policy  
Philosophy  
Purpose  
Types of Assessment  
Purpose of Grades  
Grade Composition  
Reporting Grades  
Reporting Behavior & Conduct  
Retake Policy  
Other Matters on Assessment & Grades  
Academic Achievements & Awards  
Academic Probation  
Promotion, Remediation & Retention  
Homework & Make-up Assignments  
Standardized Testing

### **Code of Conduct:**

Student Expectations  
Respect for Property  
Illegal and Harmful Objects  
Social Media  
Bullying & Cyberbullying  
Cell Phones

Personal Items  
Student Safety

**Discipline Policy:**

Early Childhood & Primary Discipline Policy  
Intermediate & Middle School Discipline Policy  
Infractions & Consequences  
Reporting Infractions  
Detention  
Intervention Plan  
In-School & Out-of-School Suspension  
Administrative Probation  
Expulsion  
Parent Integrity  
Anti-Bullying Program and Policy

**Communication:**

Constant Contact  
School Website  
Emergency Contact Information  
School Closing and Delays  
Report Cards & Parent Teacher Conferences  
Appointment with the Principal

**Dress Code:**

Uniform  
Uniform Closet  
Out-of-Uniform Days  
Spirit Shirts

**Volunteers:**

Visitors & Volunteers  
Required Volunteer Hours  
Volunteer Hub  
Volunteer Opportunities

**Health & Safety:**

Illness  
Medications  
Health Policies & Procedures

Mandatory Reporting  
Emergency Drills  
Hurricanes & Severe Weather  
School Evacuations  
Lockdowns

**Technology Policy:**

Technology Program/Acceptable Use

## **Introduction**

Welcome! We are pleased that you have chosen us as your school family. In an effort to constantly strive for the best communication and relationship with our families, we have provided you with this important tool for your reference. Please be sure to review this handbook in its entirety and refer to it throughout the school year. As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact us. We have an open-door policy in regards to communication, as together we maintain a 'Joyful' school community in faith, academics, and service!

## **Preface**

We hope that this handbook will provide information to assist parents in the performance of their duties and in understanding the operation of our school. The rules and guidelines in this handbook are illustrative of "Fundamental Fairness." All rules not covered in this handbook are delegated to the Pastor and Principal for definition and enforcement. STM is bound by policies in the Diocesan Policy Handbook. The development and implementation of rules and policies for STM is the responsibility of the Administration.

STM welcomes you and prays that you will be supportive of our traditions and requirements.

## **School Mission Statement**

As a mission of The Catholic Community of St. Thomas More, we provide an exceptional education for each learner in a God-centered environment, through a community focused on spiritual development, academic pursuits, and service to others.

## **Parish Mission Statement**

As disciples of Jesus Christ we are a diverse and hospitable Catholic Community. We pray, serve and spread the Gospel with joy.

## **School Accreditation**

STM is fully accredited by AdvanceED (<http://www.advanc-ed.org/>). Each Catholic school participates in on-going school improvement. It symbolizes the unity and commitment of the faculty and staff to insure the existence of excellence in our school.

# Admissions

## Admissions Policy

The mission of the schools and early childhood centers of the Diocese of Raleigh is to engage our school/center communities in creating quality education within a Catholic environment that fosters the current and future development of the whole child.

St Thomas More Catholic School does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, sex, color, national or ethnic origin in the administration of educational policies, admission policies, scholarship programs, and other school administered programs.

Openings in the school will be filled in the following order:

1. Children already in the school who wish to reapply.
2. Siblings of parishioners and children enrolled in the school as of the previous school year.
3. STM Parishioners - applies to all REGISTERED, ACTIVE, AND CONTRIBUTING members of the parish.
4. Other Catholics - supporting documentation is required.
5. Other applicants. If there are more applicants in any of the above categories than there are available openings, selections for admittance will be made by means of a waiting list.

To be eligible for acceptance and parish tuition rates for the school year, you must meet the following criteria:

**Registered:** Have been registered at St. Thomas More Church for one year as of March 15, of the previous year, unless you recently moved into the Triangle area. If you have recently moved into this area, documentation must be provided by your previous parish verifying that you were a registered, active, and contributing member of that parish.

**Active:** Have attended weekly Mass at STM since March 15, of the previous year.

**Contributing:** Have contributed financially to the support of the Church in a regular and identifiable way through parish envelopes or checks since March 15, of the previous year. Contributions cannot be made in a lump sum and cannot be made retroactive in order to qualify for the reduced rate. If your tuition payments are delinquent for two months, you are in danger of losing your eligibility to continue your education for the rest of the year.

**Students entering from other schools:** The administration of St. Thomas More Catholic School reserves the right to interview all children transferring from other schools and the parents of those children. We require copies of standardized scores, report cards, teacher recommendations, and any other samples of schoolwork that will help us to assess the child's academic readiness. We reserve the right to test any new applicant to determine their grade level, placement and acceptance and to do screening for Pre-K applicants. If we determine that we cannot meet the needs of the student, the parents will be advised to seek other placement. Registration of new students will occur in February.

\*\*New students entering 8th grade will only be considered for admission if they are moving from another state.

**Age and Registration Prerequisites:** Children must be four years old by August 31st to enter the pre-kindergarten, five years old by August 31st to enter the kindergarten and six years old by August 31st to enter the first grade. All new students must present original birth and baptismal certificates as well as a complete record of immunizations. A letter of recommendation for pre-kindergarten, kindergarten and first grade are also required. A registration fee is needed to complete the registration process.

**Immunizations:** All students are required to be up to date with immunizations. State law requires the following minimum doses: 5 DPT Shots (one required dose after 4th birthday) 4 ORAL POLIO VACCINE DOSES (one required dose after 4th birthday) 2 MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) after 15 months of age. 3 HIB Vaccine

**Re-enrollment of current students:** Re-enrollment for students attending St. Thomas More Catholic School will occur in early January. If tuition payments are not current, re-enrollment will not be accepted. If we determine that we cannot meet the needs of a student or if the student is interfering with the education of other students, we reserve the right to refuse re-enrollment. We will do all that we can to assist parents in finding an alternative that would best serve the needs of the child.

### **Probationary Period of Admission**

All new students will be accepted on a probationary basis for a nine week period. If warranted, probation may be extended to the end of the semester. The purpose of this policy is to ascertain a pupil's ability to adjust to the school philosophy and program. All transfer students MUST be in good standing with their previous school

# Finances

## Tuition Rates and Fees

Tuition and Re-enrollment/Instructional Fees are determined each year by the St. Thomas More Budget Committee, School Advisory Board and Finance Council based on the yearly budget and are published prior to re-enrollment. All fees and payments are non-refundable.

## Tuition Assistance

Families in need of tuition assistance may pursue scholarships, and financial aid from various sources. Please visit the school Tuition Assistance webpage for more information <https://www.stmcsnc.org/tuition-assistance>

1. **FACTS Grant & Aid Assessment** will conduct the financial need analysis for us again this year. To be considered for tuition assistance all required information and supporting documents must be submitted and uploaded to the FACTS Grant and Aid website by March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019. Applications will open December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2018. A FACTS website link is located on the Tuition Information page under the Admissions tab of the school website. Families **MUST** re-apply **EACH** year.

*Note for separated or divorced parents:* In the case of divorced or separated parents, each retains the obligation to contribute to the education of his or her child, regardless of whether a legal agreement to do so exists. In this instance, both parents must complete a required Financial Aid application either jointly or separately. Financial aid grants will be made only after considering the financial resources of both parents. In the case of separated and/or divorced parents, no information will be given by the school to either parent regarding the other parent's financial disclosures. The assets of both parents will be considered before making any award; the assertion that one parent has disclaimed responsibility for educational expenses does not apply.

2. **The Opportunity Scholarship Program** expands school choice in North Carolina through scholarship grants for eligible children in kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade and is administered by the NCSEAA – North Carolina State Education Assistance Authority. An eligible student must live in a household whose income meets the Income Eligibility Guidelines established by the OSP.

# All families of St. Thomas More Catholic School are expected to pay tuition. Financial assistance may be available for currently enrolled families experiencing a temporary financial difficulty. Should a family have a problem or need for some assistance during the year, the parent should contact the Principal. Any financial information and requests will be held in the strictest confidence. A family who does not remain current with their tuition payments risks the loss of their tuition assistance.

