



Parent and Student Handbook

St. Thomas the Apostle School

5467 S. Woodlawn Avenue

Chicago, IL 60615

www.stapostleschool.com

phone: 773-667-1142

email: schoolinfo@stapostleschool.com

St. Thomas the Apostle School Handbook

TABLE OF CONTENTS

OUR MISSION	9
OUR PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION	9
OUR VALUES	10
ADMINISTRATION	11
PASTOR	11
PRINCIPAL	11
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL	11
CHICAGO ARCHDIOCESE CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE	11
TEACHERS	12
HOME AND SCHOOL ASSOCIATION	12
HANDBOOK AGREEMENT SIGNED BY PARENTS	12
AMENDMENTS TO THE HANDBOOK	12
HANDBOOK INTERPRETATIONS	13
PARENT-SCHOOL AGREEMENT	13
ENROLLMENT	14
ADMISSION POLICY	14
ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS	14
ADMISSIONS PROCESS	15
APPLICATION	15
ACCEPTANCE	15
ADMISSION	16
ADMITTANCE ASSESSMENT	16
BIRTH CERTIFICATE	16
REGISTRATION PROCESS	16
TRANSFER IN POLICY	16
TRANSFER OUT POLICY	17
STUDENT GRADE LEVEL AND HOMEROOM PLACEMENT POLICY	17
SCHOOL SUPPORT AND FEES	18
PAYMENTS FOR REGISTRATION/ENROLLMENT	18
GRADUATION FEE	18
SCHOOL TUITION SUPPORT	18

TUITION PAYMENTS	19
LATE TUITION	19
NON-PAYMENT OF TUITION	20
FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE	20
SCHOLARSHIPS	20
FUNDRAISING POLICY	21
OTHER WAYS TO SUPPORT ST. THOMAS	21
ACADEMICS	23
GRADING SCALE	23
Standards-Based Scale for All Students	23
Letter Grades Scale for Grades 4-8	23
HONOR ROLL	23
HOMEWORK	24
ASSESSMENT PROGRAM	26
CURRICULUM	27
SCHOOL SUPPLIES	27
LOCKERS/DESKS	27
COMPUTERS AND INTERNET USAGE	27
1-to-1 TECHNOLOGY USAGE	29
USE OF SCHOOL NAME, LOGOS, AND MOTTOS	29
REPORT CARDS AND ONLINE GRADES	29
PROGRESS REPORTS	29
PROMOTION	29
RETENTION	30
PROBATIONARY PLACEMENT	30
STUDENT SUPPORTS	31
TITLE ONE SERVICES	31
STUDENT RECORDS	31
RECORDS - FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT	32
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM	33
ATTENDANCE	36
CALENDAR	36
EMERGENCY DAYS	36
ATTENDANCE	36
DAILY SCHEDULE	36

*WEDNESDAY DISMISSAL	37
ARRIVAL	37
DISMISSAL	38
STUDENT DEPARTURE	39
SUPERVISION AFTER SCHOOL DISMISSES	39
ABSENCE	39
ABSENCE FOR ATTENDANCE AT SHADOW DAYS	40
TARDY	40
Medical Tardy	41
Tardy After 8:30 AM.	41
PERFECT ATTENDANCE	41
EARLY DISMISSAL	41
APPOINTMENTS	41
VACATION / ABSENCE	42
COMMUNICATIONS	42
EMERGENCY CARD	42
CHANGE OF ADDRESS/PHONE NUMBER/EMAIL ADDRESS	43
PARENT NEWSLETTER	43
WEBSITE	43
PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES — FORMAL	43
PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES — INFORMAL	44
EMAIL	44
VISITORS' IDENTIFICATION	44
CHILD CUSTODY	44
NON-CUSTODIAL PARENT / JOINT CUSTODY PARENTS	45
PARENT-PRINCIPAL CONFERENCES	45
PARENT VISITS TO CLASSROOMS	45
TELEPHONE	45
ITEMS DELIVERED TO SCHOOL	46
TELEPHONE BROADCAST SYSTEM – SCHOOL MESSENGER	46
DISCIPLINE	47
SAFE SCHOOL POLICY	47
CODE OF BEHAVIOR	47
COMMON EXPECTATIONS FOR SHARED SPACES	47
POSITIVE BEHAVIOR	47
MONITORING STUDENT BEHAVIOR	47

VERY SERIOUS OFFENSES	47
LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES	51
LEVELED CONSEQUENCE SYSTEM FOR GRADES 4-8	51
SERIOUS DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES	52
SEARCH AND SEIZURE	53
GUM AND CANDY	53
ELECTRONIC/OTHER EQUIPMENT	54
DRESS CODE	54
PURPOSE	55
UNIFORMS	55
PURCHASE OF SCHOOL UNIFORMS	55
N.U.T. DAYS (No Uniform Today)	56
SCHOOL SPIRIT WEAR DAYS	56
HEALTH EXAMS	57
HEALTH RECORDS ON THE EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARD	57
IMMUNIZATIONS	57
ADDITIONAL MIDDLE SCHOOL IMMUNIZATIONS	58
ALLERGIES	58
COMMUNICABLE DISEASE	58
ILLNESS	59
FEVERS	59
MEDICATION	59
ACCIDENTS	60
CONCUSSIONS	60
HOSPITALIZATION	61
SAFETY	62
ASBESTOS	62
PROCEDURES FOR MORNING DROP OFF AND AFTERNOON PICK UP	62
PROCEDURES FOR MORNING DROP OFF	62
PROCEDURES FOR AFTERNOON PICK UP	63
TRAFFIC SUPERVISION	63
PARKING LOT ETIQUETTE	63
PARKING LOT DURING THE SCHOOL DAY	64
PARKING IN FRONT OF SCHOOL	64
BUS SAFETY	66
SECURITY	66

CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT: ALLEGATIONS/SUSPICIONS	64
EMERGENCIES	65
FIRE	65
TORNADO	65
EARTHQUAKE	65
SCHOOL EVACUATION	65
SHELTER IN PLACE	66
SNOWSTORM	66
SCHOOL DELAY	66
EMERGENCY SCHOOL DISMISSAL FOR WEATHER	66
EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES	64
AFTERNOON EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES	67
ATHLETICS	67
SPORTS PHYSICALS	69
FEES FOR PARTICIPATION IN SPORTS	69
SPORT UNIFORMS	70
BASKETBALL HOME GAMES	70
ACADEMICS AND CONDUCT IMPACTING PARTICIPATION IN SPORTS	70
BIRTHDAY PARTIES	71
FIELD TRIP POLICIES	71
VOLUNTEERING WITH CHILDREN	73
PROCESS	73
SAFE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM (VIRTUS)	73
PARENT—PARISH COVENANT	74
REGISTERED MEMBERS OF ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE PARISH	74
APPENDIX	76
APPENDIX A	77
PARENT AGREEMENT WITH ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE SCHOOL	77
APPENDIX B	80
TECHNOLOGY	80
APPENDIX C	85
ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE PBIS MATRIX	85
APPENDIX D	89
UNIFORM DRESS CODE FOR BOYS AND GIRLS	89

APPENDIX E	97
ASBESTOS INFORMATION LETTER	97
APPENDIX F	98
PARENT/GUARDIAN VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS	98
APPENDIX G	99
ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE SCHOOL FUNDRAISING POLICY	99
APPENDIX H	103
	103
APPENDIX I	104
	104

St. Thomas the Apostle School

OUR MISSION

The mission of the St. Thomas the Apostle School community is to lead, challenge, and encourage God's children in Extraordinary Variety to grow in faith, knowledge, and commitment to service.

Root Beliefs of St. Thomas the Apostle School

- 1. Faith Is Our Foundation**
- 2. What Makes Us Different Makes Us Great**
- 3. Learning Is Exercise**
- 4. Every Minute Matters**
- 5. Challenges Are Opportunities**
- 6. We Are A Family**

OUR PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

St. Thomas the Apostle School believes that childhood is the most critical period for the development of attitudes, habits, capabilities, and skills, and that the curriculum encompasses all that a child experiences in his life at school.

The purpose of the school is to create a faith-filled learning environment. The pastor, principal, staff, teachers, parents, and other community members lay the foundation for a love of learning, instill a sense of personal worth and respect for others, and develop critical thinking skills so that the children can grow to be responsible and practicing citizens. We endeavor to develop a community of learners where respect, collaboration and excitement for learning prevail. Quality Catholic education is provided for students in preschool through eighth grade in a caring and family atmosphere.

The main components of the school's educational program are:

- Embracing a faith to be lived within a believing community.
- Developing Christian attitudes and habits as a contributing and supporting member of a diverse community.
- Acquiring essential knowledge, skills and techniques with the stimulus of practical application.
- Integrating technology skills and applications.
- Encouraging creativity and self-expression.
- Promoting each student's personal academic, artistic, and athletic gifts and talents.
- Nurturing each child to help balance the physical, intellectual, social, emotional and ethical development as a whole person.
- Promoting leadership as a service to others.

OUR VALUES

The entire staff and faculty of St. Thomas the Apostle School, in their efforts to achieve these objectives, hold certain convictions which underlie the learning process.

We believe in:

Faith Community

- The recognition of Jesus Christ as the meaning and purpose of our school
- The importance of modeling what we teach about Christian values and ethics

Respect

- Recognition of the dignity and worth of each person
- The importance of individual differences and potential

Academic Excellence

- The importance of responsiveness by the faculty to the interests, needs, and learning styles of individual children.
- Providing the academic rigor and challenge to meet each child's potential

Responsibility

- The shared responsibility of school, home and community for children's growth and development
- Fostering students' personal responsibility and accountability

Safe and Nurturing Environment

- The need for a warm, supportive school environment in which all children feel welcome, accepted, and safe.
- The importance of open and continuing communication between school and home.

Leadership

- The importance of teaching children ways to transfer learned skills to real world applications.
- The importance of teaching and demonstrating Catholic social teaching in daily life

ADMINISTRATION

PASTOR

The pastor is the primary spiritual leader of St. Thomas the Apostle Parish and the parish ministry of the Catholic School. He is responsible for the overall administration and direction of the school together with the school principal. The pastor appoints the principal.

PRINCIPAL

The principal is the executive director of the school and is chiefly responsible for the effective operation of the school as an educational institution. The principal is responsible to the pastor for the school and cooperates with the Catholic School Superintendent and state school officials for all matters pertaining to the school. The principal administers the educational program, hires and supervises faculty and staff, and coordinates all educational activities within the school. The principal represents the school to the community at large.

ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

The assistant principal is selected by the principal to support and help the principal in administering the educational program and all educational activities within the school. The assistant performs all designated duties assigned by the principal.

CHICAGO ARCHDIOCESE CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE

The Office of Catholic Schools for the Archdiocese of Chicago provides leadership and guidance for all the Catholic Schools. The Office provides direction on policies and curriculum. St. Thomas the Apostle is located geographically in Vicariate 6 with a regional director as liaison to the Superintendent and the Catholic Schools Office.

TEACHERS

The teachers are responsible for effective academic excellence in the school. They strive to fulfill the philosophy, objectives, and functions of a Catholic school by motivating students to academic, moral, and spiritual achievement. The teachers dedicate themselves to the *ministry of education* within the Catholic School. All educators at St. Thomas are professionally prepared, highly qualified, fully accredited by the state, and approved through the Archdiocese. Teachers are selected who possess Illinois state certification in their appropriate areas of teaching. The number of the faculty is determined by school enrollment.

HOME AND SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

The Home and School Association is an organization of St. Thomas the Apostle School parents and stakeholders. All parents automatically join HSA when their children are enrolled at school. The HSA promotes community and the academic and spiritual welfare of the students in the school.

Through HSA, parents are encouraged to be involved in academic and extracurricular activities. The HSA provides social and informational activities to further develop the school community.

HSA is organized into committees to run events throughout the year. Each committee is run by a Lead Parent Volunteer. The Lead Parent Volunteer is responsible for communicating with administration to confirm event details, share communication plans, book the space on campus, ensure all events are in accordance with the handbook and other logistical details of the event. The Lead Parent Volunteer position is open to all STA parents and if families are interested, they can reach out to Mr. Koll.

The HSA is NOT a governing body of the school, and they are NOT involved in any decisions regarding curriculum, school finances, and school personnel. They are only responsible for planning HSA events and coordinating these events with school administration. Any money raised from HSA events goes toward funding the event. Any left over funds are at the discretion of administration.

HANDBOOK AGREEMENT SIGNED BY PARENTS

The Handbook describes the policies and guidelines for most aspects of school life at St. Thomas the Apostle School. All parents receive a copy of the Handbook at the start of the year. Parents sign a statement indicating that they have read and agree to abide by the policies and guidelines within this handbook when they register their student(s). The contents of this book should be explained by the parent(s) to the student(s).

AMENDMENTS TO THE HANDBOOK

The pastor and/or principal retain the right to amend the handbook at any time. The school administration annually reviews the handbook for updating. Ad hoc due dates and exclusion days may change upon need.

HANDBOOK INTERPRETATIONS

Interpretation of the provisions made in the St. Thomas the Apostle Handbook is made according to the discretion of the pastor and the principal. The pastor and the principal reserve the right to make any and all decisions on the application of the policies outlined in the handbook to concrete situations as they occur.

PARENT-SCHOOL AGREEMENT

As a condition of enrollment, a student's parents or guardians are required to sign an agreement with the school. This agreement is signed by the parents when they register for the upcoming school year. This agreement articulates the expectation of parents to be partners with the school in order to provide a quality education for their children.

Since St. Thomas recognizes parents as the primary educators of their children, the policy of St. Thomas the Apostle elementary school requires active parental support and participation in the life of the school as a condition of enrollment. Such support is a necessary prerequisite for the school in order to be able to offer a quality educational program. Active involvement includes providing service at the school for various events and activities.

The school and the parents are partners in the education of children at St. Thomas the Apostle School. That partnership includes the religious education of the students enrolled. Accordingly, all parents are required to sign an agreement with the school, committing themselves to active support of the school. If the parent repeatedly or seriously violates the contract or if, in the opinion of the administration (pastor and principal) that partnership is no longer viable, the family will be invited to leave St. Thomas the Apostle School. Additionally, if their children repeatedly or seriously violate school rules, the school reserves the right to require the parent to withdraw the student from the school. (See **Appendix A** for a copy of the Parent-School Agreement).

ENROLLMENT

ADMISSION POLICY

St. Thomas the Apostle School has been established to meet the spiritual, educational, and social needs of our students. The school is open to all students regardless of race, color, sex, ethnic and national origin, or religious affiliation.

St. Thomas admits students of any race, color, sex, or national and ethnic origin in administering the education policies, athletic or other school-administered programs.

Admissions are processed between the last Monday in January of the current year and the second Friday in March of the next year..

We highly value classroom size and children learning in a nurturing, comfortable environment with minimal disruption. We urge interested families to begin the admissions process in a timely manner. The number of sections in each grade level are determined by enrollment and this decision is made in the spring. After all openings are filled in a classroom, the school maintains a waiting list until sufficient numbers warrant the opening of another classroom for that grade.

All who attend St. Thomas the Apostle School understand that participation in Catholic religious instruction and school activities related to the Catholic identity of the school are required.

Questions and/or concerns regarding discrimination in admissions should be directed to the principal (if appropriate), the pastor, and the regional director of the Office of Catholic Schools. Concerns regarding discrimination in hiring should be directed to the Human Resources Department of the Archdiocese of Chicago.

ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS

When a child enters the school, the following records are required: birth certificate, baptismal certificate for Catholics, and health records. Students must meet state requirements regarding immunization policies before and during their time of attendance. *Until the new student's immunizations and health records are submitted, the student may not attend school.*

New parents are required to complete a parent tour and in some cases a shadow day may be scheduled before they may apply for the upcoming school year.

For admission of transfer students, parents shall present the proper transfer or some appropriate credential from the school previously attended. Upon a written request from St. Thomas the Apostle, all records from the previous school, including health records, shall be transferred within ten days provided financial obligations to the school have been met.

Students entering Kindergarten through grade 8 must have their academic records and recommendations reviewed by the principal. Students may be asked to be interviewed by the principal prior to acceptance.

Pre-Kindergarten students must be able to dress and feed themselves, be fully toilet-trained, able to care for their own toileting needs, and be able to follow simple directions.

A child must be in compliance with the age requirements of the State of Illinois regarding age of admission. Students must meet the age requirement for Pre-K, Kindergarten, and first grade:

- 3 year old program: the child must be 3 years old by SEPTEMBER 1st of the current year.
- 4 year old program: the child must be 4 years old by SEPTEMBER 1st of the current year.
- Kindergarten: the child must be 5 years old by SEPTEMBER 1st of the current year.
- First Grade: the child must be 6 years old by SEPTEMBER 1st of the current year

St. Thomas the Apostle does not advance students to grades beyond the one their age requirement indicates. On occasion and when necessary, St. Thomas the Apostle School may recommend that a student be retained if the school believes this will best benefit the physical, academic, and social-emotional development of the child. The principal makes the final decision for grade placement.

ADMISSIONS PROCESS

The admissions process consists of three steps: **Application, Acceptance, and Admission.**

APPLICATION

Applicants must:

1. Complete a parent tour and shadow day for the student (required for Pre-K and K parents, strongly encouraged for 1st-8th parents)
2. Fill out *the entire* application form on line.
3. Provide the original or certified copy of the birth certificate. It will be copied and returned.
4. Provide the Baptismal certificate if the child is Catholic.
5. Submit the latest report card and 2 years prior.
6. Submit the latest standardized test scores and last 2 years prior (for example, PARCC, ASPIRE or IReady).

Our school will reach out to the student's former school (if applicable) for a recommendation letter from a current teacher or principal. All required documents must be submitted before a decision on acceptance can be made.

ACCEPTANCE

Acceptance is based upon academic records, standardized test scores, and school recommendation. In some instances, a student interview with the principal and/or teacher will help decide whether the student is accepted to the school. All students must be emotionally and intellectually capable of meeting St. Thomas the Apostle School standards. All required documents must be in hand before acceptance. Families will be notified of acceptance via email.

ADMISSION

Admission of new and transferring students is on a probationary basis for academics and all new and transfer students are welcome and will be accepted on a probationary period of 90 school days. During this probationary period students are expected to maintain passing grades, have no major disciplinary issues, or require accommodations that the school physically or financially is incapable of supporting. Children in the Pre-Kindergarten or Kindergarten also must demonstrate behavioral and developmental readiness for school. Students with special learning needs may be accepted if the school has the staff and ability to make the necessary accommodations for the child's academic growth and success. During the 90 day probationary period if the school determines the student is unable to perform with adequate growth in this environment, please be aware that current month tuition will be due and any prepaid tuition will be refunded.

ADMITTANCE ASSESSMENT

Prior to the admittance of a child to any grade at St. Thomas the Apostle School, a child may be required to be assessed for grade placement. The administration shall have the right to test the student in any subject and/or to require a written recommendation from the teacher at the prior school. Test results will be used to place a child in a proper grade level and will determine acceptance or non-acceptance into the established curriculum. If a student's grade report indicates success at the prior grade level, then testing may be omitted.

BIRTH CERTIFICATE

St. Thomas the Apostle has a moral and legal obligation to protect children enrolling at our school. The school must ensure that every student enrolling at St. Thomas the Apostle is under the care of the proper legal guardian. State law requires that every student registering at St. Thomas the Apostle for the first time must provide a government-issued copy of the child's birth certificate within 30 calendar days. Local law enforcement will be notified about any person enrolling a child who fails to provide a birth certificate.

If a child from St. Thomas the Apostle has gone missing, the school will flag the birth certificate. This will notify the school secretary when any information is requested about the student. The school secretary will immediately report this request to the local authorities. St. Thomas the Apostle will not forward the records of any student transferring out of the school whose records have been flagged. The requested school will notify authorities of this request.

REGISTRATION PROCESS

Current families must complete the registration process to guarantee a spot for their child(ren) for the upcoming school year. The administration will provide the link to the online registration form during Catholic Schools Week. Current families must:

1. Complete the online registration forms for their child(ren)
2. Pay tuition deposit (one month of tuition)
3. Submit all medical documents

4. Set up the Tuition/Extended Day program payment plan for the next school year on FACTS

Upon acceptance, new families must complete the registration process to guarantee a spot for their child(ren). In the acceptance email, the link to the online registration form will be provided.

New families must:

1. Complete the online registration forms for their child(ren)
2. Pay the tuition deposit (one month of tuition)
3. Submit all medical documents
4. Set up the Tuition/Extended Day program payment plan on FACTS

TRANSFER IN POLICY

Transfer students are admitted when space is available and there is a good fit between student and the class. Once the school year begins, we only take transfer students through the second day in December. New students will be notified of admittance after all records have been properly transferred and evaluated by officials at St. Thomas the Apostle School and all forms and fees have been submitted. New students are admitted on 90 days probation. Students must have successfully passed to the grade the student seeks to enter.

Students who transfer from an elementary school must meet all their outstanding financial obligations before an official transfer or final report card is accepted.

TRANSFER OUT POLICY

Parents are advised to inform the School Office Staff of a transfer and the name and address of the new school. This information is essential in expediting the transfer of school records. A transfer will be provided to the parent or guardian following the child's last day of classes at St. Thomas the Apostle School. **All financial obligations must be met before an official transfer or final report card is issued.** Checks will require two weeks in which to clear before the transfer is provided.

STUDENT GRADE LEVEL AND HOMEROOM PLACEMENT POLICY

It is the responsibility of the school administration, in conjunction with the faculty, to place students in the proper grade level and to assign them to their respective homerooms in the best interest of all concerned.

The main criteria for determining a child's placement is the child's age. The previous academic record of the student at St. Thomas or any other school (school records from previous school) and standardized test results are used as criteria in exceptional circumstances. Transfer students may be required to be tested if there are no standardized test results. Additional consideration is given to the balance of boys and girls in the classroom, blend of personalities, and previous teacher recommendations. *A parental request for a specific teacher is not one of the criteria to be used in any placement.* The principal and assistant principal make the final decision on class placement.

New students are admitted on 90 days probation. During that time, the student must demonstrate adequate progress and the skills to succeed in the current grade. At the end of the probationary period, if there is a concern, the parents and the teacher will meet to discuss the student's progress and any prescriptions for further success and determine whether a return to the previous grade is more appropriate. A statement of the school recommendation will be kept in the student's file. If there is not a good fit with the school, the student will no longer continue at St. Thomas.

If the school determines that the student's needs are behavioral rather than academic, a plan of action will be made for the student's success. St. Thomas retains the right to not continue the student in the grade or school.

SCHOOL SUPPORT AND FEES

TUITION DEPOSIT

1st payment towards tuition per child for Pre-Kindergarten and grades K to 8 at the time of registration.

The deposit is non-refundable and non-transferable.

PAYMENTS FOR TUITION

Payments to the School Office during school hours can be made via check, credit card, money order, debit card.

Tuition payments are non-refundable and non-transferable.

GRADUATION FEE

The graduation fee for eighth grade students will be determined in February once all graduation activities are finalized. The fee is *due in full* no later than April 1st. Payment is made in the school office or on FACTS.

SCHOOL TUITION SUPPORT

School tuition represents *only a portion* of the *actual cost* of educating a child at St. Thomas the Apostle School for the year. Tuition is paid on a 12-month plan or paid in full. Requests for a 11-month plan may be accepted. Tuition is pro-rated for those who register after October 15th.

TUITION	Pre-Kindergarten & Kindergarten	1 st – 8 th Grade
One Child	\$9,349.20	\$8,872.20
Two Children	\$16,647.19	\$15,863.30
Three Children		\$22,494.78
Four Children		\$26,917.66

One 1 st - 8 Child & One Pre-K Child	\$18,221.40
---	-------------

ALL MONTHLY TUITION PAYMENTS ARE NON-REFUNDABLE.

TUITION PAYMENTS

In order to finalize registration at the school, the family will complete a FACTS Online Tuition Account Registration which will be their annual financial contract indicating their school support. It will designate their tuition payment plan. The plan is determined on the “FACTS Online Tuition Account” at <https://online.factsmgt.com/signin/41YRC>. All families must complete this online tuition account registration in order to finalize registration. This is true even if tuition is paid in full, to assure proper account record keeping.

Tuition payment plan options include online payments, automatic deduction from your bank account or credit card and invoicing. There is a transaction fee for debit and credit cards and for invoicing. All tuition payments are due on the 1st or 15th day of each month, depending upon the online tuition account plan chosen. Special arrangements are *highly* discouraged. Non payment of tuition and or incidental fees will result in your students inability to participate in sports, field trips and other activities. **Tuition accounts must be paid in full by May 20th, of the end of the current school year.**

Families, who pay tuition in full for the entire year by October 15th, will receive a 5% discount on the tuition. You must alert the office that you are making a total payment to receive the discount.

LATE TUITION

All tuition payments are due either on the 1st or the 15th day of each month, depending upon the online tuition account plan chosen. **Your payment is deemed late 5 days after tuition due date.** A **\$30.00 late fee** will be charged and the student(s) will be excluded from class on the 6th day. There is a **\$30.00 handling charge** for all checks returned for non-sufficient funds. After an NSF check, payment should be made with cashiers check, credit card, or money order. If a family misses two or more consecutive school tuition payments, they will be asked to meet with the finance officer who will establish a payment plan with the family to resolve the delinquent tuition. In the event of extraordinary circumstances, parents should contact the finance officer .

Exclusion from school is the Archdiocesan policy for delinquent tuition. Because we cannot take back the education we have provided up to the date of exclusion, we then stop providing the service for which payment has not yet been received.

All tuition must be paid in full by May 20th . If tuition is not paid, report cards, transcripts, etc. will **not** be issued to you or to a new school. Additionally, the family’s registration for the next school term will not be accepted until all outstanding bills are paid in full.

NON-PAYMENT OF TUITION

If a family leaves a school and does not pay the balance of tuition, another Catholic school in the Archdiocese will ***not accept*** that student for admission until the tuition at the sending school is paid in full.

If a family leaves a school and does not pay the balance of tuition, grades and test scores do not have to be sent to the public school until the balance is paid. The school only sends the health records on to the public school. Verbal confirmation of grade placement *may* be given. In the case of eighth grade students, diplomas, report cards, transcripts, etc, will not be issued to you or to the high school until accounts are fully paid.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Prior to the start of school, some need-based scholarships are available; these scholarships cover only partial school tuition. Eligibility for aid is determined through a third party agency. Individuals must apply online at www.factsmgmt.com/aid. Once an online application has been completed, the following information will need to be provided to FACTS to complete the application process:

- Copies of your most recent Federal tax forms including all supporting tax schedules;
- Copies of your latest W-2 forms for both you and your spouse;
- Copies of supporting documentation for Social Security Income, Welfare, Child Support, Food Stamps, Workers' Compensation and TANF. This documentation can be uploaded in PDF format online. FACTS Customer Care is available at 1-866-441-4637.

St. Thomas the Apostle School has a Scholarship Committee that determines awards based on need. This committee meets monthly from March through August. Families who receive need-based financial aid must sign an agreement to indicate their commitment to comply with the parent-school contract. A copy of this contract is found in the Addendum of the Parent-School Handbook. **You must be registered, have completed your first tuition payment, and registered an account with FACTS in order to complete your award.**

SCHOLARSHIPS

Funding for need-based scholarship assistance is sought out by the school from agencies and organizations, such as Big Shoulders or the Archdiocesan program CARITAS. St. Thomas the Apostle School annually requests support from alumni and friends for a pool of financial aid.