### **Delinquent Accounts**

Delinquent accounts, whether for tuition or aftercare, can result in a child being removed from the school. However, every opportunity is afforded a family to help them bring their delinquent account current. The process is as follows:

1. First Month Delinquent - Communication will be made with the family (via email, phone call, or letter) requesting payment.
2. Second Month Delinquent - If no attempt has been made to bring the account or accounts current, the family will be required to meet with the School Administration to work out a payment plan.
3. Third Month Delinquent - If no attempt has been made to bring the account or accounts current and there is no payment plan in place, the student/s will be:
  - a. Suspended from attending aftercare (if it's the aftercare account that is delinquent).
  - b. Asked to leave the school for non-payment.

## **School Hours & Attendance**

### **Office Hours**

7:30am-3:15pm

### **Instructional Hours**

7:50am-2:45pm

### **Definition of Tardy and Absence**

Students are considered absent for the whole day if they arrive after 11:30am or leave for the day before 10:00am.

\*\*\*Students in grades PreK to 8<sup>th</sup> are expected to enter the STM Hall each morning between 7:30am and 7:50am to wait for Prayer and Assembly. Students who arrive to school after Prayer and Assembly has begun will be counted as tardy. Parents must accompany their child(ren) to the elementary office to sign them in if arriving after 7:50am.

## **Attendance**

Regular attendance and punctuality have a marked influence upon academic achievement. They are essential elements to consistent progress in school. Being absent means a student is missing important classroom instruction. A student's presence each day is the responsibility of both the student and their family. Consistent attendance is required in order for your child to be properly prepared to learn.

Parents are encouraged to schedule their children's medical and dental appointments after school. Parents are also asked to please honor the school calendar and plan vacations that coincide with the school holidays.

If your child is going to be absent or tardy you MUST call 919-942-6257 or email [mjkrafte@stmcsnc.org](mailto:mjkrafte@stmcsnc.org) before 8:15am. The call should include the reason for the child's absence. As a safety precaution, parents of absent students will be contacted if the office has not been informed.

The school is required to report "truancy" to the Department of Child Protective Services when there is an extended absence, without notification, from the parent or guardian. A student who is absent for twenty or more days in a school year may not be eligible for promotion to the next grade or may receive an incomplete for the year. A conference may be scheduled with the principal to discuss further.

## **Tardy Policy**

\*\*\* It is the responsibility of all parents to insure their children arrive on time for school. In the morning the gym doors close at exactly 7:50 AM as this is when Prayer and Assembly begins. If you arrive after this time you are required to park your car in the parking lot and walk your student into the building, as it is unsafe for them to be unescorted. Parents must sign their children in using the computer in the office area, and wait with their child until Prayer and Assembly concludes.

If a student is consistently tardy and their academic performance is being affected, the Administration has the right to consider retention for the following academic year.

## **Leaving During School Hours**

\*\*\* When students leave during school hours, parents must provide written notification to the classroom teacher. It should state when the child will be picked up and the reason for their release. They will be called to the school office upon the arrival of their parents. Parents must sign out their children before leaving. When returning to the school before regular dismissal, parents must accompany their child/ren back into school. Parents are asked to consult the school calendar before scheduling appointments

during school hours. Students will not be allowed to be signed out during the last 25 minutes of school, unless there is an emergency.

### **Withdrawal**

When a student withdraws, a copy of the permanent record card, grade reports and health records will be sent directly to the receiving school upon request. Parents who are withdrawing their child(ren) must give a 30-day written notice to be eligible for reimbursement of tuition. Without a 30-day written notice, Saint Thomas More Catholic School reserves the right to determine how much tuition will be returned.

### **Arrival Procedure**

\*\*\*Children may be dropped off at 7:30 in the morning. Teachers and the Safety Patrol are on duty at that time. Cars may pull up slowly to the sidewalk in front of the elementary and gym buildings. Those on duty will help students out of the car and make sure they get safely into STM Hall where they sit in assigned locations. **If parents choose to park and walk their child into the school, they are to park at the top of the hill by the church and walk their child down the sidewalk. Please do not park in front of the school buildings at arrival.** At no time should a student be dropped off in such a way that they must cross traffic or parking lots.

### **Dismissal Procedures**

\*\*\*Parents should keep their car tag with family name displayed in the front car window. The speed limit in our parking lot is 15 MPH. Parents should arrive no sooner than 15 minutes prior to dismissal, as earlier arrival interferes with normal traffic flow on campus and on Hwy. 15-501. **If parents choose to park and walk down to get their child from either building, they are to park at the top of the hill by the church and come down the sidewalk. Please do not park in front of the school buildings at dismissal.**

Parents should stay in their car and allow children to get into the car with the help of our teacher assistants. Students who are not picked up by 3:00pm will be sent to aftercare. There will be a 10-minute grace period in Aftercare. Aftercare is located within the school cafeteria. Parents will need to park and enter the Aftercare area to sign out their child. A fee of \$1 per minute will be billed via the family's FACTS Account, for students who are not registered for Aftercare.

# **Student Life**

## **Curriculum**

Our academic program is developed according to the standards and benchmarks provided by the Office of Catholic Schools. The religious beliefs of the Catholic faith permeate the curriculum. The main focus of the religion program is to impart Catholic truths and values. We establish our Catholic identity by living Christ's Gospel message of worship, prayer, and service. Religion standards are provided through the Diocesan Office of Catholic Schools.

The goal of the academic program is to develop a lifelong love for learning. An innovative curriculum is well-planned and balanced at each grade level. It encourages critical thinking, problem solving, and independent learning. Our core academic subjects are Religion, English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies.

St. Thomas More offers our students an excellent curriculum based on the Diocesan Curriculum Guides which include the North Carolina Standard Course of Study and Common Core State Standards. For more information, please visit <http://dioceseofraleigh.org/offices/catholic-schools/curriculum>.

STM Catholic School is committed to ensuring that all admitted students succeed. In the event that a learning difference is identified, requiring specialized instruction, we are able to provide remedial resources for most students.

Our academic curriculum is enhanced by an offering of co-curricular learning opportunities including: Physical Education, Art, Music, Media, Technology and Spanish.

## **Resource and Guidance**

The Diocese of Raleigh Catholic Schools acknowledge that there are students who require special services to meet their full human potential.

St. Thomas More Catholic School is committed to all students succeeding to the best of their abilities. In the event that a student has a diagnosed special need (documented by licensed medical personnel) accommodations may be offered that can be reasonably made within the normal general education classes and when the school has the resources (academic/staff) available to accommodate the students' needs. However, modifications to academic requirements or alterations in general course of studies will not be made.

The Diocese of Raleigh Catholic Schools are exempt from the mandate of providing services for IEP's and 504 plans.

If a student cannot be accommodated within the school program, every effort is made to assist with placement in another school program beyond St. Thomas More Catholic School.

Resource teachers are assigned to grades K-4 and 5-8. They are a valuable resource to both parents and students as academic needs are identified through evaluation. Our guidance counselor is also available to assist students in the development of healthy self-esteem, problem solving, peer relations, and other matters. Teachers may refer students to the counselor. Students and/or parents may request an appointment with the guidance counselor. Parents are notified if the situation warrants.

### **Media Center**

The Media Center is an area of the school that must be respected. Students are responsible for the materials they use and check out. Reference materials may not be removed from the Media Center. Lost or damaged books/materials borrowed from the Media Center must be paid for at the replacement price.

### **Textbooks**

Students are responsible for the textbooks and workbooks issued to them. They are expected to protect their books by covering them and keeping them clean. Students will label textbooks and workbooks with their name. Books that are lost or damaged must be paid for at full replacement cost.

### **Sports Program**

\*\*\*St. Thomas More participates in the Triangle Catholic School Athletic Conference. Students in grades 6-8 are eligible to participate in sports programs. Information will be sent via our weekly newsletter, Constant Contact, regarding team formation.

Students participating in athletics, and their parents, are required to read, consider and agree to abide by the expectations, rules and responsibilities specified in our Athletic Policy, found under the [Extracurricular Tab](#) on our school website.

### **Creative Arts Programs**

We offer a rich and diverse creative arts program which includes both visual and performing arts. Each year we present a theater production, as well as participate in many community activities with our choral program.

Student performers are representatives of our school and are expected to act with the utmost integrity and character at all times. Student performers must maintain at least an overall 2.5 average and have no failures in any one class. Should a student performer drop below these academic and/or behavioral requirements, he or she will not be able to practice or participate in any production for the remainder of that activity.