Parents who need emergency financial assistance during the school year are encouraged to contact the tuition manager. All information is kept confidential. Tuition assistance is based on financial need and the availability of school scholarship funds.

If a student/family is in receipt of an STA Scholarship and leaves STA mid term or does not meet STA Scholarship terms/policies the STA Scholarship is immediately revoked and the family becomes responsible for the allotted tuition amount that was previously covered by the STA Scholarship.

FUNDRAISING POLICY

Our school is funded through three sources: tuition, donations/grants, and fundraising. Our Marketing Director of School Advancement coordinates the events. Families are encouraged to be involved in helping to raise funds annually through involvement in committees, promotions of events, and volunteering in fundraising programs.

STA's Fundraising Policy is outlined in Appendix I.

OTHER WAYS TO SUPPORT ST. THOMAS

All families are urged to lend a hand and support the following activities. Your service has a positive impact on the students in the school and on the entire school community.

SCRIP

How it works: You purchase *face-value* gift certificates or gift cards for businesses and restaurants and we receive a percentage back from those companies as profit. The program that organizes such sales is called *SCRIP*.

Benefit: The program returns a percentage which we use to fund scholarships. Additionally, parents who buy cards receive a defined percent off their tuition for each card they buy. That amount depends on the value of the card and the amount of money spent on purchase of cards. Families are *encouraged to order at least three SCRIP gift cards monthly to make the greatest impact on their tuition accounts.* There is NO dollar amount assigned to the purchases.

OR Help to SELL SCRIP cards after Mass at the Sunday Hospitality held in the parish hall. This option provides the added feature of earning multiple service hours for the family.

Social Media

Facebook

Enlist the help of your friends and family on Facebook! Use the link below to easily create your own Facebook fundraiser for STA: <https://www.facebook.com/fund/stapostleschool/>

Instagram

You can also enlist the help of your friends and family through your Instagram Stories!

1. Open the camera and take or upload a photo that best highlights STA! You can also use "Create Mode" to create a post with text only.
2. Tap the "sticker" icon at the top.
3. Select the "donation" sticker.
4. Search for and select "St. Thomas the Apostle School" (look for the STA logo next to the name)
5. Customize your fundraiser post.
6. Tap "Send To" and then tap "Share" next to your story.

Occasionally there are collections for tragedy relief (e.g. famine or hurricanes), or missions (e.g. the Orphanage in the Dominican Republic), or for the civic community (e.g. the Veterans Project). You will be notified of such events in the principal's messages and in your child's weekly classroom newsletter.

St. Thomas the Apostle School is a very generous community which teaches its children to reach out to others less fortunate and to share one's own resources in the spirit of Jesus Christ.

ACADEMICS

GRADING SCALE

The elementary school grading system is explained on the report cards and is set by the Archdiocese of Chicago. All students at STA receive a level of achievement on the Standards based scale. The scale for the letter grades is common to all Archdiocesan schools. All students in Pre-K through 8th grade receive a standards based grade for special classes.

Standards-Based Scale for All Students

- 4= Advanced.** Student achievement reflects in-depth understanding and application that goes beyond the grade-level expectations
- 3= Proficient.** Student achievement reflects understanding and application of the grade-level expectations.
- 2= Progressing.** Student achievement reflects emerging understanding of grade-level expectations.
- 1= Beginning.** Student needs development of foundational skills to achieve grade-level expectations.
- >= Evaluate later,** learning goal was not a focus during this trimester

There is no 0 on this scale and a student cannot be given a grade of 0.

Letter Grades Scale for Grades 4-8

A+ = 99-100	A = 95-98	A- = 93-94
B+ = 91-92	B = 87-90	B- = 85-86
C+ = 83-84	C = 79-82	C- = 77-78
D+ = 75-76	D = 71-74	D- = 69-70
F = 0.5-68	I Incomplete	NG Not Graded

HONOR ROLL

Students in grades 4-8 are eligible to be placed on the school honor roll at the end of each trimester. Awardees are determined by point average (averages are not rounded up), and the following scale indicates the point value of each grade.

A+ = 11	A = 10	A- = 9	
B+ = 8	B = 7	B- = 6	
C+ = 5	C = 4	C- = 3	
D+ = 2	D = 1	D- = 0	F = 0

Highest Honors for the the Trimester

Student earns a 10-11 point average for core subjects (religion, reading, English, math, science, social studies)

Student earns all 3s or 4s in special classes (music, PE, Spanish, art, resource)

None of the *Successful Learner Traits* are marked (1) “Below Expectations”

Highest Honors for the School Year

_____ Earned Highest Honors in all three trimesters in the academic year

Honors for the Trimester

Student earns a 7-9 point average for core subjects (religion, reading, English, math, science social studies)

Student earns all 3s or 4s in special classes (music, PE, Spanish, art, resource)

None of the *Successful Learner Traits* are marked (1) “Below Expectations”

Honors for the School Year

_____ Earned either Highest Honors or Honors in all three trimesters in the academic year

HOMEWORK

Homework is regularly assigned to students at STA. Homework is an important supplement to the work students do in class each day. Homework serves the following purposes: reinforce and practice skills and concepts taught in class, help prepare for future lessons, and/or further develop core reading and math skills.

At the start of each school year, teachers communicate with parents how frequently homework will be assigned, how they communicate assignments, how it will be assessed, and their expectations of the students. Parents will get information on what is expected for their child’s classroom at the Classroom Open House. Some teachers choose to include homework information in their weekly

newsletter or to email homework information. Additionally, students in grades 3-8 have an assignment notebook and are directed to record their assignments in them daily. Parents should help their children learn the value of an assignment planner as a good study skill.

Parent Involvement

Parents are an integral part of making homework a positive experience for their child. Please make homework a top priority in your household and show your child that you value its worth by offering the following kinds of support:

- Sit down with your child and together schedule a time for completing homework assignments. Homework habits are more easily formed if children work at the same time each day.
- Help your child choose an appropriate study location. Provide your child with good lighting and necessary supplies
- Ask your child to describe the assignment before beginning, and later show you the completed work or summarize what he or she learned.
- Encourage your child to work on his/her own, but say that you are available for help.
- Be a resource and consultant for your child, but do not hover over him/her with constant advice. Remember that sometimes the best help is a hug, a smile or a word of approval.
- If your child becomes frustrated, put away the assignment for a while.
- Please be available to check work and check whether the assignment is complete.
- In general, be encouraging and supportive. Your attitude is contagious.

For homework, the student is responsible for:

- Knowing what assignments are assigned and their due dates.
- Completing them in an appropriate manner and on time.
- Letting the teacher know if they do not understand an assignment.

Middle School - Zeros Are Not Permitted for Homework & Daily Study Hall

Zeros Aren't Permitted (ZAP) is a program designed to increase the expectation of students who habitually, or occasionally, fail to complete and turn in assignments on time. Students who have zeros are likely to continue not handing in assignments, and therefore are at greater risk of failure and dropping out. ZAP clearly emphasizes the belief that assignments/projects/homework are important and must be completed. This program will direct students to use their abilities to acquire self-discipline and establish work habits that will serve them in an educational or work setting. We realize that for many students a zero is not an immediate consequence since most students who repeatedly receive zeros are students who are struggling in school anyway. This is just one more strategy to help a child experience more success in school. Preparing a student for high school and for life requires teachers to ensure each child knows the curriculum, and if he/she is not completing assignments a teacher cannot possibly provide an accurate measure of that student's knowledge.

The ZAP program is not a form of punishment rather a program to send a message that failure is not acceptable.

Students may not have turned in or completed an assignment, project, or homework on time. “On time” means the assignment is submitted on the day and period it is due. The teacher will notify the student in person that he or she must complete the assignment during study hall.

Study Hall is an opportunity for students who have missing or incomplete work to make it up during school hours. Study hall will be monitored by each middle school teacher on a rotating basis. Teachers will host study halls in their classroom during recess. Students with missing assignments are expected to go directly to the study hall and arrive at the study hall prepared. Students are expected to silently work at a seat the entire time they are in study hall. Assignments that are completed in the study hall are the student’s responsibility to give directly to their teacher. If a student does not complete the assignment during study hall, they must complete it that evening and turn it into the teacher that assigned the work before the 8:00 AM bell. If a student does not turn in their work before the 8:00 AM bell, they are required to attend study hall again.

A student has 5 school days to complete an assignment for credit. After 5 days, the student will be removed from the study hall list and the assignment will be graded according to completion. Grades are updated on a weekly basis on PowerSchool. ZAP assignments not turned in within 5 days of when the work was assigned will be given a grade of 50%. Families are encouraged to check PowerSchool and then email individual teachers with questions about assignments and grades.

After Study Hall, the teacher will review the assignment for completeness and quality of work. An assignment automatically drops 1 letter grade for each day it is late. If a student fails to complete an assignment he/she will remain in ZAP and attend study hall until the assignment has been completed for up to 5 days.

Note that the student is responsible for knowing the assignment and completing the assignment. Parents who consistently “rescue” the child by finding the assignment and completing the work for the child are teaching the child to be irresponsible. Teachers use PowerSchool, email, newsletters, and assignment notebooks to communicate homework with students and families. Together the teachers and the parents help children to learn responsibility for their own work and behavior.

Homework for an absent child

Parents can request homework for an absent child by an email to the teacher or by a phone call to the school office before 8 AM. This early request allows the teacher sufficient time to prepare the assignments to be picked up or sent home *in the afternoon*. Homework and textbooks may be picked up from the school office from 2:30-3:30 PM and after school until 5:30 PM.

ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

The classroom teacher administers the standardized testing program according to policies determined by the Archdiocese of Chicago. Students in grades 3-8 participate in standardized testing as designated by the Archdiocese. There are several times during the school year that students may participate in benchmark assessments in order to measure their progress and growth towards the summative assessment in the spring. iReady is a formative assessment required by the Archdiocese. Kindergarten - 8th grade students will take the iReady assessment 3 times each school year, and use the iReady program to practice targeted skills. Other formative assessments may be administered during the year as a means of assessing and directing student growth.

The eighth grade students also take a high school preparation test in early December. No student shall graduate from the eighth grade unless he or she has received instruction in the history of the United States and has given evidence of a comprehensive knowledge of the subject. No student shall graduate from the eighth grade unless he or she has passed an examination on the principles of representative government, on the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of Illinois. The student must show an understanding of the proper use and display of the American flag. Students in grades seven and eight participate in social studies classes at least three hours per week. The test is first given in the seventh grade.

CURRICULUM

The curriculum of St. Thomas the Apostle School is built around the Archdiocesan Benchmarks, which are aligned to the Common Core State Standards. Textbooks and our resources are chosen in order to support the acquisition of the skills outlined in the Archdiocesan Benchmarks.

Technology, textbooks and other resources are rented from the school and the fee is included in the tuition deposit paid at the start of each year. Students are expected to take care of all materials entrusted to them. In the event a book or device is damaged, lost or defaced, the student will be assessed a fee. That fee will be based on the cost to replace or to repair the material. If the supply is lost or damaged beyond repair, the family is expected to pay the entire cost of replacement.

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Many school supplies are provided by the school throughout the year and the fee for the various items, including materials for art projects, computer projects, science activities, etc., is included in the tuition deposit. Not all classroom materials are provided. Each student has a list of necessary supplies that should be provided from home. At the end of the school year, students receive a list of school supplies they will need for the following school year. Students are expected to have these supplies replenished as the need arises. Parents should carefully choose the items as designated on the list. The list of supplies is also posted online at www.stapostleschool.com. The individual classroom supply list can also be fulfilled with an online order. The opportunity to purchase supplies is coordinated by the Home and School Association and announced by the school through the website and emails. Supply kit orders are only accepted online at [EPI School Supplies](#). Families will be given an STA code. There is a stated deadline for ordering.

LOCKERS/DESKS

School desks and/or lockers will be assigned to students at the beginning of the year and remain the property of the school. School authorities have a right and a responsibility to examine the contents of desks, lockers, and book bags for reasons of health, safety and security. Students are not to change desks or lockers without permission from the teacher. Students show respect for school property and keep the desks and lockers in good repair. Damages to desks and lockers will be assessed to the family of the student who abused the property.

COMPUTERS AND INTERNET USAGE

Access to the school devices and the school network is given to students who attend our school, for their responsible use. Often the teachers will guide and direct students to retrieve information from the internet for research. At school, students are only allowed to access sites in order to complete an assignment.

Students will have access to desktop computers, Chromebooks, laptops, and tablets. This property must be used appropriately and safely. Damages that arise from careless use will be paid for by the student (or paid for by the student's parents) who abused the property.

Fourth through eighth grade students will receive a school email account that will enable them to use Google Apps. This account should only be used for academic purposes. Students should do this only to interact with STA teachers and other middle school students. Any inappropriate use of this account could result in loss of their account or additional disciplinary measures. Students should never use their personal email accounts on school devices.

All students, teachers, and staff are required to comply with the policies outlined by the school for the use of computers and tablets within the school and use of the internet in school and in school-related activities. The computer network and internet use policies are outlined in an Acceptable Use Agreement. All students and their parents are required to sign the agreement and a copy of the agreement is kept on file for the calendar year. Another copy of these guidelines can be found in **Appendix B**.

Student websites referencing the name *St. Thomas the Apostle School* or any member of the STA community should reflect Christian values. Any derogatory comments or pictures, personal attacks, rude or inflammatory language or postings on the internet (including, but not limited to Facebook, Twitter, etc.) will result in disciplinary consequences. Conduct, whether inside or outside the school, which is detrimental to the reputation of the school, can result in discipline. (See section in this Handbook on Discipline for further explanation)

Parents/guardians are primarily responsible for the student's appropriate and ethical use of technology *outside of* school. Some inappropriate use of technology outside of school, however, may subject the student to disciplinary action. Action-worthy inappropriate use of technology may include but is not limited to: harassment of others, derogatory use of the school name, remarks

directed to or about teachers, staff, and students. It also includes offensive communications including videos/photographs and threats. Students who appear in photos or send messages conducting themselves in rude, vulgar, or inappropriate manner or gestures and are wearing identifiable school uniforms depicting St. Thomas in a negative light will be subject to serious discipline.

Unauthorized costs incurred for online purchases charged to the school by a student are the responsibility of the student and her/his family.

Per Illinois law, the school may not request or require the student to share content in the course of an investigation. The school may not require a student to provide a password or other account information, but may require a student to cooperate in an investigation if there is sufficient evidence to suggest the student's social network account violates the school's disciplinary policy.

1-to-1 TECHNOLOGY USAGE

Every fourth through eighth grade student will be provided with a Google Chromebook to use during instructional time. The Chromebook will remain at school at all times. Students are NOT allowed to bring a personal device. Please see **Appendix B** for the complete policy for Chromebooks and Personal Devices.

USE OF SCHOOL NAME, LOGOS, AND MOTTOS

No one may use the school name, logo or motto on any type of social media or in any other way, for example, printing the name or logo on t-shirts or within publications, without the expressed written permission of the Director of Advancement or their designee. **The school logo is school property.** If you want or need permission to use the school name, logo, or motto, then you must email the administration with the details for what you are requesting and receive written permission before proceeding. .

REPORT CARDS AND ONLINE GRADES

Through *PowerSchool*, parents will have access to the grade book for their own children. Students receive a trimester grade report derived from the grades online. Parents may view their student's grades on *PowerSchool*. Teachers will post grades regularly. A copy of the report card will be emailed at the time of Parent Teacher Conferences. The end of year report card will be emailed to students whose accounts are fully paid.

For families that need support logging into PowerSchool, please contact Ms. Keith in the Main Office via phone or email.

PROGRESS REPORTS

Individual pupil progress can be monitored *every day* throughout the year through Power School. Parents will be issued a secure password to assess the electronic grade book for their individual children. Parents are urged to monitor grades online. This electronic grade book provides immediate communication between parents and teachers throughout the year and thus each time the parent views the grades online, constitutes a progress report. Teachers will regularly update grades on PowerSchool. In this way, *every day a progress report is available*.

PROMOTION

Children who have completed the basic requirements of their grade level, according to their ability, will be promoted to the next grade. Students must have mastered the majority of their grade level standards in order to be promoted to the next grade.

RETENTION

Sometimes it is advisable for a student to be retained at the present grade level for another year. This should not be considered a punitive action, but rather a way to ensure that a student is sufficiently prepared for further academic progress.

The decision to retain a student shall be made only if there is adequate evaluation and documentation that indicate that the student would most likely benefit from another year in the same grade to achieve the standards of that grade level.

Ordinarily parents are notified of the possibility that the child is making little or no progress in grasping grade level standards at the current grade level, usually no later than the end of the first trimester (November). If a student's lack of improvement continues past the end of the second trimester, the school will advise the parents of the appropriate interventions that are needed to ensure growth and progress. Families of students who face the possibility of retention will be notified of this at their March conference and be given measurable goals for the student to achieve by the end of the school year in order to advance to the next grade.

If no significant progress is achieved by the end of May, it is likely that the student will likely be either (1) placed in the next grade on probation for six weeks after having successfully completed summer school or a comparable program of tutoring; (2) will be required to attend summer school; or (3) will be required to repeat the grade level for another year.

A statement of the school recommendation will be kept in the students' file. New students who have been retained at their previous school will be placed in the grade level indicated on their report card.

PROBATIONARY PLACEMENT

Students who have not mastered the majority of the material in their current grade level at the completion of the school year are required to attend summer school or a comparable program of tutoring during the summer in order to be placed in the next year *on probation*. Upon the start of the next school year, we may require receipt of a letter from the summer school program or from the tutor outlining the work and progress made over the summer. *Without that receipt, the student will be retained in the grade level from the previous year.*

The probationary period is four to six weeks. During that time, the student must demonstrate adequate progress and the skills to succeed in the current grade. At the end of six weeks, the parents and the teacher will meet to discuss the student's progress and any prescriptions for further success and determine whether a return to the previous grade is more appropriate. A statement of the school recommendation will be kept in the student's file.

STUDENT SUPPORTS

St. Thomas the Apostle School endeavors to educate all students within the limits of the school educational program. The school does not employ a special education teacher nor have a special education program. St. Thomas the Apostle School will cooperate with the local educational agency of the Chicago Public School System to assist parents who seek comprehensive testing for children's learning problems.

The school will comply to the extent possible within the regular school program with all recommendations and/or Individual Service Plans developed by the local educational agency. St. Thomas will determine if they cannot implement a student's IEP or 504 plan. We can fulfill it according to our available resources within the school. This school can, with the help of the Archdiocese, in some cases develop Catholic Individual Education Service Plans (CIEP) for students with special needs that can be managed in a regular classroom. A special education teacher may be available through the Archdiocese for a limited percentage of time to help implement the CIEP.

TITLE ONE SERVICES

St. Thomas is a recipient of Title One funding to assist qualified students whose standardized test scores on standardized testing were below the 50th percentile. The Title One teacher has a classroom for small groups of students who rotate into the Title One classroom for 30 minute periods once or twice a week for remediation. The teacher is highly qualified and is employed through the Chicago Public Schools.

Regardless of standardized test results, a qualified student for Title One must reside in a zip code served by Title One. Parents of students in the Title One program are provided with learning materials and input to work with their child. Parents are offered background support by the Title One teacher for working with their children.

Additionally, Academic Counseling is available for students who are in the Title One program. The program focuses on social and emotional skills for school success: setting student expectations, examining classroom behaviors, improving listening and study skills, practicing conflict resolution, encouraging self esteem, learning about bullying, reacting to peers, developing organizational skills, and more. A highly credentialed Academic Counselor is provided for eligible Title One students through Cornerstone Counseling Center of Chicago (www.chicagocounseling.org).

STUDENT RECORDS

Permanent Educational Record: The student's permanent record of education, often called the cumulative folder, consists of basic identifying information including the birth certificate and custody documents. It also contains a copy of the following documents for each year the student is in attendance: the attendance records, report cards, standardized test results, health and dental forms (except any psychological reports), accident reports, transfer records or graduate summary. The permanent record remains in the school permanently.

Temporary Educational Records: Includes all other family background information, information from school sponsored activities including honor and awards achieved, psychological and academic testing reports, and any serious disciplinary reports. This file is NOT kept permanently; it is destroyed a year after high school graduation.

RECORDS - FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT

Parents and students age 18 or older have the right of access to their permanent educational records in the presence of the principal. The school presumes that both parents have access to the student's records unless one parent can provide evidence that he/she has the sole right. A 24-hour notice is required in writing and should identify the precise record wanted to inspect. The principal must respond within 45 days. The school may refuse to change or delete any records. Statements made by parents about the records will be included in the record. The school may charge for any copies of the permanent record and for postage if that is indicated.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM

RELIGION CLASS

Religion class is conducted daily and considered a core subject in the curriculum at this Catholic School. St. Thomas the Apostle School implements the goals of the religious education curriculum developed by the Archdiocese of Chicago. All students are expected to participate in religion class. Academic standards of achievement are delineated for this subject.

St. Thomas the Apostle School is committed to serving the whole student - socially, emotionally, academically and spiritually. Therefore, all students in preschool through 8th grade will participate in weekly Social Emotional Learning (SEL) lessons led by their classroom teacher. Students in elementary and middle school will be responsible for homework and assignments in SEL. SEL lessons will be assessed and graded as part of a student's Religion grade.

LITURGY

Students attend Mass once a month during the academic year. They also participate in other traditional prayers and devotions according to the seasons of the church year. Attendance at the Mass and at devotions during the week is a *requirement* for all students. Parents/guardians and relatives are encouraged and invited to join us in these prayer opportunities. Students in

PRAYER

Students are guided to memorize specific prayers according to their grade level. Spontaneous prayer and meditative prayer are also encouraged. Students participate in daily morning prayer at school. Students are expected to act respectfully during prayer and to actively participate in prayer at this Catholic School.

PREPARATION FOR THE SACRAMENTS

"Parents, above others, are obliged to form their children in the faith and practice of the Christian life by word and example." (Canon 774 #2) Catholic students are prepared for reception of the sacraments on a continuing basis during daily religion classes. All second grade students will be prepared to receive their first Holy Communion as a part of the religion curriculum. There are religious education classes held outside of school through St. Thomas the Apostle Parish to prepare students for Reconciliation and Confirmation.

MINISTRY AT MASS—ALTAR SERVING AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

All fifth through eighth grade students are invited to be trained in the ministry of altar serving at Mass. All students in the school will have an opportunity to be trained to serve as a lector at Mass—reading the Scripture or leading prayers of the assembly—or to participate in processions or to join the choir as their interests lead them. The children's Gospel Choir is open for membership of students in the third grade and higher. They lead the music at the Tuesday services at 8:30 AM during the school year in selected months.

STUDENT SERVICE HOURS

All students at St. Thomas the Apostle School—no matter what grade level—are nurtured to recognize **service** as a way of life for followers of Christ. In the spirit of the Gospel, students learn to choose to reach out to others in need. Many opportunities for service are available at school, in the parish, and in the community.

By the time a student reaches middle school, he/she should be well-versed in recognizing opportunities for service. Service is a value held by all in the school community from the youngest student to the parent body. The underpinnings of the value of service are explicitly taught: a good citizen performs good deeds for others and our faith in Jesus Christ calls us to practice His teaching of service as a disciple. Students recite a school pledge in which they promise to give service.

Eighth grade students are required to complete a minimum number of 12 hours of service annually. There are many opportunities for service projects organized by the faculty throughout the year. Eighth grade students may receive recognition in the form of an award for accumulation of 50, 100, or more service hours. Middle school students will be informed by their teachers about the methodology of recording their hours.

SCHOOL SERVICES

LOST AND FOUND

Parents should mark the child's name on all articles of clothing and property. Parents should check the Lost & Found box periodically. Lost articles may be claimed from the container provided in the school office or corner of the gym. The school is not responsible for lost or misplaced items.

Administration does not keep track of your students' personal items. Clothing and other articles turned into the school office are kept for one month. After that time they will be given away. Money, glasses, jewelry, cell phones and other valuables should be turned in to staff for safe keeping.

SCHOOL HEALTH & WELLNESS POLICY

Parents want the best education and health care for their children and a healthy diet plays an important role in both. St. Thomas the Apostle School has embraced guidelines to limit the consumption of food and drink with high fat, sodium, and sugar content while the students are in school.

LUNCH

Students have a choice of bringing lunch or buying a hot lunch at school. The hot lunch program follows the federally approved nutrition standards that became effective July 1, 2015. Food or drink with high sugar content will not be served through the hot lunch program. Each month a menu is published by our Food Services. Families that are interested in having their student receive free hot lunch must contact our lunch coordinator through the school office.

Free and Reduced Lunches are available to those families who are eligible. Applications for Free and Reduced Lunches are provided through the Lunch Coordinator. All families are encouraged to apply for school lunches at the start of the year, even if they do not plan on ordering them. Forms can also be requested from the Lunch Coordinator. The hot lunch Program is provided by a 3rd party vendor not St. Thomas the Apostle School

GUIDELINES FOR STUDENT LUNCHES

Food or drink with high fat, salt, and sugar content should not be brought to school in lunches. Any treats sent to school for any reason without permission from administration will stay in the office and be sent home with that child at the end of the day. Great care should be taken about **NOT** bringing any item that contains peanuts, any type of tree nuts, or items made in a factory which also processes food with nuts, to school as treats. Carbonated sweetened drinks are **prohibited** with their daily lunches. Commercial (non parent/guardian) delivery of a student's lunch is highly **prohibited**, will not be accepted and will be turned away.

SPECIAL *FUN* LUNCHES AND *HEALTHY SNACKS* ON SPIRIT DAY

A few times a year, the Home and School Association provides alternative “Fun” lunches for the students. Order forms are provided for these special lunches. At certain times in the year, healthy snacks are available for sale on Spirit Day. The snacks and the fun lunches also follow the Nutrition Standards for all. Food and beverages will be caffeine free and feature healthier foods with more whole grains, low-fat dairy, fruits, vegetables, and leaner protein. Carbonated soda will not be sold at school for lunches or snacks.

ALLERGIES AND SAFETY

Some of the students have extreme reactions to contact with nuts. Some students can go into anaphylactic shock from this exposure. We do not want to compromise our children’s safety at school. When students bring food to school, please check that manufactured items have not been produced in factories where nuts have been processed e.g., granola bars.

NUTRITION EDUCATION

At school, students learn about good nutrition. It is important for them to *practice what they have learned about healthy eating and drinking in the classroom, especially while they are present in school*. Students are educated on healthy eating during the course of the school year. It is our greatest hope that through our combined home and school efforts, good habits will be learned and practiced for a lifetime.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Exercise is a critical part of healthy living and a partner to good nutrition. We believe that students should learn to pair healthy eating with daily exercise. Exercise is a daily part of every student’s elementary school program. All students have weekly Physical Education (*P.E*) classes and daily recess, outdoor with weather permitting.

SCHOOL PICTURES

In the fall of each year, school pictures are taken of all students. Purchase of these pictures is *optional*. Parents will receive the picture composites and choose whether they want to keep them, have retakes, or to simply return them is at their discretion. The deadline for deciding purchase, retake, or return will be reminded to the parents. The School does not take payment for or arrange the ordering of student pictures. This is completed online through Van Gogh, the school vendor.

SCHOOL YEARBOOK

A school yearbook is printed annually **if** a committee of parents and/or teachers expresses a desire to make one. A volunteer yearbook committee may include representatives from parents, faculty and students.