### **School Masses**

\*\*\*All students attend the 8:40am Mass each Friday that we are in school. Masses for Holy Days of Obligation are also held at 8:40am with all students in attendance.

Students rotate by class in participating in school Masses through prayers, responses, hymns, altar serving, and other components. Everyone is expected to participate with enthusiasm, reverence, and respect. Parents and community members are welcomed and encouraged to attend these school Liturgies.

Students who are Catholic and have received the Sacrament of Penance will have annual opportunities to participate in the sacrament during school hours.

Additionally, students and their families are expected to attend any Sunday morning Masses designated as a school-led Mass. Students are to wear their uniform to all school-led Masses. Dates for these masses will be communicated via our weekly newsletter, Constant Contact.

### **Altar-Serving**

Students who are in Grades 4 to 8 have the option to train to become an altar server to serve at School Mass, as well as weekend and special Liturgies. Students in these grade levels will have the opportunity to receive training during the school day, annually.

### **Student Attendance at School Performances**

Students are provided with various opportunities to perform throughout the year. The school offers support for these performances by inviting specific grades to attend events. Not all performances are intended to be viewed by all students. Students will be given the opportunity to watch siblings perform if their class has been invited to the performance. However, the school does not support siblings being removed from class to watch a performance that the entire class has not been invited to attend. Parents are expected to show respect for teaching and learning time in the classroom and not request that exceptions be made for their child.

## **Cafeteria**

\*\*\*Hot lunch is available each day. Prices and updated menus are posted in the Renweb database, accessed via the Parent Portal. A letter is sent home each year outlining the process to order lunch if you wish to, and can also be found on our school website in the [Parents & Students Tab](#).

Each class has a specific time set aside for a lunch period. As in all areas of the school, courtesy is expected in the cafeteria. Proper table manners are expected and required. Students are expected to leave tables and chairs clean and neat.

Forgotten lunches should be brought to the kitchen in the Cafeteria. Be sure all items are labeled with your child's name and grade level. Fast food, candy and soda are not to be brought in for lunch. If a student does not have a lunch, the school will provide a small sandwich, bag of chips and an applesauce for them. The cost for this will be \$5, which will be billed via the family's FACTS account, and an email confirmation will be sent to the family.

## **Food Allergy Considerations**

There is a table in the cafeteria that is designated for students with severe food allergies. Its surface is covered with a new plastic tablecloth daily and all children who request to sit there are educated by teachers as to the food precautions that must be taken at that table.

NO LOOSE NUTS ARE ALLOWED IN LUNCHESES, SNACKS OR CLASSROOMS. Nut products should not be brought into any events/activities/field trips where students would interact informally. The nut dust can provoke a severe allergic reaction in some of our students, even from a distance. If there is a student in your child's classroom with an allergy, your teacher will inform you so that you can follow specific precautions.

## **Field Trips**

Field trips are a privilege. They are educational in nature and an extension of the curriculum and regular classroom experience. All school rules apply when students are on field trips. Parent signature/s are required on a field trip permission form in order for students to participate. The field trip form indicates an acknowledgement by parents of the nature of the trip and the time supervision of the students will end. All appropriate documentation must be on file.

### **Field Trip Chaperones**

Chaperones must be completely qualified. Each chaperone must have completed and submitted a volunteer form, qualified through the background check, as well as attended a Safe Environment Training Class. The school reserves the right to carefully select chaperones to drive and supervise our students. Meeting the requirements for background screening and Safe Environment Training does not automatically give parents the privilege of chaperoning. Chaperones are expected to arrive on time, dress modestly, buckle all riders, drive carefully, and model good behavior with appropriate conversation throughout the trip. Smoking or using inappropriate language is not permitted at any time. Alcohol consumption is not permitted prior to or during the field trip.

Chaperones must begin and end the field trip at school with the class. Chaperones may not meet up with the class at the destination. They are never permitted to make side trips, such as stopping at the grocery store or a drive-thru. Only Saint Thomas More Catholic School students are permitted on field trips. Siblings are not permitted to attend.

Anyone providing transportation must have completed a [Driver Verification Form](#), hold a valid North Carolina Driver's License and automobile liability insurance. Copies of these items will need to be on file in the main school office. The vehicle used must be in safe operating condition and the number of passengers must not exceed the maximum occupancy for that vehicle.

Exemplary conduct is expected on all field trips. This is an opportunity for students to give witness to the values of the Saint Thomas More Catholic School Community.

### **Student Council**

Students have a voice in their school through their representative to the Student Council. Grades 4 through 8 elect its own representative and the officers are elected by the student body. The Student Council is in charge of school spirit, as well as service projects and fund raising.

### **Yearbook**

STM publishes an annual yearbook in which all students will be included. The yearbook is sold exclusively to STM school students and families.

### **Lockers**

Lockers are property of Saint Thomas More Catholic School. Locks are built in to the lockers, so personal student locks are not permitted or required.

### **Lost and Found**

All personal and clothing items should be labeled with the student's name. Found items that are labeled will be returned to the student. Items found that are not labeled will be placed in the Lost and Found bin which is in the cafeteria in the elementary building, and in the stairwell across from the office in the middle school. On the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month, the contents of the Lost and Found will be donated to a local charity or discarded. If a student forgets an item at home, it should be brought to the school office. The item will be delivered to the student by office personnel to avoid interruption to instruction.

### **Birthdays**

Parents wishing to send in a treat for their child's birthday are asked to send in something simple and preferably healthy. The treat will be shared with the class at a time that works best for the teacher's instructional plans. Please keep in mind that gifts such as balloons and flowers are very distracting and will not be delivered to classrooms or aftercare. These items are best saved for after the school day.

\*\*\*Parents are invited to come to school to eat lunch with their child in the cafeteria on his or her birthday. Parents are welcome to bring lunch on this day.

### **Invitations to Out-of-School Parties**

Invitations to parties held in a private location may not be distributed at school.

# **Grading and Academic Policies**

## **Assessment, Grading, Reporting and Records**

### **A. Philosophy**

We believe...

- Our system of grading should be timely, specific, fair and accurate
- Grades should be based on a well-defined set of standards
- Grades should be an accurate measure of a student's ability to demonstrate understanding
- Students should have a clear understanding of learning objectives
- Criteria that are not a direct measure of student learning, such as work habits and behavior, should be reported separately from the academic grade
- Assessments are critical to the teaching and learning process

### **B. Purpose of Assessment**

An Assessment is defined as any instrument that is able to indicate or provide feedback on student achievement or performance. The purpose of assessment may be summarized as follows:

1. To provide information to students in regard to their proficiency towards mastery of the standards. In addition, it provides information for self-evaluation and the incentives to learn.
2. To provide information to teachers about the student's level of mastery of the content/skill.
3. To allow teachers to use assessment data to plan instruction that will meet the needs of the students.
4. To communication information to parents about student achievement and performance in school.

### **C. Types of Assessments**

While assessments will take many forms, they will be grouped under two broader categories.

Formative: Whenever a student learns new material, he or she needs time to practice and gain familiarity with the material. It is expected that the student will make mistakes during this learning process. Any work done during this learning period is considered formative. The purpose of a formative assessment is not to judge a student's final competency on a topic or unit, but to evaluate where he or she is in the learning process, diagnose any problems, and motivate and help the student learn the material. Formative assessments also inform the teacher of learning areas that may need reinforcement or re-teaching.

Summative: After a student has had sufficient instruction and practice on a topic, including assessments of a formative nature, it is then reasonable to judge mastery of understanding, content or skills. The purpose of a summative assessment is to evaluate how well a student knows and understands the material after sufficient engagement and practice with it.

Assessments are *Formative* or *Summative* based on their intended use and purpose, and not by form. A quiz for example, may be formative if the teacher is having the students use new concepts to ascertain their level of understanding. A quiz would be a summative assessment if used at the end of a learning section or curriculum chunk after the students have had adequate instruction and practice. In the same way a trial test is formative, while an end of chapter test is summative. Projects contain both formative and summative elements. They include the ongoing nature of practice, reflective thinking and reworking, before the final summative rendition. Homework is mainly formative in nature as students get familiar with or reinforce what was learned in the classroom.