ATTENDANCE

CALENDAR

The school calendar is formulated with attention to state and Archdiocesan requirements. A copy of the calendar for the following school year is provided to parents. A more detailed calendar will be posted on the school website. **Families are responsible and required to read the information sent home and in the Newsletter.**

EMERGENCY DAYS

Our school is required to schedule five emergency days over the course of the year. These days can be used when weather or outside events make it unsafe for students to come to school. If an emergency day is used, the last day of school will be pushed back. The emergency days this year are June 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th.

ATTENDANCE

The school calendar for the year consists of a minimum of 180 attendance days for students. More days are scheduled on the calendar in order to allow for possible weather-related closures. Students must attend school daily and avoid unnecessary absences. Student attendance is taken daily.

ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

Daily attendance is compulsory in the State of Illinois for children 6 through 16 years of age. Therefore, students enrolled in grades K-8 at St. Thomas the Apostle School are required to attend school daily. The responsibility for compliance with the law and the school's policy belongs to the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the child.

The school is responsible for keeping an accurate record of each student's daily attendance. The attendance record is placed in the student's permanent file each school year.

DAILY SCHEDULE

7:00 AM _____ Extended Day Morning Program begins
7:45 AM _____ Students may enter the classrooms
8:00 AM _____ School begins
3:15 PM _____ Pre-K Dismissal

3:30 PM _____ Grades K-8 Dismissal
 3:45 PM _____ Extended Day Afternoon Program begins
 6:00 PM _____ Extended Day is closed for the day

On Wednesdays, the school dismisses an hour earlier to accommodate regular professional development and meeting time for the teachers.

***WEDNESDAY DISMISSAL**

2:15 PM _____ Pre-Kindergarten Dismissal
 2:30 PM _____ Grades K-8 Dismissal
 2:45 PM _____ Extended Day Afternoon Program begins
 6:00 PM _____ Extended Day is closed for the day

ARRIVAL

Students may arrive at school anytime *after* 7:00 a.m. They come in the front door of the school building and wait quietly in the AM Care locations until they are allowed to go to their classrooms at 7:45 a.m. Students may never be unsupervised and for this reason, they may not wait anywhere else in the building or go to their classrooms before 7:45 AM.

Students should **not** be dropped off at St. Thomas the Apostle before 7 AM. The Extended Day Morning Program begins at 7 AM and is supervised by faculty members. The charge is \$3.00 per 15 minutes of care. The charge is levied for any part of 15 minutes. Students may never be unsupervised once they enter the campus. Families will be charged \$6.00 per minute for every minute their child is in extended day after 6:00 PM.

Students who arrive at or after 7:45 AM must go directly to their classrooms. All students should *enter the building using the Woodlawn Entrance* beginning at 7:00 AM. Students should use the stairwell designated for their class in the morning. Students are expected to be ***in their seats, ready to learn at 8 AM***. Any student who is not in their classroom and ready to learn after 8 AM is tardy. Tardy arrivals will be recorded and reported on the Report Card.

Once a student has 3 tardies, it translates into an absence. This will be reflected in PowerSchool.

Students in grades 1st-8th go to their classrooms directly and by themselves in the morning. Parents do not walk them to the classrooms or lockers unless there is a special circumstance such as carrying a project.

Parents of children in kindergarten may accompany their children to their lockers located on the first floor in the morning for the **first two weeks of school only**. We teach our children to be self-reliant and independent. They should be able to hang their coats and carry their backpacks by themselves as a sign of readiness for kindergarten. The Teacher Assistant will be available to help them with needs after the first two weeks of school.

Parents of children in the pre-kindergarten classes may help their children with their clothes and lunch boxes at their lockers throughout the year. They may stay a brief time with the children for the first month of school. **By the end of September, the Pre-K parents should leave the building after the children have walked into the classroom.**

DISMISSAL

Dismissal takes place at 3:30 PM (2:30 PM on Wednesdays) for students in grades K-8. Pre-kindergarten children leave the building at 3:15 PM (2:15 PM on Wednesdays). Teachers will take students outdoors to the reserved area in the parking lot. Parents do not come into the building to retrieve the children except in inclement weather. Students who walk home or take the city bus will be released by their teachers to go directly to their destination. Families must provide the school with written permission that their child is allowed to walk home and/or take the bus. Most students ride home by car and their drivers must follow school protocol.

Parents/guardians must exit their cars, notify the teachers that they are taking their child/ren, and lead the child/ren back to their vehicles within the parking lot. Parents may not park on Woodlawn and beckon their children to cross the street to the car. Teachers will not permit the children to leave the parking lot until an authorized adult has been acknowledged. For safety sake, students may not walk unaccompanied among the cars and back to the reserved area. Parents may not offer a ride to another student without the expressed permission of the parent of that child who communicates that permission to the teacher.

Students do NOT return to the school building during dismissal at 3:30—3:45 PM. Any child who wants to re-enter the building after dismissal must get authorization from their teacher. Children must be released directly to a parent and are under staff supervision until the exchange takes place.

At 3:45 PM (2:45 PM on Wednesdays), ALL the students who have not been taken home must go directly to the Extended Day Program. Students may not walk across the street, stand or sit in the parking lot unattended, or wait at the local fast food/drink shop *unless the student is accompanied by a parent or guardian to the shop*. For safety sake, no child is left unattended, especially outdoors. That is our firm policy. The Extended Day Afternoon Program begins at 3:45 PM and is supervised by a staff member. The charge is \$3.00 per 15 minutes of care. The charge is levied for any part of 15 minutes.

St. Thomas the Apostle School will not release children to be picked up by taxi or any ride sharing service. We will only release the child to approved adults from the list provided by the child's parent/guardian. Students who are dismissed and leave the school property **may not** return and sign themselves into pm care. They may return to attend their enrichment class/program at the start of that particular class/program.

STUDENT DEPARTURE

On Health and Safety Form, parents list one of the following ways for their students to depart from school: car, walk, bike, bus, school van, or public transportation). When a child utilizes a different way to get home from their normal mode of transportation, the teacher and office must be notified in writing every time by the parent. This rule also applies to students who do not take their usual designated ride home and walk to the Neighborhood Center or the public library after school. The school must be notified in writing when the student is walking to the Neighborhood Center or library and will leave for home from there. There is no adult supervision from St. Thomas the Apostle School for students who walk to either location. When there is extreme cold, heavy snow, or falling rain, the students will be dismissed from the school gym rather than the parking lot. Families must pick up their children from the gym and walk them to their cars. They should not request that their children stand at the doors or run to the parked cars to find a parent.

SUPERVISION AFTER SCHOOL DISMISSES

Students must leave the school grounds by 3:45 p.m. If no ride has been provided by 3:45 PM, the child goes directly to the After School Care Program for supervision. The child may NOT wait in the school office for a ride since there is no supervision during that time. Office personnel have other duties and child supervision is not their purview. **No one** is permitted back into the classroom once a teacher has locked the door (NO EXCEPTIONS). Students may be allowed to go to their lockers after dismissal if they have been given permission by school personnel. Students in the building after dismissal may not move unsupervised through the building. They must be supervised by an adult at all times.

Students may also participate in the After School Enrichment programs at 3:45 p.m. and/or at 5 p.m. They will be supervised by the moderator of each program until being dismissed directly to a parent or guardian. Students must remain with their STA School Athletics coaches after school until they are dismissed directly to a parent or guardian. If a parent or guardian does not arrive within 15 minutes, the student is escorted to the After Care Program. If dismissal is after 5:30 PM, the coach *must remain* with the student until the parent or guardian arrives. Students cannot be signed into the After Care program after 5:45.

ABSENCE

A student who is not present in the classroom at 8:00 a.m. is marked absent. This designation may be changed to tardy if the student arrives within one hour. A student who arrives later than 10 AM will be marked absent unless they have a written note for a doctor..

We encourage parents to notify their child's teacher and/or the school office in the event of an absence. If a child is absent from school for the day, he/she may not participate in extracurricular activities that day or evening.

Parents are notified by a phone call when their student is too sick to attend class. If the child becomes sick during the school day and *remains in school in the school office for two hours or*

more, the child will be counted “absent from class.” The child is not attending school and thus is “not present.” St. Thomas cannot provide healthcare in the school building for a sick child other than emergency care.

If the student has been chronically absent due to health complaints (3 days in succession or a total of 5 days due to health) the parent will bring in an excuse *completed by a physician*. Excessive absence could lead to summer school. This will be determined by the school administration. This is a St. Thomas policy; not an Archdiocesan policy.

Excused absences are only given for middle school students on high school shadow visits, deaths in the family, extreme health issues, and other potential reasons as determined by the school administration. All decisions on excused absences are made at the discretion of the principal and/or assistant principal.

ABSENCE FOR ATTENDANCE AT SHADOW DAYS

Parents of Middle School students, who want them to attend Shadow Days at high schools, must abide by the following protocol:

1. Permission for absence at a Shadow Day will be granted based on the student’s record of current completed assignments. Permission will not be granted for absence on days on which tests are given unless special arrangements have been made with the teachers. Teacher approval of absence for a Shadow Day is required. Students who are absent *without* notification and permission for a Shadow Day will have an unexcused absence.
2. Absence for a Shadow Day will be marked as an *excused absence* for the attendance record, and because the student is in attendance at the high school for the entire day, the excused absence will not be held against a student’s perfect attendance record.
3. The high school must give acknowledgment of the student’s attendance that day.
4. All class work and homework missed due to attendance at a Shadow Day must be completed within TWO school days.

TARDY

Students need to be on time everyday. Students are marked **tardy if they are not present and prepared to learn in their classrooms by 8:00 AM**. Between 8:00 AM and 8:15 AM, tardy students should go directly to their classrooms. Students who arrive after 8:15 a.m. must report to the school office to inform the Office Manager before going to the classroom. Students *who walk into the building* at 8 AM will be marked tardy. Students, who are at their lockers, in the school office, or in the hallways at 8 AM will be marked tardy because they are not in the classroom ready to learn.

It is the parent’s responsibility to get their child here on time. The school administration will address chronic tardiness with the family. Traffic jams and personal emergencies can happen to every family and are totally understandable, but ongoing issues of late arrival are a matter of concern.

Students have the number of tardies they received each trimester noted on their report card.

Medical Tardy

Students experiencing health problems or attending doctor/dentist appointments, which result in lateness to school, will be given a tardy slip marked “medical” when they arrive in the building. Parents are required to phone the school office by 8:00 AM. to report that their child will be tardy for medical reasons and to explain the complete circumstances. Granting of a medical tardy will be left to the discretion of school administration and, if used repeatedly, may need to be verified with a doctor’s note. Children receiving medical tardy slips will still have the tardy recorded on the child’s report card.

Tardy After 8:15 AM.

Parents of students, who are more than 15 minutes tardy to school, for whatever reason, are asked to come into the office to sign the child into the building. Students will receive a tardy form in order to be admitted into the classroom. Parents will come to the school office to explain the reason for the tardy. They may not simply drop the child at school and leave.

PERFECT ATTENDANCE

A student has Perfect Attendance when s/he has attended each day of school and has had zero tardies. Students with Perfect Attendance for the trimester will be given a NUT card at the beginning of the next trimester.

EARLY DISMISSAL

All requests for early dismissal must be made by 10:00 AM on the morning of the day on which the child will be leaving school early. Requests should be made via phone call or email before 7:45 AM when students arrive at school. Without prior notification, school personnel are not authorized to release students from school prior to the 3:30 PM dismissal time. If there is a compelling emergency, please see school administration. The School Office Personal will release students only to the immediate care of a parent, guardian, or authorized person. Always the adult must sign the student out in the Office “Sign-Out” book.

Medical and dental appointments should be made after school hours whenever possible. Early dismissal requests for medical appointments, which have been rescheduled that day, will be permitted with notification after 10:00 AM, but the student must produce a doctor’s slip upon return to school.

APPOINTMENTS

Students, who have a doctor, dentist, orthodontist, etc., appointments and need to leave early or in the course of the day, must have a parent email or send a ClassDojo message regarding the reason and time for the appointment to the teacher. The teacher will forward the message to the office. Parents who pick up a child for an appointment must come into the office to sign the child out. Children are then called out of class and meet their parents in the office. **Parents who bring a**

child back to school after an appointment are required to come into the office and sign the child into the building.

VACATION / ABSENCE

Requests for absence from school for vacations other than those scheduled for the school, are strongly discouraged. A child must be in attendance at school while school is in session, except for emergencies, health issues, and compassionate leave for funerals. **Parents who take a child out of school for non-emergency reasons are responsible for the impact that this absence may have on the child's academic grades.**

Parents must notify both the school office and the teachers about a vacation, athletic competition, or trip that is not an emergency *at least one week* in advance of the extended leave. **Students whose parents do not notify the office and their teacher prior to leaving will be given an unexcused absence and will not be permitted to make up work.**

It is the policy of the school that

1. No assignments will be given *in advance* for students leaving for ***non-emergency reasons***.
2. Tests/quizzes, depending on the timing of the requested vacation, *may* be given prior to a student's leaving if that chapter or unit is nearly complete and the teacher agrees.
3. Teachers will notify parents whether tests or quizzes will be administered prior to the vacation or if a test/quiz must be taken immediately upon a student's return
4. Upon returning from a vacation which is not at the end of an academic grading period, students will be given three school days to complete and submit all missed assignments and to take all tests/quizzes.
5. Teachers can require tests/quizzes to be taken *earlier than three school days* provided that parents were *notified of the requirement prior to leaving*.
6. No extra credit activities will be given or accepted in place of missed assignments that are not completed within 3 days of return.
7. If a vacation falls at the end of an academic grading period, the student will **not be able to make up any missed homework, tests, or quizzes for a grade.**
8. It is the parents', rather than the school's responsibility, to initiate and receive all non-emergency vacation communication.