#### **D.** Purpose of Grades

A grade is a recorded score derived from an assessment or assessments. The purpose of grades may be summarized as follows:

1. To provide information to students in regard to their proficiency towards mastery of the standards.
2. To provide information to teachers on the students' level of mastery of the content/skill.
3. To communicate information to parents about student achievement and performance in school.
4. To document student performance for transcripts and to evaluate the effectiveness of school programs

#### **E.** The Grade Composition

In order to represent an accurate measure of what a student knows, understands and is able to do, the academic quarter grade needs to be based primarily on work that is evaluated for appropriate content, understanding and correctness, at a time when the student has had sufficient instruction and practice to be responsible for the material. Summative assessments will therefore be the primary constituent of the quarter grade. They will account for 70% of the quarter grade. Formative assessments will account for 30% of the quarter grade.

No behavior and conduct attributes will be included in the academic grade. These attributes will be reported separately.

## **Reporting Grades**

### Preschool Assessments/Progress Reports

We consistently assess the students in our care. Assessment data using the guidelines and tools from the Diocese is presented to parents in the form of:

- Written narrative at Fall conferences
- Progress report form at Spring conferences

**Progress for students in grades K – 8** can be viewed online via the Renweb portal. Kindergarten students receive four reports; progress reports in November and March, and report cards in January and June. Report cards for grades 1 through 8 are posted on Renweb four times a year and are available to view shortly after each quarter concludes.

### Kindergarten to Grade 2:

**Exceeds Expectations (EE)** – The student consistently exceeds expectations on standards as demonstrated by a body of evidence that shows depth of understanding and flexible application of those skills/concepts.

**Meets Expectations (ME)** – The student consistently meets expectations on standards as demonstrated by a body of evidence that shows independent understanding and application of grade-level concepts.

**Approaching Expectations (AE)** – The student performs just below what would be expected on standards as demonstrated by a body of evidence that shows incomplete/inconsistent understanding and application of grade level concepts. Positive progress is evident.

**Does Not Meet Expectations (DE)** – The student performs far below expectations on standards as demonstrated by a body of evidence that shows limited understanding and application of grade-level concepts.

If an 'X' is marked next to a skill, that means that the teacher had drawn attention to that learning area, and the parent will coordinate a plan with the teacher to build and reinforce that skill/concept."

### Grade 3 to 8

Students in grades 3 through 8 receive letter grades for all Core Subjects (Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies, Religion and Spanish-(Grades 6-8 Only). Specials will be grades based on 4 Point Scale.

<b>4 Point Scale *Specials*</b>	<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Percentage Range</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>EXEMPLARY:</b> In addition to 3.0 performance, the student provides evidence of deep understanding and fluent application of the target standards or expectations as well as the ability to apply and transfer learning to new situations.	<b>90 - 100</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>PROFICIENCY:</b> No major errors or omissions regarding any of the target standards or expectations.	<b>80 - 89</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>BASIC:</b> No major errors or omissions regarding the simpler details or processes of the target standards or expectations, but errors or omissions regarding the complex processes.	<b>70 - 79</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>BELOW BASIC:</b> The student is beginning to address the simpler target standards and expectations.	<b>60 - 69</b>
<b>0</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>NO EVIDENCE:</b> The student is unable to provide any evidence of addressing the target standards or expectations.	<b>50 - 59</b>

### **Access to Student Grades**

Each year, families receive a username and password that allows them to login to the [Renweb database](#), via the school website. Grades are updated weekly on Renweb.

### **H. Other Matters on Assessment and Grades**

Missing work and the use of zeros. Teachers understand that a zero (on the percentage scale) on an assignment is a disproportionate penalty that places the student at a disadvantage when it comes to making up the grade deficit. For this reason, zeros may only be given on the 4-point scale. A score of 50 is the score that should correspond to a zero on the 4-point scale.

### **Parent-teacher conferences**

Parents are encouraged to be involved in their child's education and to establish communication with their child's teachers. Your child's teacher will request conferences as needed, throughout the school year.

Conference requests may be made by parents via email or a note to the teacher sent with their child. The teacher will contact the parent within 24 hours to set a meeting time.

### **Assessments and testing**

IOWA Testing: The IOWA Test of Basic Skills is administered in grades 3 through 8 each fall. The Cognitive Abilities Test is also given to students in the 5th grade as part

of the IOWA testing. The results of these tests are used by faculty for instructional planning. They are kept in the students' academic record, and shared with the family. Gesell: Students entering Kindergarten are assessed using the Gesell Developmental Observation Tool for direct observation of a child's growth and development, as well as some measures of achievement.

The I-Ready diagnostic assessment is a computer-based mathematics and reading assessment. It is completed in Grades K-8 three times per year: fall, winter, and spring. This standardized assessment is adaptive to the student based on his/her response patterns. With this feature, the assessment allows for an accurate picture of what the student knows and is able to do, with an emphasis on critical thinking. The teachers utilize this assessment to create differentiated instruction within the classroom, as well as get a view of the overall strengths and weaknesses of the individual student and the class as a whole.

Math Test: NC State-mandated End-of-Course exams will be taken at the end of the year for students in the high school level math course, Common Core I. This affords our students the records necessary for use in their math placement in high school. Cardinal Gibbons Catholic High School does not require these scores in order to place students in the next, natural math level in their freshman year.

### **Classroom tests:**

Classroom tests and quizzes are scheduled by individual teachers. For grades 4-8, dates are posted on RenWeb so that students can plan their study time. Teachers communicate with one another each week so that a developmentally appropriate number of tests and projects can be scheduled. There will be no more than 2 summative assessments (tests and projects) due in a day. Tests, projects and quizzes will be posted on RenWeb.

## **Reporting Grades**

### **Preschool progress reports**

We consistently assess the students in our care. Assessment data using the guidelines and tools from the Diocese is presented to parents in the form of:

- Written narrative at November conferences
- Progress report form at April conferences

**Progress for students in grades K – 8** can be viewed online via the Renweb portal. Kindergarten students receive four reports; progress reports in November and March, and report cards in January and June. Report cards for grades 1 through 8 are posted on Renweb four times a year and are available to view shortly after each quarter concludes.

### **School Records**

A permanent record is kept on file with St. Thomas More Catholic School indefinitely of every attending student. This confidential file contains end of year grades and promotion information. All other records are only active for one calendar year. When a student transfers from St. Thomas More Catholic School, including matriculation into high school, a written request to share those records must be presented to the school office. A copy of the student's records are then mailed to the new school. Please contact the main office with questions.

### **Academic Achievements and Awards**

Saint Thomas More Catholic School believes that positive reinforcement and recognition are key to a student's success. The staff recognizes students for special accomplishments on a regular basis. Report card award categories for Grades 4-8 include:

Principal's List - This consists of those students who have earned A's in all subjects.

Honor Roll - This consists of those students who have earned A's and B's in all subjects.

### **Academic Probation**

Students who are not achieving academically in a manner that will help them successfully complete their current grade, or students who have shown a tendency to perform poorly, may be placed on academic probation.

Academic Probation will occur after the first quarter if a student is not meeting the standards (below a 2.5) in a core-subject. At that time, parents and student will meet with the academic team, as well as Administration to develop a plan. This plan will be monitored regularly, and reviewed quarterly. In the event we are unable to meet a student's needs, withdrawal from the school may be deemed necessary.

### **Promotion, Retention, and Remediation**

#### **Promotion and Retention**

Our goal at Saint Thomas More Catholic School is to instill success and confidence as students master academic skills. In the primary grades, the student must master the necessary Language Arts and Math skills in order to be promoted. The decision to promote or retain a student is made by the principal in consultation with the student's teachers and parents.

The core subjects are Religion, Math, Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies. A student enrolled in a Catholic school who fails one core subject must participate in a remedial program. Failure of two core subjects will result in remediation or retention at the discretion of the principal. Failure of three or more core subjects will result in retention.

### **Remediation**

The following criteria must be met with regard to the remediation process. Remediation must take place in one of the following ways:

- In an individual program facilitated by a teacher who is certified in the subject area that the student needs for a predetermined number of contact hours\*
- In a remediation program which has been approved by the Principal

\*Neither the student's current teacher nor any teacher, who presumably will be the subject area teacher in the future, may tutor the student

Prior to the beginning of the next school year, the Principal must receive:

- Validation of attendance
- Proof of proficiency in the subject area(s) including work samples and test scores

The following documentation guidelines will be followed after meeting remediation guidelines:

- The original failing grade is recorded on the permanent record and may not be altered
- Proof of proficiency in the subject area must be recorded separately on the permanent record card

**Transfer Rule** Any student who fails one or more core subjects must meet the remediation guidelines of the originating school. After these criteria have been met, further assessment may be administered by the school Principal to ensure proper placement.

### **Homework and Make-Up Assignments**

It is the policy of the school to have regular homework assignments. The purpose of homework is to extend or reinforce the learning which has taken place during the day.

Absence from school does not excuse a student from written or study assignments. Students are responsible for the subject matter in all classes, even when they have been absent. It is the student's responsibility to get make-up work from the Parent Portal or from their teachers. For each day that a student is absent, they are given one day to turn in their missed work. For example, if a student is absent for three days, all missed work must be turned in within three days of returning to school. Parents requesting work to be sent home for an absent child must give teachers 24-hour notice.

## **Code of Conduct**

Saint Thomas More Catholic School's Code of Conduct is based on the two great commandments.

“You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.”

“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

Our Catholic faith and school mission require us to live the Gospel message in our everyday lives. In order to ensure your child, and all students, the Christ-filled learning climate they deserve, we utilize a school-wide Code of Conduct. The primary purpose of our school is to ensure students develop to their full academic, physical, social and spiritual potential. This development best takes place in an environment that is safe and protects a student's right to learn. In order to create this type of environment, sensible rules are established and student responsibility and self-discipline are required. This provides an orderly framework in which individual goals can be realized. Our emphasis is on developing responsibility, self-discipline, and mutual respect.

Positive reinforcement is a focus at our school. Students who demonstrate positive behavior will earn both teacher/classroom recognition, as well as school-wide appreciation during Morning Prayer assemblies. Students who engage in inappropriate behavior will be counseled, warned and receive appropriate consequences, as stated in our Discipline Policy.

Our concern is not for forced adherence to basic rules, but rather for the desire to have students assume responsibility to follow the rules of the community.

### **Student Expectations**

**Respect for Others** - Students are required to show respect towards faculty, staff, administration, and classmates at all times. Behavior that disrupts classroom instruction, such as disrespect, excessive talking, not following teacher directions, making noises, or distracting other students is cause for disciplinary action. Poor attitudes, poor behavior, or any conduct detrimental to the reputation of the school, whether inside or outside the school, may result in detention, suspension, or expulsion.

### **Respect for Property**

Students are expected to respect school property, both inside and outside the school building. Students are expected to report any damage to school grounds, such as bathrooms and locker rooms, or items assigned for their personal use, such as laptops/iPads, textbooks, lockers, and desks, to the teacher immediately. Students who

do not report damage immediately could be held responsible for covering the cost of repairing or replacing the damaged item.

### **Illegal and Harmful Objects**

Alcohol, tobacco and drugs will not be carried or used at any time. Matches, fireworks, knives, guns, slingshots, chemicals, and objectionable materials or objects are not to be brought to the school at any time.

### **Social Media**

Engagement in online social media such as, but not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. may result in disciplinary actions if the content of the student's page includes defamatory comments that impact the school or learning environment.

### **Bullying and Cyberbullying**

Saint Thomas More Catholic School is committed to providing a safe environment for all individuals. Verbal or written threats made against the physical or emotional well-being of any individual are taken very seriously. Students making threats, whether joking or serious, online, in writing, or in person, or by texting or spreading rumors, will face detention, suspension, and/or expulsion.

Every student is expected to respect the feelings of others. Language or behavior that is hurtful, threatening, or unkind will not be tolerated. Tripping, pushing, shoving, spitting, swearing, or making rude noises or gestures, are cause for disciplinary action. Students are to report disrespectful behavior to a teacher or administrator immediately. If inappropriate behavior continues after disciplinary action has been taken, students may be asked to withdraw from the school, or be expelled. Information about our Anti-Bullying Program is found within the Discipline Policy below.

### **Cell Phones**

Cell phones may be brought to school, but are to be handed into the homeroom teacher immediately following morning assembly and retrieved at dismissal. Students will not be allowed to use their cell phones until they have been picked up from school. They can ask an adult for permission to contact their parents as needed, and will be allowed based on adult decision. No cell phones are allowed in class, backpacks, pockets, purses, lockers, locker rooms, cafeteria, or playground. Use of a cell phone during school will result in a consequence deemed appropriate by the classroom teacher and administration. Any cell phone not turned into the homeroom teacher will be taken away from the student until the parent is able to retrieve it. If a cell phone is taken from a student for a second time in one school year, the phone will not be allowed to be brought to school for the remainder of the year.

### **Personal Items**

Personal electronic learning devices, such as e-readers, iPads, laptops and other wireless devices including smart-watches are not permitted at school. Toys, watches with distracting sounds, iPods, music devices, tape recorders, computerized pens and similar items must be left at home unless permission to bring them is granted in advance by the teacher or administration. If such items are brought to school, the school cannot be held responsible if they are lost or damaged.

### **Student Safety**

Running is permitted only during physical education classes or on the playground during supervised activities. There is never a reason to run inside the school buildings or hallways.

All students are expected to be orderly and quiet in the hallways. Loud, boisterous behavior is not necessary and is not permitted.

Chewing gum is not permitted.

### **Reporting Behavioral and Conduct Achievement**

#### **Reporting Behavioral and Conduct Attributes**

**The principles of Respect and Responsibility is the focus for conduct behaviors.**

**The following are the indicators of Respect and Responsibility.**

#### **Respect**

- **Has a good attitude**
- **Is respectful to adults and peers in speech and action**
- **Maintains positive peer relationships**
- **Is respectful of personal, peer and school property**

#### **Responsibility**

- **Exhibits self-control**
- **Follows directions and does not need constant reminders**
- **Socializes only at appropriate times**
- **Takes ownership for behavior**

**The following is an example of a rubric for the reporting of *Conduct*.**

	<b><u>Respect</u></b>	<b><u>Responsibility</u></b>
<b><u>4</u></b> <b><u>Exceeds</u></b>	<b><u>Consistently respectful, kind and cooperative.</u></b>	<b><u>Consistently follows school/classroom rules and directions.</u></b>
<b><u>3</u></b> <b><u>Meets</u></b>	<b><u>Frequently respectful, kind and cooperative.</u></b>	<b><u>Frequently follows school/classroom rules and directions.</u></b>
<b><u>2</u></b> <b><u>Developing</u></b>	<b><u>Occasionally respectful, kind and cooperative.</u></b>	<b><u>Occasionally follows school/classroom rules and directions.</u></b>
<b><u>1</u></b> <b><u>Rarely</u></b>	<b><u>Rarely respectful, kind and cooperative.</u></b>	<b><u>Rarely follows school/classroom rules and directions.</u></b>

Student conduct is shared via report cards, each nine weeks using the scale below:

**4:** Consistently exceeds the expectations. Goes above and beyond to help others and is a model of excellent character

**3:** Consistently meets the expectations.

**2:** Needs redirection to maintain behavioral expectations. Students who remain at this level require administrative intervention.

**1:** Unable to meet the reasonable expectations, despite interventions. Students who remain at this level are not able to remain at Saint Thomas More Catholic School.

## **Discipline Policy**

*The Pastor and Principal of Saint Thomas More Catholic School reserve the right, as they deem necessary, to take disciplinary action for any behavior which violates the spirit and philosophy of our school, and the teachings of the Catholic Church, even though it is not specified here.*

As students grow they are taught both at home and school to take greater responsibility for their actions. As a result, discipline is handled differently in early childhood, primary, intermediate and middle school grades. Any serious infraction of the Code of Conduct, at any level, will be handled within the scope of the 3rd-8th grade discipline policy, including issues of detention, suspension and expulsion.

### **Early Childhood & Primary Discipline Policy and Procedures:**

At Saint Thomas More we help our students find acceptable ways to express their feelings, communicate and behave appropriately, and develop strong, healthy relationships with their peers in accordance with our Code of Conduct. Positive redirection is our main source of discipline.

If a particular student is having either academic or disciplinary difficulty, communication between the parents and teachers will occur in order to ensure a positive behavior change.

- Communication may occur via note, email, telephone call, or scheduled conference.
- Administration, team leaders, school counselors, resource teachers, and other third party resources may be informed by the teacher and participate in the conferences as necessary.
- Records will be kept of all conferences and action plans may be put into place to help the student meet their full potential.
- In order to achieve a desirable situation, support of both parents and students is essential.
- The school reserves the right to dismiss any student whose needs are not being met by our available programs and resources.