COMMUNICATIONS

EMERGENCY CARD

Each year a new Emergency Card must be completed for each student. The card is electronically signed by the parent/guardian and submitted to the school office staff. This card is extremely important. It is critically important that all phone numbers and emails are accurate and current.

In the event of a medical emergency, the parent is always called first to make a determination whether the parent or paramedic should take the child to the hospital. If there is grave danger for a child taken to the hospital, the signature gives permission to begin treatment before the parent/guardian arrives at the hospital.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS/PHONE NUMBER/EMAIL ADDRESS

Parents should notify the school as soon as possible when a change of custody, address, email address, or phone number takes place.

PARENT NEWSLETTER - *THE GOOD NEWS AT STA*

Every Friday the School will send an electronic newsletter to all families called *The Good News at STA*. This newsletter will be sent to all given email addresses. This newsletter is the primary way the school will communicate with families. It includes important information, news, and upcoming events in the school. All parents are expected to read this weekly message. If families do not receive the message in their email they should notify the school office. Parents and guardians must read and inform themselves of all school messages sent from school. **It is the parent's responsibility to be current on all school messages sent to the homes.**

WEBSITE

School events and information, including the school calendar can be found on the school website, www.stapostleschool.com. Families can find information on academics, extracurricular activities, tuition, ways to support STA, school news, and more on the website.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES — FORMAL

Parent-Teacher Conferences are formally held at the end of the first and second trimester of school when the report cards are issued for Pre-K-8 students. It is a requirement to attend the conference twice a year. This matter is indicated in the Parent Agreement with the school. **See Appendix A.** Parents are urged to sign up for the conferences ONLINE and in a timely manner. Students are welcome to attend the report card conference *with* their parents.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES — INFORMAL

Parents and teachers are encouraged to contact each other whenever a concern arises. Please make an appointment in advance either by phone, through email, or in a ClassDojo message. In order to ensure privacy and adequate time, the teacher may schedule a conference only at a time when she is not supervising students. Do not expect to speak with a teacher when he/she is supervising students. If parents “drop by” the classroom before or after school, this does *not constitute an appointment* unless the teacher has the time available and students are *not* present. Parents cannot visit the classroom after 7:45 AM when the teachers are supervising students. Parents must have an appointment in advance in order to meet with a teacher.

The best way for parents to contact teachers is via email. Teachers inform families of their *school email* addresses at the start of the year. Teachers always can be reached through a message sent on ClassDojo.

EMAIL

The primary way to reach teachers is through their school email address. Each teacher's school email consists of the first initial of the first name followed by their last name and this is followed by @stapostleschool.com. All school staff are expected to check their email regularly. Parents can also contact teachers through ClassDojo.

VISITORS' IDENTIFICATION

Parents and anyone else who wants to visit a classroom, must sign in at the school security desk and obtain a Visitor's Badge on a lanyard to wear before they move freely in the building. School staff and faculty have been instructed to ask all adults—including parents—and non St. Thomas students to display their Visitor's Badge on a lanyard, and if they do not have one, to return to the school office to get one. The purpose of these requirements is to insure that all who are present in our building provide no threat to our students and, in case of a school evacuation, to have an accurate understanding of all who are not remaining in the building. This is a school policy designed to ensure the safety of all.

CHILD CUSTODY

If parents are separated or divorced, the school presumes that both parents have access to the child unless one parent can provide legal documentation that he/she has the sole right to the child and may indicate whether contact is allowed or not. Legal documentation is required and should be provided at the time of registration or whenever circumstances change. Court Orders designating custody arrangements must be filed in the student's permanent/cumulative file. The Archdiocesan attorney may be consulted in situations that are unclear to school personnel.

NON-CUSTODIAL PARENT / JOINT CUSTODY PARENTS

Unless the school is provided with a court order prohibiting the parent from inspecting or obtaining records, the school will provide the non-custodial parent access to the school records for their child. Academic records as well as other related information regarding the child may be inspected—including medical, dental, child care. The non-custodial parent will receive information/communications from the school.

The non-custodial parent will also have access through *PowerSchool*. The non-custodial parent who desires a copy of all report cards, messages, newsletters, and wants to participate in parent-teacher conferences may receive information and participate according to the plan the Court has allowed. If there is no prohibition, then we provide full participation.

PARENT-PRINCIPAL CONFERENCES

Please make an appointment in advance either by phone or email to meet with the principal and/or assistant principal. To contact the principal by email use: **kkoll@stapostleschool.com** To contact the assistant principal by email use: **rturner@stapostleschool.com**

If the topic involves a *child's academic progress, classroom behavior, or a concern with a teacher*, parents must first have had a personal or phone conference with the teacher to resolve the concern before asking to see the school administration. Parents may request to have school administration at a parent-teacher conference. It is important to address concerns at the most immediate levels of involvement.

PARENT VISITS TO CLASSROOMS

With the exception of Pre-K parents, after the first day of school, parents do **not** walk their children directly to the classroom in the morning. We encourage the children to become independent and responsible and we support them in their growth. Visitors may not eat with or visit with students during lunch.

Parents are welcome to observe their child's classroom, but they must first get permission from both the classroom teacher and administration beforehand. All parent observations must be scheduled at least one day in advance. Parents' visits to classrooms should be rare and purposeful, as frequent parent visits disrupt the learning environment.

TELEPHONE

The telephone in the school office is for school business use only.

Student Use of the School Phone

Students must have office staff's permission to use any school phone. With a teacher's permission, students may be permitted to phone home if they forgot their lunch, have violated the uniform dress code, injury or have a canceled after school activity. The student must be in the presence of a school office staff member when making this phone call. There is no other reason for a student to need to call home.

Student Cell Phones

ALL students must park their cell phone with the classroom teacher when they arrive for the day and retrieve it when they leave directly for home. Students never carry their cell phones, keep them in their desks or lockers or anywhere except with the teacher during the day. The cell phones may not be turned on in the school building, at dismissal or during After Care. Students may only turn on their phone when picked up by their parents or guardian. Cell phones may not be used for picture taking, texting, game playing, and Internet or email access during After Care. Parents should not try to contact their child via their cell phone while the student is at school. See complete cell phone policy under "Electronic Equipment."

Phone Calls to Teachers

Parents may leave a message for a teacher at school. Teachers will return the call as soon as they are able. Teachers are not obligated to share their personal cell phone number with school families.

Phone Messages for Students

Only in a true emergency should one leave messages for return calls from students. **Office staff are not available to deliver phone messages to students at any time during the day.** That being said, the student will be informed of important messages left for them by the school office at the end of the day.

ITEMS DELIVERED TO SCHOOL

On occasions, students may forget to bring items to school. Parents are discouraged from bringing those forgotten items to school. Items delivered before 8AM will be delivered to the students, but classes begin at 8:10 AM after morning announcements, and we will not interrupt them in order to pass on any items. Items will be available for pick up during recess and lunch. **Lunch delivery for students is prohibited if not brought by a parent/guardian.**

TELEPHONE BROADCAST SYSTEM – *SCHOOL MESSENGER*

St. Thomas the Apostle School uses a telephone broadcast system that enables school personnel to notify all households and parents by phone within minutes of an emergency or unplanned event that causes early dismissal, school cancellation or late start times. This service is provided by **School Messenger**. Parents are asked to ensure that correct phone numbers and emails are on file.

St. Thomas the Apostle School will continue to report school closings due to snow or weather on local radio and television stations, and will use this system as an overlay to the public announcements. Morning announcements *for school closures or delays* will be made early in the morning with no exception for individuals. Most announcements about weather delays or cancellations will be made via email and Class Dojo.

DISCIPLINE

SAFE SCHOOL POLICY

Our school mission requires us to implement a faith-filled educational community, promote respect for self, others, and others' property at all times. We therefore expect that our students' conduct will be formed by and demonstrate Christian values.

CODE OF BEHAVIOR

for ALL students, teachers, and parents at St. Thomas the Apostle School:

- Stay Safe
- Take Responsibility
- Act Christ-like

COMMON EXPECTATIONS FOR SHARED SPACES

St. Thomas has matrices for proper behavior in the following shared spaces in the school building. Our shared spaces include the hallways, stairways, restrooms, playground, gym, and school office. See [Appendix D](#).

POSITIVE BEHAVIOR

Students will be recognized individually, as a class, and as a school throughout the school year for staying safe, taking responsibility, and acting Christ-like. Teachers and administrators will explain and model the guidelines during the August Teach Day and throughout the year as needed so that students know what is expected at our school. Students can be recognized with a positive office referral by any staff member.

MONITORING STUDENT BEHAVIOR

STA believes it is important to collect data on student behavior to better understand when and where particular behaviors are occurring. ClassDojo is one way our school will record the positive choices that students make. Students will be recognized for their positive choices both on an individual and group basis. Use of ClassDojo will allow for teachers to recognize students over periods of time. ClassDojo is secure and any student information will be protected. No student last names will be used. ClassDojo's privacy policy can be found at <https://www.classdojo.com/privacycenter/>

In the event that a student does not meet the expectations of staying safe, taking responsibility, and acting Christ-like, the teacher or staff member will remind the student of the expectations.

VERY SERIOUS OFFENSES

Very serious offenses can lead to detention, suspension, or possible expulsion from St. Thomas the Apostle School.

Harassment or Intimidation of Others: excessive teasing, racial remarks, making threats (verbal or written or sent online), abusive, sexual, or vulgar language and name-calling, or physically touching/pushing someone around to frighten another

Intentionally Causing or Attempting to Cause Physical Injury or intentionally behaving in such a way as could reasonably cause physical injury to a student or school personnel

Defacing or Vandalizing school or parish property

Leaving School Grounds without permission and without adult supervision—and especially when students leave the grounds to spend time in local shops or at restaurants or fast food locations

Blatant Disrespect of an Adult or Peer: Students are expected to treat everyone with respect and kindness at all times. Blatant disrespect or defiance is not tolerated.

Possession of Illegal Substances such as alcohol, tobacco, or drugs

Weapons such as knives of any kind: plastic, rubber, Swiss Army, traditional; handguns, semi auto guns of any size or type (any kind), including: plastic, “toy,” paintball, BB, or water – as well as those not specifically mentioned; and any other item *used as a weapon* in a threatening manner or in “play-fighting”. This also includes sharing pictures of weapons or discussing the use of any weapon to intimidate or threaten someone else. All are prohibited.

Sexual Harassment is unwelcome attention of a lewd or sexual nature. It includes a range of behavior from mild transgressions and annoyances to serious abuses. Sexual harassment is considered a form of illegal discrimination, and is a form of abuse (sexual and psychological). Examples of harassment include but are not limited to the following:

- Sexually suggestive remarks, gestures, and jokes
- The display of offensive sexual drawings, pictures or photos
- Offensive or negative comments about a person’s gender and/or physical appearance
- Inappropriate touching or advances
- Standing too close to or cornering a person
- Unwelcome pressure for dates or sex
- Discussing and/or spreading rumors about a person’s sexual activity or orientation.

Engaging in Illegal Activity including calling in false alarms of any nature or actions punishable by law

Fighting including “play fighting” is not allowed. A student should never to put his/her hand(s) on another student.

Gang Behavior is not tolerated in any form at Saint Thomas the Apostle. Gang affiliation or the appearance of gang affiliation which includes, but is not limited to: expression in costume, caps, hair styles, signs, signals, insignias, and posters (whether in lockers, books or notebooks), graffiti, and intimidation of others – has no place at St. Thomas the Apostle School.

Possession of Pornographic or Malicious Material or exploring Internet sites with such material, “sexting” others, or entering false information into a website or online about another student or member of the staff of St. Thomas the Apostle School

Bullying

All St. Thomas the Apostle students are important to our school community. We believe that it is the responsibility of students, faculty and parents to work toward the eradication of any type of bullying. Parents are urged to work in partnership with the school to encourage positive behavior, valuing differences in gifts, talents, and abilities, and promoting sensitivity toward others.

Bullying acts involve repeated harassment of another student. Harassment may be:

Physical which includes, but is not limited to, punching, poking, stalking, destruction of property, strangling, hair pulling, beating, biting, spitting, pinching, and excessive tickling, theft, destruction of property

Verbal which includes, but is not limited to, name-calling, teasing, taunting, gossip, and threats whether in person, through **any** form of electronic communication or social media, the Internet or written communication

Emotional which includes, but is not limited to, intimidation, rejecting, terrorizing, extorting, defaming, humiliating, blackmailing, rating/ranking of personal characteristics such as race, disability, ethnicity, perceived sexual orientation, manipulation of friendships, isolating, ostracizing and peer pressure

Sexual which includes, but is not limited to many of the emotional acts or conduct described above (in person or through electronic communication or social media) as well as exhibitionism, voyeurism, sexual propositioning, gestures, sexting, sexual harassment and abuse involving actual physical contact or sexual assault.

Teasing *may lead to* bullying, but on its own is not necessarily bullying. Teasing behaviors include hurtful name-calling, ridiculing, exclusion, pressure to engage in undesirable behavior, threatening, gossip, and fighting. Teasing behaviors include repeated harassment that may turn playground squabbles into bully behavior of intentional malicious harassment and physical abuse. Situations can take place at home or at school. Students who are teased themselves may tease others.

Students who are witnesses of bullying or victims of bullying are expected to report the bullying to the teacher. Parents of children who are witnesses of bullying or who feel their child is a victim of bullying should report this to their child's teacher, as well. Parents need evidence and specific information to support their claim. The teacher will determine the validity of this report and bring it to school administration, if valid. The school administration will then investigate the claim and determine the appropriate response depending on whether the allegation is substantiated or unsubstantiated. St. Thomas the Apostle School follows the policy of the Archdiocese of Chicago in addressing and responding to bullying.

The school's goal is to create a positive school climate, to educate students about the harm that results from teasing/bullying behaviors and the significant participative role of by-standers when it takes place. We also teach students the strategies for dealing with such behaviors, engage parents as partners in teaching and modeling respectful behaviors at home, and to promptly punish bullying behavior when it is reported. Our goal is to teach skills for prevention of teasing and bullying as well as to promote self-resilience and coping skills among all students so they know how to deflect harmful teasing.