### **Intermediate & Middle School Discipline Policy and Procedures (Grades 3-8)**

Discipline will be monitored and tracked by the classroom teacher in accordance with school administration. Though the methods of behavior management may vary throughout the grades, the Code of Conduct and Discipline Policy will be consistent. Students and staff will follow the procedures outlined in the Discipline Policy.

**Infractions and Consequences**

**Infraction:**

- A behavior that warrants a consequence whether verbal or written.
- Infractions are organized by their severity into Levels 1-3 as seen below.
- Consequences will vary based on level and severity of the infraction.

<p><b>Level 1 Infractions</b></p> <p>-Level 1 Infractions are cumulative and rollover from quarter to quarter.</p> <p>-Three Level 1 Infractions equal a detention.</p>
---

L1: Cell Phone	Cell phone policy is violated
L1: Chewing Gum	Chewing gum on campus
L1: Class Disruption	Out of seat, throwing of objects, talking, not abiding by school rules
L1: Disrespect School Environment	Litter left on or under desk, leaving area in disarray
L1: Dress Code Violation	Dress Code Violation
L1: Field Trip & Off Campus Behavior	Inappropriate behavior off school grounds at school event or while representing the school.
L1: Hallway Disruption	Excessive noise, inappropriate behavior
L1: Inappropriate Church behavior	Talking, not participating in Mass, sleeping, irreverence
L1: Inappropriate Cafeteria behavior	Not abiding by Cafeteria rules, disregard for lunch room monitors
L1: Inattentive in class	Off task, sleeping, reading unassigned materials including books, doing work from other subjects.
L1: Tardy	Late to class without a pass
L1: Technology Violation	On device without permission, visiting websites or documents that are off task

**Level 2 Infractions**

- Administration will be contacted when a Level 2 infraction occurs.
- Administration will meet with the student.
- Level 2 Infractions equal an automatic detention.
- Detention slip will be written by teacher assigning the detention.

L2: Disrespectful Behavior	Talking back/defiant to teachers, peers, Admin, volunteer parents, etc...
L2: Inappropriate fire drill behavior	Failure to maintain silence and/or follow safety procedures
L2: Copying	Copying homework or classwork, not completing own work
L2: Lying	Reporting untruthful information about self or others
L2: Offensive Language	Offensive language, swearing, using the Lord's name in vain
L2: Skipped Class	Did not report to assigned class
L2: Skipped Detention	Did not report for detention

**Level 3 Infractions**

- Administration will be contacted when a Level 3 infraction occurs.
- Administration will meet with the student.
- Level 3 Infractions equal an automatic in-school suspension.
- Depending on the severity of the behavior the principal may determine that an Out-of-School Suspension, or even Expulsion, may be necessary.

L3: Bullying *see definition	Persistent bullying behavior, Cyber-bullying
L3: Cheating	Cheating, plagiarism
L3: Fighting	Physical Altercation or Fight
L3: Forgery	Forgery

L3: Harassment	Harassment of student, faculty or staff
L3: Illegal Activities	Possession of Drugs, Alcohol, Tobacco, Weapons
L3: Property Destruction	Destruction of School property or property of others
L3: Stealing	Stealing
L3: Technology: Inappropriate Websites	Visiting Inappropriate and/or offensive websites
L3: Aggressive Physical Behavior	Intentional tripping, bullying, etc...

### **Reporting Infractions**

- Students in Grades 3-5 will receive a written disciplinary referral slip for each Level 1 Infraction.
- Students in Middle School will track their Infractions using Renweb (see Middle School Discipline Policy \_\_ Appendix).
- Three Level 1 Infractions equals a detention.

### **Detention**

- A Detention is given after three Level 1 infractions or immediately after a Level 2 infraction.
- Student will be given a copy of a paper detention slip (to be signed at home). Administration will keep a copy on file. Parents will also be notified by email.
- Detentions for Middle School will be held during lunch/recess on Tuesdays and Thursdays.
- Detentions will be proctored by Mrs. Moore.
- Students will be expected to complete a Disciplinary Essay or Assignment during the detention period.
- Students will not be permitted to participate in school sponsored extracurricular activities on days that they serve detentions.
- After three detentions an Intervention Plan will be put into place.
- After four Detentions student will be given an Out-of-School Suspension.
- After five Detentions student will be put on administrative probation.

### **Intervention Plan**

- After three Detentions or one Level 3 Infraction an Intervention Plan will be created by parent/guardian, school administration, teacher, guidance counselor, and appropriate third party resources as needed.
- This written plan and action steps, which must be completed by students/parents, will be put into place and signed by all involved.
- Intervention Plans, when necessary, can be carried over from year to year.

### **Out-of-School Suspension (OSS)**

- There may come a time when an Out-of-School Suspension is necessary due to the nature of the infraction. The principal reserves the right to deem when this may be necessary.
- Students who are assigned an Out-of-School Suspension are not permitted on the school campus for any reason on the date of the suspension and may not participate in any extracurricular activities.
- Students who receive an Out-of-School suspension are responsible for and must complete all work assigned by their teacher.
- The student will be marked absent for the date of the suspension.

### **Administrative Probation**

- After a student has received five detentions they will be put on Administrative Probation.
- A mandatory conference will be called with parent/guardian, school administration, guidance counselor, and appropriate third party resources as needed.
- Once a student is put on Administrative Probation, another infraction or any level, as determined by Administration, may result in immediate expulsion.

### **Expulsion**

- Expulsion is not only restricted to students on Administrative Probation, but may also be used for any Infraction that is of a severe nature determined by Administration.

## **Parent Integrity**

Saint Thomas More Catholic School views the education of a student as a partnership between parents and the school. Parents and students are expected to comply with the school rules, policies and consequences for inappropriate behavior. Parents and students are expected to accept and support the authority of school officials. Just as the parent reserves the right to withdraw a child, the school has the right to ask a student to withdraw if the administration determines that the parent or student partnership with the school is irretrievably broken.

## **Anti-Bullying Policy**



# **Not in God's House**

## ***John 2:9***

*<sup>9</sup> Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness.*

## **In the classroom, if verbal or social bullying occurs:**

### **Report**

The key thing to express when a student reports bullying to you is praise for reporting. Most bullies do not act in front of adults and most victims won't report. If it is the victim reporting, reiterate the difference between reporting and tattling and the importance of letting someone know so that they can be supported and protected. If it is an upstander reporting, reiterate the importance of standing up for others and protecting someone like Jesus would.

Consider your classroom and how a student could confidentially let you know they need to speak with you privately. Put this into action and let the students know about it.

### **Investigate**

Once a victim or upstander has reported bullying behavior to you, begin to investigate. Take notes (use attached reporting form) on when and where it happened, what actions occurred, who else witnessed this. Interview anyone involved as a bully, victim or witness/bystander. Ensure that interviews are private and individual, allowing students to speak freely, honestly and without fear of repercussion.

### **Separate to Prevent**

If it is clear that bullying took place, students involved must not participate or be around others in similar situations until they are able to try again with corrected behavior. For example:

- Bullying happened during lunch, then the bully eats alone for a period of time
- Bullying happened at recess, then bully does not participate in recess for a period of time
- Bullying happened while in a line or moving between buildings, then bully must be supervised or travel separately from the group for a period of time
- Bullying happened in the classroom, then bully must sit apart from the group for a period of time

### **Reflect and Apologize**

The bully should complete a reflection sheet and write a letter of apology that includes what they did, how it affected the other person, how they feel about their actions, and a promise not to do it again.

It is important to have a class meeting to generally discuss the situation, reiterate commitment to the pledge and policies, as well as the promise of support and protection, and encourage students to forgive and move on.

### **Call the Parents, Inform Administration**

Parents of both the victim and the bully should be contacted. Information should be delivered in the form of facts about what happened and how you have responded to the incident. No student names should be used in talking with the parents, other than that parent's own child's name. Send an email or talk with administration so that they are aware of the situation.

### **Check Back In**

Within a couple of days of the incident, check back in with both the victim and the bully to see how they are doing. Stay alert to uninvolved students continuing to talk about the incident and step in to stop this.

### **Repeated Bullying Behavior**

2<sup>nd</sup> clear offense: Meeting with parent and counselor, behavior plan must be developed with continued follow-up from counselor

3<sup>rd</sup> clear offense: Administrative referral

**For third offense, physical or cyberbullying incidents (these require immediate admin. referral):**

Consequences for Administrative Referral	
Least Intensive (this would be used for students who have valid, extenuating circumstances that are reasonably known to be affecting their behavior)	Parent phone call Conference with student Silent lunch, recess detention Reflection sheet Student and parents are contacted by counselor
	Assignment of bullying project Conference with parents, student Loss of privileges Lunch/recess detention
	Behavior plan with outside provider Partial-day suspension
	Suspension for a period of time
Most Intensive	Long-term suspension with outside provider care Expulsion

The key to successfully preventing bullying is to *all* have the same knowledge as to what bullying is, what it isn't, and how to respond when it occurs. The term *all* refers to teachers, staff, students, parents and administration. Additionally, all adults must commit to responding promptly to bullying that they witness, or that is reported to them. Consistency in use of the school policy and personal awareness of tolerance levels that may need to be adjusted is also important.

**Bullying**: verbal teasing or name-calling, verbal threats to harm another student, physical contact that inflicts pain or injury, communication meant to demean, emotionally hurt or intimidate another person, whether face to face or electronically, exclusion and non-acceptance of other students

**Physical bullying**: hitting, tripping, pinching, pushing or damaging property

**Verbal bullying**: name-calling, insults, teasing, intimidation, homophobic or racist remarks, verbal abuse

**Social bullying**: lying/spreading rumors, physical gestures, jokes that embarrass or humiliate, mimicking unkindly, encouraging others to social exclude, damaging someone's reputation or acceptance

**Cyberbullying**: using digital technology to send abusive or hurtful texts, emails or posts to social media, including images or videos; excluding others online, spreading gossip or rumors, imitating others online or using their login

**Active bystander**: someone who witnesses an act of bullying and attempts to perpetuate it (spreads the rumor, forwards the electronic communication to others, yells "fight, fight" ...)

**Passive bystander**: someone who witnesses an act of bullying and does not step in to stop it and/or let an adult know

**Upstander**: someone who witnesses an act of bullying and steps in to stop it and/or lets an adult know

### **Harassment, Discrimination**

Any actions or words that result in singling out a group based upon race, religion, gender, orientation, ethnicity, age or disability, and result in creating an unwelcome environment for any member of that group, is a serious offense to our community. When these actions persist it can result in a student being asked to leave our school community.

### **Academic Dishonesty**

Academic dishonesty of any type will not be tolerated. Plagiarism involves a student submitting work and representing it as their own or copying the work of another person and representing it as their own work. Students who choose to misrepresent what work they do or help others do the same, may face a failing grade, detention, suspension, and/or expulsion.

# **Communication**

## **Communication**

The success of Saint Thomas More Catholic School relies on good communication and parental involvement. Our school keeps families informed and involved in a variety of ways, including the following:

### **Constant Contact**

A weekly newsletter which is emailed to every parent each Friday evening. This is an essential tool for parent communication, as it includes dates, documents, and important notices about our school. It is your responsibility as a parent to stay informed and report to the school if you are not receiving this message.

### **School Website ([www.stmcsnc.org](http://www.stmcsnc.org))**

This website is updated regularly to help keep you informed of school and classroom news. This site includes our links to the Renweb Parent Portal, Facebook, and Twitter

## **Parent Notification System**

Parent Notification System is an instant alert notification system used to notify parents of school closings, emergencies, and important meetings via text, voice message, and e-mail. This service is intended to serve as a safety feature, as well as to keep parents informed. Parents must check that their contact information in Renweb is accurate to ensure the effectiveness of this system.

## **Emergency Contact Information**

For the safety of all students, it is important that the school administration be able to contact parents in the case of an emergency.

Saint Thomas More Catholic School is unable to prevent a parent from picking up his or her child without a court ordered custody agreement. In addition, the school cannot uphold any court ordered agreement or document if an official copy has not been provided to the school office. All custody agreements are kept in a confidential file in the school office.

## **School Closing and Delays**

### **SCHOOL CLOSINGS**

School closing decisions are made with the approval of the Pastor.

Before 10pm, or no later than 6am, the Parent Alert system will be used to announce schedule changes.

Once closing or delay decisions are made, the following media outlets will carry schedule changes for STM: WCHL (1360) Radio, WTVD News Channel 11, News 14 Carolina, and WRAL News Channel 5

If there is a one or two hour delay due to weather, preschool children should be dropped off at the designated time and proceed directly to their classrooms. If there is a 3 hour delay, preschool will not be held that day.

### **Parent-Teacher Conferences**

Teachers may request a conference at any time with parents to discuss academic achievement or behavior concerns. Parents may also request conferences at any time by emailing the teacher for an appointment. When possible, conferences should be held before school so that all teachers involved in the student's education can be in attendance.

### **Appointments with the Principal**

The principal strives for a positive relationship with all parents. Parent opinions and concerns are very important to our principal, and parents are always welcome to call or email the principal to schedule an appointment.

When parents have questions or concerns in regards to a classroom situation, the school policy is to discuss the situation with the classroom teacher prior to contacting the principal. This often brings clarity or a better understanding to an existing problem or concern. The principal also understands that there are topics that need to be addressed directly with him first. After meeting with the school administration, if there is no resolution to parent concerns, parents may contact the pastor.

## **Dress Code**

### **School Uniform**

All students from Kindergarten through Grade 8 are required to wear the official Saint Thomas More Catholic School uniform.

Students should pay attention to the proper appearance of the uniform, ensuring that basic standards are always met. For example, shirts should always be tucked in and uniform pants worn at the waistline. Socks should be solid white and visible above the shoe, and belts should be worn with all pants or shorts with belt loops. Skirt, short and jumper checks will take place for girls beginning in Grade 4. The hem of these garments should not be more than 2 inches above the knee. Should the garment not meet this standard, a student will have a three day grace period to replace it.

Should a student come to school in improper or incomplete uniform, parents will be called immediately and are expected to reinforce these uniform policies.

Lands' End is the only approved retail option for St. Thomas More Catholic School uniforms and can be accessed via their website at [www.landsend.com](http://www.landsend.com). Five percent of all uniform sales at Lands' End return to the school to fund faculty development and continuing education.

1. go to [www.landsend.com](http://www.landsend.com)
2. our preferred school number is 900167370
3. create a free account on the website (username and password); part of creating this account is the input of information about your child's gender and grade level; you can add as many students (gender and grade level) as necessary; having this account means you will receive information from Lands' End about frequent sales, free shipping, free logo sales... Lands' End does not share customer information with other companies.
4. the gender and grade level information will take you to a page that lists only the items available for that gender and grade level; you will see the option to view checklist information, as well
5. clicking on each clothing item will show information about whether the item is optional, required, when it is required and whether it must have a logo or not

### **General Uniform Policies**

- \*\*\*Students in grades 6-8 must wear the Mass Uniform on Fridays and all days we will be attending mass. Jacket/sweater must be worn to Mass from October through April. Students may remove the jacket/sweater following the liturgy.
- Shorts, skorts and jumpers are to be no shorter than 2" above the knee.
- Non-banded shirts must be tucked in at all times.
- Student Athletes may wear their team uniform to school on game days; if pieces of the uniform are not appropriate for the learning day, the team coach will provide information about modifications.
- Black or brown belts should be worn with all pants or shorts with belt loops
- Personal jackets and coats may only be worn at arrival, recess and dismissal. Lands' End sweaters, Lands' End Lightweight Fleece Half-Zip, and PE uniform sweatshirts may be worn throughout the day. The full-zippered fleece is for outdoors only.
- Eye make-up, colored lip-gloss, lip stick, and nail polish are not permitted for any grade level.

- Girls may wear one pair of small post earrings (one in each ear). Boys are not permitted to wear earrings.
- Small simple chains with a cross or religious medal are permitted.
- One watch and one bracelet may be worn.
- Hats are not to be worn in the buildings.
- Hair will be neat and well groomed. Boys' hair should be no longer than the shirt collar. Hair will be kept out of the eyes. Extreme hair styles (such as Mohawks), colored, or bleached hair is not permitted.
- All clothing should be labeled with the child's name.
- All black or all brown, closed-toed shoes, any type, must be worn with the daily uniform. Athletic shoes must be worn on PE day. These can be any type and color athletic shoe, with non-marking soles. Shoes with laces are to have the laces tied at all times.
- Socks must be white with no stripes on them.
- Students may not wear colored shirts or shirts with logos under their uniform.
- Brownie/Scout uniforms may be worn on meeting days.