Bullying is considered to be a major behavior. Any incidents of bullying should result in an office referral form and the student being sent to meet with school administration. Parents of both the bully and the student being bullied must be informed.

All students are taught to report bullying behaviors to a teacher, playground supervisor, principal, or other delegated authority as soon as the incident occurs. All reports of such behaviors, even minor incidents, will be logged and tracked through office referrals. In addition to the bully, the by-standers are *also held responsible*. As a school community, we all are involved. Bystanders may also be held responsible for teasing and bullying behaviors.

Parents are also expected to follow the school guidelines for positive behavior and avoid any behavior that could be defined as bullying or harassment. Any parent who displays bullying behavior towards a child, parent, or staff member either directly or indirectly can face consequences, up to and including expulsion from St. Thomas the Apostle School.

Cyberbullying

Acts of cyber bullying by students are strictly prohibited. All personal electronic devices brought onto school grounds including cell phones can be searched by administrators if they have reasonable suspicion that a student has been involved in cyberbullying. The school also has the right to search any school-provided technology of the students. Parents and students should be aware that students can be disciplined for cyberbullying even when the events do not occur on school grounds or at a school sponsored event if: the conduct is viewed to be detrimental to the reputation of the school or the Roman Catholic Church; if the conduct could reasonably cause a substantial disruption at school; or if the conduct reasonably interferes with the rights of the students to feel safe and secure while at school.

Cyberbullying encompasses all acts currently prohibited as bullying that are accomplished through electronic means including, but not limited to, direct harassment and indirect activities that are intended to damage the reputation or interfere with the relationships of the student(s) targeted. Examples include posting harmful material, impersonating the person, disseminating personal information or images (pictures), or activities that result in exclusion. Cyberbullying encompasses all forms of electronic harassment including social media, text messaging, instant messaging and email. It is important to understand that even if the harmful online interactions occur off-campus, the subsequent personal interactions often occur at school. The combination of online and in-school interactions can present significant concerns and risks for the safety of students.

This list of *Serious Offenses* is not intended to be all-inclusive. Our policies take the necessary consideration of the age or mental capacity of the student involved or the particular circumstances involved. The disciplinary consequences of the serious behavior *will match the situation as deemed appropriate by the principal*.

LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES

In guiding the student's growth in Christian attitudes, St. Thomas the Apostle School strives to emphasize *positive interventions* that build a child's ability to choose appropriate over inappropriate behaviors. Self-discipline, responsibility, and accepting the consequences of behavior are emphasized. The students are expected to respect self, others, and all property. Teachers have been trained on providing logical consequences for misbehavior.

LEVELED CONSEQUENCE SYSTEM FOR GRADES 4-8**Minor Behaviors**

Minor Behaviors will be noted with a negative point on ClassDojo. Parents can utilize the settings of the ClassDojo app in order to receive notifications for when their students receive a negative point. Teachers may implement leveled consequences within their classrooms for times when students display multiple minor behaviors.

Major Behaviors or Repeated Minor Behaviors

Major behaviors will result in an office referral. An administrator will meet with the student who received the office referral. The administrator will decide if any of the following consequences are needed:

Demerits – Demerits will be given by administrators to students when they engage in one of the following major behaviors: blatant disrespect, stealing, cheating, violence, extreme uncooperativeness, forging parent or guardian signatures, disruptive classroom behavior, vulgarity in any form (including online pictures and expressions), abusive language, profanity, bullying, or cyberbullying. This list does not include all behaviors for which a student can receive a demerit. Demerits can be given for unlisted behaviors by the principal or assistant principal. Families will be notified of the demerit either via email or a phone call. Families are encouraged to contact the teacher with questions about the incident and to contact the administrator with questions about the consequence.

Detention – Administrators can give detention to students who engage in any of the very serious offenses listed above. Families will be notified of the date and the time of the detention via email at least one day in advance. Detentions will be served after school and will last an hour long.

Suspension – A suspension can be given in one of two ways. Administrators can give a suspension to students who engage in any of the very serious offenses listed above. Students who receive three demerits in one academic year will have an in-school suspension. The administrator will notify families of the date(s) of the suspension via a phone call. The administrator will determine whether or not the suspension is noted in the student's records.

In-school suspension requires that a student remain in school, but be out of the classroom completing the assigned schoolwork. On days of in-school suspension, students may take any scheduled quiz or test or submit any project that significantly impacts the student's grade. Students will receive and complete the regular classroom work throughout the day and must submit that completed work to the teacher immediately upon returning to class. The teacher will check all assignments to ensure that students have kept up with the skills taught during the day and will assign what was not completed during in-school suspension.

Out-of-school suspension means that a student is removed from the school environment for a period of 1-5 days and placed in the custody of parents. The school will issue assignments to students

placed on out-of-school suspension and all tests, quizzes, and class work missed will receive 0's unless the student completes them within two days of returning to school. A student may have to stay after school to take the exams if they cannot be completed during the school day. A child's academic work and progress during out-of-school suspension is the sole responsibility of the parent.

Expulsion - Expulsion means not allowing a child to remain in the school building. Under rare circumstances, after repeated interventions, attempts to help one child must be weighed against what is good for the school as a whole. Serious disciplinary infractions may subject a child to immediate expulsion. Expulsion may follow a lengthy out-of-school suspension.

The pastor and the principal make the final decision as to whether or not a serious disciplinary infraction warrants expulsion. Depending on circumstances, parents may be given the opportunity to voluntarily withdraw their child rather than face involuntary expulsion. If expelled, the record of that expulsion remains on the child's permanent record and will follow the child to any subsequent school to which the parent makes an application.

Administrators can give an expulsion to students who engage in any of the very serious offenses listed above. The administration will contact the family to arrange a meeting to discuss the possibility of expulsion.

SERIOUS DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

When there is a problem in the classroom, inside or outside the building, or elsewhere, it is important that everyone understands the concerns. The incident will often be recorded in writing. The teacher or administration will determine the seriousness of the issues at hand.

In the process of investigating disciplinary incidents at all grade levels, students will be given the opportunity to explain the incident before any action is taken by the teacher or principal. Parents will be notified of any disciplinary consequences.

According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church (no.2223) "Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children." Our role at STA is to assist parents in this vocation, not to replace them. We strive for a partnership based on good communication and mutual support. Therefore, when a student's behavior is out of line or misguided, we expect parents to support us in our attempt at correcting the behavior as the student progresses.

Following the determination of consequences, if a parent thinks that the student has been *dealt with unfairly*, they are asked to observe the following order of contact for resolution of the concern:

1. Conference with the teacher.
2. Talk with the principal.
3. Contact the pastor to request a meeting *with the teacher, principal, and pastor*.

Behavior that is deemed very serious is reported to the parents by the Principal or Assistant Principal. Consequences are determined on a case-by-case basis. The principal may impose disciplinary measures, such as detention, probation or suspension, expulsion, and/or parental

withdrawal. These disciplinary measures may be imposed progressively or separately as the situation warrants.

In incidents of serious or chronic misbehavior, suspension or expulsion may be employed. Suspension is a limited exclusion from the classroom. It is used to correct a student who does not respond to regular corrections or has been part of a serious incident or infraction of school rules. Expulsion means excluding a student from school over a longer period of time or permanently for the good of all involved. Some serious incidents require the involvement of and/or report to the police department and may or may not include pressing charges against the student.

Each case will be handled individually according to the nature and seriousness of the violation. If a disagreement between the parent and the school results in the parent seeking civil litigation, the student will be asked to withdraw from school until the civil decision has been made.

SEARCH AND SEIZURE

The teacher and/or principal have the authority to search students and their property and seize student's property if reasonable cause exists. School personnel may conduct inspections of desks, lockers, backpacks, personal belongings, etc, at any time with or without the student present, and without notice. This search will generally be done with another school administrator or teacher present.

GUM AND CANDY

Gum chewing is NEVER permitted anywhere on the school premises. Ordinarily, eating candy treats is limited. Teachers may arrange for class treats occasionally in the classroom or in the lunchroom. Students are never permitted to eat in the school hallways.

ELECTRONIC/OTHER EQUIPMENT

Students may not bring electronic equipment to school. Students with unauthorized equipment will have those things removed and kept in the school phone cart until the end of the school day or longer. The equipment will be returned *directly to the parents—not to the student*. If a phone or other electronic equipment is found in the student's possession during defined school hours after the first incident and reminder, a consequence will be assessed.

The following policy applies to all cell phones:

- Students must turn them off when they are on school grounds between the time they arrive in the morning and 3:30 p.m. *when they leave the grounds with their rides*. If a student stays for Extended Day, the phone is retrieved *when they leave Extended Day*.
- Students check the phones in at the school office when they arrive and never keep them on their person, in their locker, backpack, or desk. Students who fail to turn in their cell phone in the morning may receive a demerit.

- Phones may not be used for taking pictures, text messaging, or game playing after school as the student waits for a ride. They may not be used at Extended Day since phones are not permitted to be retrieved from the office until students leave.
- Phones may be turned on only after school is dismissed and students have left the school property in the company of an adult; or if they have received permission from the school personnel.
- Students may not carry them along on school trips. If there is a need to use a phone, the student will contact his/her teacher who will carry a phone.
- For emergency messages to parents during the school day, students will consult with school personnel first and use the school office phone in the presence of a staff member.

DRESS CODE

PURPOSE

The school dress code is important to our parochial school. We have developed a standard of proper dress and general appearance for our students that will demonstrate the Christian values of our school program. We believe that the dress code will enhance the educational purpose of our entire student body. Families must cooperate with it and to set aside individual desires for the good of the overall school community. The clothing and appearance of all students should be appropriate, modest, and neat.

School uniforms are designed to remove the pressure of competition and economic status for students. Uniforms permit a neat, consistent appearance and allow students to concentrate on their studies. The uniform code is strictly enforced by the school faculty and administration. All uniforms should be clean and free of holes. Shoes and socks must be worn at all times. Grooming and hairstyles meet a given standard.

UNIFORMS

Students in grades pre-kindergarten through eight wear the uniform as described in **Appendix E** of this handbook. The school uniform features the stylized STA initials on the outerwear. All students wear the uniform for Physical Education class described in the Appendix. Please note the uniform requirements for shoes as well.

Along with the uniform clothing are guidelines for student appearance. Parents are urged to carefully read the rules for uniform wear at each grade level. The Dress Code and rules for the uniforms at each grade level are also posted on the school website. See **Appendix E** of this handbook for a complete listing of requirements.

Parents should ensure that all students wear the complete uniform to and from school. On gym class days, students are to wear their gym uniform to and from school. Students who come out of uniform will receive a uniform violation notice. **Students will receive a warning for their first notice, and the student's family will be fined \$25.00 for each subsequent violation after the warning.**

The school has the right to hold students out of class if they are not following the dress code. Parents are responsible for making sure that their child comes to school in uniform, and parents are expected to support and enforce the school's dress code.

PURCHASE OF SCHOOL UNIFORMS

There are three resources for ordering school uniforms. They include ***Schoolbelles*** 79th & Harlem at the Bridgeview Court Plaza, Bridgeview, IL 60455; 708-598-8008. OR **MartiNelli's** 3517 W. 95th Street, Evergreen Park, IL 60805; 708-425-6287. OR families may purchase gently used uniforms from the **school supply closet** at \$5 per item or make an exchange of used clothes. Gently-used school uniforms are available for sale throughout the year and can be arranged through the school secretary.

The gym uniform may be purchased through the companies listed above. Some School Spirit Wear tee shirts *but NOT ALL) may also be worn as part of the gym uniform. Orders for School Spirit clothing and items are made periodically through special orders throughout the year.

NU CARD DAYS (Non Uniform Cards)

Occasionally, students are allowed to dress out of uniform for special days or as a special reward. NU Cards are earned throughout the school year as stated in school newsletters. NU Card days are not permitted when students participate in a field trip. **Students are not to ever dress in clothing that is unbecoming to a Christian student.** Clothing worn for NU Card Days should be neat and modest and a student's appearance must conform to the Appearance section of the Dress Code Policy in **Appendix E** of this handbook.

The administration will make the final decision as to whether a particular article of clothing is appropriate for a NU Card Day. See NU Card Days in **Appendix E** for details.

If an article of clothing is deemed inappropriate by the administration, the student will be asked to call home for a change in clothing or for their school uniform and will receive a uniform violation. Students unable to reach a parent may be asked to put on a school uniform from the extra uniform closet instead of continuing to wear the article of clothing that was deemed inappropriate. Repeated noncompliance will be noted on the student's report card. Administrators can suspend NU Card use for a period of time.

SCHOOL SPIRIT WEAR DAYS

On School Spirit Days, students may wear clothing that is the official St. Thomas the Apostle Spirit Wear. Check both the School Spirit Day and the NU Card. sections of **Appendix E** for guidance about appropriate attire for these events.

HEALTH

The following information outlines important information regarding health requirements and health records at school. There are absolutely no exceptions to the stated requirements for health records, and they all must be satisfied by any student who wants to continue to attend this school or any other state-accredited school in Illinois.

HEALTH EXAMS

BEFORE SCHOOL BEGINS, all health records must be up-to-date. Students may not attend school until health records are submitted.

- **Dental Exam**— all new students and all students entering kindergarten, second, and sixth grade must have a dental exam. This is recorded on a **Dental Form** which is signed and dated by the dentist.
- **Eye Exam**— all new students and all children entering kindergarten must have a vision screening. Results are documented for the school.
- **Hearing Test**— all new students must have a hearing test. Results are documented for the school.
- **Physical Exam**—all new students and all sixth grade students must have a physical and this is documented on a form signed and dated by the doctor. Illinois state law requires that all students have a physical exam on file at school. Parents complete the health history on the form; sign and date it.