### **Uniform Closet**

\*\*\*There is a uniform closet in the cafeteria that contains uniform pieces that have been turned in for reuse. Parents may go through the closet and take items of clothing that can be worn by their children. These items of uniform apparel are \$2 per item. Please add to the closet as your children outgrow their uniforms.

### **Out-of-Uniform Days**

On the occasional Dress Down Day, clothing must adhere to the following standards:

- No tight clothing (i.e. yoga pants, leggings, ...)
- No clothing with inappropriate slogans or images
- No halter tops, spaghetti straps, bare midriffs
- No dresses, shorts and skirts/skorts that fall higher than two inches above the knee
- No pants with holes or tears in them
- 

### **Spirit Shirts**

On Wednesdays students may wear an STM "Spirit Shirt" (current or past year STM t-shirt) with regular uniform bottoms.

# **Volunteers**

## **Visitors**

\*\*\*For the safety of students and staff, all visitors must enter through the front door, sign-in at the front office and wear a visitor badge. There are no exceptions to this rule.

## **Volunteers**

In accordance with the updated directives of the Diocese of Raleigh, all volunteers who work with students must adhere to the following requirements:

- Complete a [Volunteer Form](#)
- Complete the Diocesan Safe Environment Training through a local Parish or school
- Enter through the front door of the school, sign in at the school office, and receive a volunteer badge
- Volunteers will only be permitted to visit the classroom with prior teacher approval
- Volunteers are expected to be dressed appropriately and modestly. Exercise clothing, spandex, short shorts, low cut shirts or dresses, and tight clothing should not be worn while volunteering.

## **Volunteer Hours**

Volunteers are the backbone of what we accomplish at our school. Your time and work are valued and truly make a difference for our students and faculty. We welcome parents into our school and are happy to help connect families with volunteer opportunities. Each family is asked to contribute a minimum of 26 hours of volunteer time to our school community. The Home and School Association provides guidance and support on how to sign up and track volunteer hours through their “Parent Stewardship” program (see HSA website). (It is understood that households with one parent may find 26 hours cumbersome, so a requirement of 13 hours applies). Please contact the principal if you experience unforeseen circumstances that interfere with your volunteer commitment.

All volunteers are required to complete and submit a Diocesan, Level C, background check form which can be obtained via the Parent Portal on the school webpage. Volunteers must also attend one Safe Environment Training workshop which is offered throughout the year. To obtain a current listing of dates and time for upcoming training sessions please visit the Parish website. The training and background check must be updated every five years.

## **Required Hours**

- **Two-parent families are expected to volunteer 26 hours of service.** Two-parent families are defined as households with two parents or with a parent and a step-parent.
- **Single-parent families are expected to volunteer 13 hours of service.**

Failure to fulfill required general volunteer hours will result in a \$25.00/hour fee.

These are the minimum number of hours needed for parents to volunteer. However, we welcome and encourage families to participate in fundraising and celebratory events all throughout the school year.

## **Volunteer Hub**

School volunteer opportunities are posted on the Volunteer Hub website. It is the responsibility of each family to sign up for hours via this website. If you have not registered, you **MUST** complete your enrollment by going to the website and then following the prompts.

## **Health & Safety**

St. Thomas More Catholic School has a plan for transitioning to distance learning strategies in the event of a natural disaster, disease outbreak or any other circumstances that make it unsafe or imprudent to continue on-campus education. The judgement of the school administration, in consultation with our pastor, and in conjunction with the Catholic Schools Office of the Catholic Diocese of Raleigh, will determine when the change to our school's normal instructional model warrants the transition to distance learning. The strategies used for distance learning will be developed by the school administration and faculty.

In the case of a public health crisis/pandemic situation, guidance from public health experts (i.e. NCDHHS and/or CDC shall be incorporated into the St. Thomas More Catholic School plan for prudent precautions for student/faculty health. This plan may be modified as necessary. Parents accept and assume all risk of returning their child to school.

### **Illness**

Students should stay at home and will not be permitted to school if ill or exhibiting any of the following symptoms: influenza, fever, rash, vomiting, severe sore throat, diarrhea, excessive cough, lice, or nits.

If a child is sent home for having lice or nits, the school will notify parents so that classmates can be checked that evening. No student will be permitted back in school until they are completely lice/nit free.

After an illness, students may return to school if their symptoms have not been present for at least 24 hours. Parents of children who have contracted a contagious condition such as chicken pox, strep throat, MRSA infections, or lice must notify the school office.

Absence due to illness is excusable, however parents must understand a pattern of irregular absences may negatively impact their child's grades.

If students get sick or injured at school, parents will be called to pick them up immediately. The school is not able to take care of sick students for a long period of time. Your child's absence must be reported each day to MJ Krafte by 8:15 AM. Call 919-942-6257 or email [mjkrafte@stmcsnc.org](mailto:mjkrafte@stmcsnc.org). If you email or text your child's classroom teacher regarding the reason for the absence and plans to pick up work, please copy MJ Krafte.

### **Medication**

When possible, parents should give medication at home. Teachers cannot give medication. All medication will be dispensed by the school nurse when the following conditions are met:

There is a serious health need, such as a chronic illness, or failure to take prescribed medication could jeopardize the student's health. All prescription medications to be dispensed in school require the completion of the [Prescription Medication during School Hours form](#), found in the Parent Downloads area of the school website.

Please insure that medication is reliably and safely delivered directly to the school office with written permission.

### **Health Policies and Procedures**

The state of North Carolina requires that a current record of immunization be on file in the school office. A health exam by a physician, within one year prior to admission, is also required. A STUDENT WILL BE TEMPORARILY EXCLUDED FROM SCHOOL IF HE/SHE HAS NOT RECEIVED THE VACCINES INDICATED AND PRESENTED PROPER DOCUMENTATION TO THE SCHOOL OFFICE NO LATER THAN THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL, or DATES SET FORTH IN CONSULTATION WITH THE SCHOOL NURSE. THERE WILL BE NO EXCEPTIONS.

## **Drills and Procedures**

### **Emergency Drills**

Saint Thomas More Catholic School conducts one emergency drill each month. The specific drills practiced are listed below.

### **Fire Drills**

Students are taught where and how to exit the building in case of fire. For fire drills or fire emergencies, the fire alarm will signal to evacuate the building. Teachers regularly instruct students regarding specific procedures.

### **Inclement Weather Drills**

Students are taught the “duck and cover” procedure for hazardous weather drills and emergencies. For both drills and emergencies, students will be notified through the intercom system. Teachers regularly instruct students regarding specific procedures.

### **Lockdown Drills**

Students are taught the proper procedures for locking down the building in the event of a potentially dangerous situation on campus. Students are also taught the procedures for modified lockdowns in the event of a dangerous situation or person in close proximity to the school. Teachers regularly instruct students regarding specific procedures.

### **School Evacuations**

In the event that Saint Thomas More Catholic School has to be evacuated, due to toxic or hazardous materials on the premises or in the area, students will be walked to the UNC campus Administration Building or the St. Thomas More South Campus, depending on the location of the hazardous materials. The fire department will determine when it is safe for students and staff to return to the building.

### **Lock Down**

In some situations it may be necessary to perform a school lockdown. Law enforcement recommends the following procedures, which STM performs during a school lock down: An alert will be broadcasted to initiate the lockdown. All interior and exterior doors will be locked. No one (including parents) will be permitted to enter or leave the buildings. The lockdown will continue until the school receives an “all clear” signal from emergency personnel

Parents should not call the school during a lockdown; the phone will be used by emergency personnel only. Lockdown drills will be performed with students as a preventative measure. Information will be provided as soon as possible via our emergency notification system.

## **Technology Policy**

### **Technology Program/Acceptable Use Policy**

Saint Thomas More Catholic School provides technology for students in order to support learning and enhance instruction. Internet access is available to our students and allows them to utilize unique and diverse resources. Use of the internet is a privilege, not a right. Students who misuse this privilege may be denied access to school technology and face disciplinary action.

For more information and specific details please visit our school website at [stmcsnc.org/1-to-1-device-program](http://stmcsnc.org/1-to-1-device-program)

**\*\*\* PLEASE SEE 2020-2021 RETURN TO SCHOOL PLAN ON THE ST. THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC SCHOOL WEBSITE FOR ADJUSTMENTS TO POLICY DUE TO COVID-19**