HEALTH RECORDS ON THE EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARD

Each student is required to have Emergency Medical Information on file in the school office. The Health Record Form is given to families at the time of registration. It also includes contact information for parents and other individuals who are back-up contacts. On the card, indicate any chronic illnesses and/or allergies.

IMMUNIZATIONS

Illinois State Law requires that parents provide a written updated statement of a child's required immunizations. **No child shall be permitted to attend beyond the date of enrollment without the written statement.** Forms to be completed and signed by your doctor are provided at the time of registration. St. Thomas the Apostle School can exclude your child from school if your medical forms are not submitted. NOTE: If a student has *not* been vaccinated and there is an outbreak of measles, mumps, or chicken pox, that student may not return to school until the health department agrees that the contagion is over.

All pre-kindergarten through grade 8 students must have all immunization records up to date.

Registration at STA is not complete without submission of these records.

The minimum immunization requirements for all children include the following:

5 DPT's (DtaP's, DT's) (diphtheria-tetanus-acellular pertussis)

- 4 OPV's (Oral Polio)
- 2 doses of measles (rubella) vaccine
- 2 doses of rubella (German measles) vaccine
- 2 dose of mumps vaccine
- 3 doses of hepatitis B vaccine
- 2 doses of varicella (chickenpox)

The requirement for sickle cell anemia, TB, diabetes, and lead poisoning screening tests is determined by your doctor who indicates this decision on the health history section of the Physical Form.

ADDITIONAL MIDDLE SCHOOL IMMUNIZATIONS

Additional immunizations are required of students in grades six through eight. All sixth grade students must have had a DTAP vaccine *prior to entering the grade*. The DTAP refers to a vaccine to prevent whooping cough, diphtheria, and tetanus. Students who are not in compliance will stay out of school until the requirement is met. See the listing of required immunizations for sixth grade students that is provided with the registration materials.

ALLERGIES

Parents inform the school of any and all allergies the student has. This information is recorded on the School Health Record. Teachers will be informed of students who have allergies that require immediate response. Some of the students have extreme reactions to contact with or even the smell or presence of nuts. Because we do not want to compromise any child's safety at our school, we have put precautions in place.

In instances where students do have an allergic reaction to nuts or any other allergen, parents can be reassured that teachers have been trained in first aid, CPR, and use of the epi-pen. Students may carry their own epi-pen if the parents request it. A Food Allergy Action Plan must be completed and submitted *on the first day of school* for those children with food allergies.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE

Students with Covid, pink eye (conjunctivitis), flu, or other communicable diseases must be excluded from school for 5 days or until symptoms are no longer apparent. Should you think that your child has contracted a contagious disease (pink eye, measles, chickenpox, etc.) please advise the school office immediately. Do NOT send your child to school if you have suspicions that the child has a contagious disease. Contact the doctor and if the suspicion has been confirmed, please relay that information to the school office as well.

After a diagnosis of head lice is confirmed, the student must immediately be treated with an anti-lice shampoo until nits are no longer evident. Treatment takes place at home and directions for home treatment will be made available. Families in the school will be notified by a letter to take precautions. The student will not be permitted to return to class until the school receives a note from a physician stating that they no longer have lice

A student who has other communicable diseases (for example, ringworm or strep throat) cannot be readmitted to school without a physician's certificate which states that he/she is able to return to school and is no longer contagious. A letter is sent to the families of that student's classroom indicating that someone in the class contracted the communicable disease and warns parents of symptoms for which to watch.

If a student contracts measles, no textbooks or papers may be sent home until after the child returns to school. At that time, all assignments will be given and sufficient time will be arranged for the make-up of work.

ILLNESS

If your child is sick or has an elevated temperature *before leaving for school*, keep your child at home. Students must be fever free before returning to school. Sending children who do not feel well to school does not help the student, the parents, or the other students at the school. Students should be symptom free for 24 hours after the initial day of notification of illness (*example: if John is sick at 11am Tuesday he cannot return until Thursday and must be symptom free all of Wednesday*).

In the event of illness of a student while at school, the parent or other designated person indicated on the Emergency Medical Form will be telephoned. Parents should make arrangements to pick up their child who is sick *in a timely manner*.

FEVERS

If a student is sent home with an elevated temperature, he/she should remain at home until his/her temperature has been NORMAL for 24 hours *after the initial day of notification (example: if John is sick at 11am Tuesday he cannot return until Thursday and must be symptom free all of Wednesday)*. Students who have left school with a temperature may not return to school to participate in any after-school sports activities.

MEDICATION

Generally, school personnel will not maintain or supervise students' taking medications or administer medications. Only in extraordinary circumstances may medication be supervised by the staff—asthma inhalers, epi-pen, or medication for ADHD such as Ritalin™

Only those medications that are necessary to maintain the child in school and must be given during school hours shall be administered. Students with asthma, epipen, or diabetes medication may self-carry and/or self-administer upon receipt of necessary documents.

1. No medication will be given to any student *without the written consent of the physician and parent*. The physician and parent will complete and sign a **medication form** that is available in the school office. No exceptions to this rule are permitted.

2. For those who have a medication form, the following applies. Medications prescribed for a student must come in the original container/package with the pharmacy label and student's name affixed. The medication must be accompanied by a signed note and must include:
 - Name of medication
 - Dosage
 - Time
 - Complete instructions for administration of the medication.
- Indicated health condition
3. All medications are kept locked in the school office. No student is to have any medication in his/her possession.
4. With written permission from a physician, a student with asthma *may* keep an inhaler in their possession. The student will self-medicate as needed, and may keep the inhaler with him/her and away from other children. Students will be responsible for cleaning and maintaining their inhaler.
5. With written permission of the parents, the student may carry his/her own epi-pen.
6. If non-prescription medication is necessary during school time, the parent/guardian must come to school to administer it to the child.
7. If non-prescription medication is necessary during school time, the parent/guardian must complete the necessary **medication form** with the doctor so the student can self-medicate.
8. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to notify the school if medication orders change.
9. Under no circumstances may the *school personnel* administer pain relievers (Tylenol™ or aspirin) to students.
10. Parents should never put medication in the child's lunch box or book bag.
11. Cough drops, throat lozenges, aspirin, etc., constitute medication at school. If the doctor requires such medication during the day, a **medication form** is required. The medication is stored in the school office for the student to self-medicate. Alternatively, the student would stay at home until this condition is alleviated.

ACCIDENTS

All accidents during the school day or at a co-curricular activity should be reported to the school office staff. Parents will be notified in case of a serious injury. The supervising teacher or staff member who witnessed the accident will complete an accident report.

State law regulates that minor injuries be treated by school staff with only soap and water and a bandage. If there is any serious injury, the parents are notified immediately. If the parent cannot be located, and if immediately necessary, paramedics will be called and the child will be taken to Children's Hospital accompanied by the principal.

CONCUSSIONS

Any student who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion (loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion, or balance problems) shall be immediately removed from class and their parents will be notified. Students who have had a concussion must have written permission from a doctor in order to return for after school athletics.

HOSPITALIZATION

Notify the principal if a student is hospitalized. A physicians' certificate stating that the student is now able to return to school is required when the child returns.

SAFETY

ASBESTOS

In 1986, Congress passed the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act. (AHERA). That law requires all schools, kindergarten through twelfth grade, to be inspected and identify any asbestos-containing building materials. The law further requires the development of a Management Plan, based upon the findings of the inspection, which outlines our intent in controlling the potential for exposure to asbestos fibers in our schools.

In the past, asbestos was used extensively in building materials throughout the country because of its insulating and fire retarding capabilities. Virtually any building built before the late 1970's contains at least some asbestos in pipe insulation and structural fireproofing. Parish buildings contain asbestos material. The primary concerns arise when these materials begin to deteriorate or become damaged.

Our school has been inspected and some asbestos containing materials were identified in our building. The materials are distributed in various locations and include floor tile, pipe insulation and mechanical areas not readily accessible to building occupants or students. These areas have been contained for safety. The school has been inspected and has passed inspection for safety.

Our school's Inspection Report and Management Plan outlines in detail the methods used to maintain the materials in a safe manner. In addition, as required by law, appropriate school staff members have been trained to administer this program. A copy of the inspection report and the management plan is on file at our school office for review if you so desire. In addition, a letter sent to all families regarding this matter is in **Appendix F**.

PROCEDURES FOR MORNING DROP OFF AND AFTERNOON PICK UP

Parent Volunteers direct traffic in the morning and afternoon. You must obey their directions. Please demonstrate cooperation and respect toward the patrols. Your behavior is a model to your children. Repeated instances of misbehavior in the parking lot can result in additional service hours being charged to your family.

PROCEDURES FOR MORNING DROP OFF

1. All vehicles must enter St. Thomas the Apostle School at the private alley entrance to the parking lot from Kimbark Street. Do not enter from Woodlawn Avenue, which is a designated exit.
2. Cars proceed in a single file order toward the school sidewalk on the south entrance to school.
3. Vehicles will proceed to the parking lot following the direction of the cones which will be in place each morning during the drop-off time. These cones will be located parallel with the school on the east side of the parking lot. Four vehicles can unload at a time as long as every car pulls up to the side entrance. Drivers must pull up!
4. Your child **MUST** be ready to exit the vehicle when you make a complete stop. Adults are asked **NOT** to exit their vehicles at any time while in the drop-off lane. If you need to exit in order to assist your child out of the car, then choose to park in the lot and do not pull up in the drop off lane.
5. Drivers must drive very slowly as they exit and are not permitted to make a left hand turn on to Woodlawn Avenue. They must make a right turn only.

All students and families should enter the building through the Woodlawn Avenue Entrance at arrivals and during the school day. No one should enter through the Parking Lot door at any time.

PROCEDURES FOR AFTERNOON PICK UP

1. All vehicles must enter St. Thomas the Apostle School at the private alley entrance from Kimbark Street. Do not enter from Woodlawn Avenue, which is a designated exit.
2. Cars proceed in a single file order toward the school sidewalk on the south entrance to school.
3. Parents park and exit their cars and proceed to the cones which will be in place each afternoon during the drop-off time. These cones will be located parallel with the school on the south side of the building
4. Retrieve your child from the gathering of students and walk them directly to the car. Do not stand at the door, in the walkway, or in the area in which the children gather. Please stand on the outside of the cones to allow the staff to properly dismiss and release students.
5. Parents are asked not to use dismissal time to have a conference with the teachers.
6. When exiting the parking lot you must make a right turn only.

TRAFFIC SUPERVISION

Traffic Monitors are parent volunteers. Follow the directions of these individuals. Every parent has the opportunity to volunteer on this Home and School committee. Violations of the parking lot procedures will be reported to the school office. Please do not socialize with traffic monitors while they are volunteering.

PARKING LOT ETIQUETTE

1. Do not walk down the driveway. This is for all vehicles.
2. Be alert for cars that are already moving and do not walk behind them – they may not be able to see you approaching. Instead, wait until they have cleared your area and then move on.
3. Be cautious and aware of your surroundings when walking in the parking lot.
4. Make sure that you are driving 5 mph or less.
5. Do not use your cell phone while driving in the parking lot.
6. Cars should always be parked in marked stalls.
7. On school days, do not drive across the parking lot, even if it is fairly empty. There are children on the STA campus from 7:00am until 6:00pm and this includes the parking lot.
8. Please demonstrate cooperation and respect toward the traffic monitors.
9. Parents should demonstrate respect in their words, gestures, and other body language toward the volunteers directing traffic. We model respect to our students at all times.

PARKING LOT DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

Do NOT park in the parish/school lot from 10:30 a.m.-12:45 p.m. The parking lot is used for recess during this time. Cars within the lot during recess may not leave while children are playing.

If you are chaperoning a field trip or volunteering at the school, park along the perimeter of the parking lot or on the street.

Note that any cars parked in the parking lot between the school and church, in the alley, behind the school gym or in any other non-designated spot will be ticketed and towed by the police department as an obstruction to the fire lane.

PARKING IN FRONT OF SCHOOL 7AM-5PM

DO NOT park in front of the school on Woodlawn from 7am- 5pm. **This is a School Zone and parking is prohibited.** The first time you will receive a warning. **This is a Kiss & Go Zone at morning drop off only.**

BUS SAFETY

When students ride the bus for school field trips or for daily transportation services, they should observe the proper rules of safety and courtesy. The guidelines are provided in our PBIS Matrix (see Appendix D). Students who are regular bus/van rides to and/or from school must bring a note to school if they will not be using that service on a particular day.

SECURITY & SAFETY

All school entrances are locked when classes are in session for the safety and protection of students and staff. The school has a safety officer responsible for monitoring the safety and security of the

building from the front desk in the main lobby. All parents and students are required to enter by the FRONT DOOR of the school building (Woodlawn Entrance)—not the parish entrance (south door/parking lot door). Parents and visitors during the school day may enter through the main doors and are required to check in at the front desk before going anywhere else in the building. Visitors must pick up a Visitor Badge from the front desk before entering classroom areas. Parents or other visitors found in the building without a badge will be asked to return to the front desk to obtain one.

CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT: ALLEGATIONS/SUSPICIONS

All teachers and staff members are **mandated reporters** of allegations and suspicions of child abuse and neglect and are required by law to make reports to the Department of Children and Family Services whenever such circumstances should become apparent.

EMERGENCIES

All adults and students in the building are required to observe these procedures during an actual disaster and/or practice drills.

FIRE

Signal: Ring the fire alarm bell.

Procedure:

Exit the room single file to the assigned area.

Close the classroom door.

Teacher takes a roll book to check attendance.

Remain outside in silence until further directions are given.

TORNADO

Signal: Announcement over the PA system

Procedure:

Exit the room single file to assigned area.

Close classroom door.

Teacher takes roll book to check attendance.

Kneel facing the wall and shield head and face

Remain quiet until further directions are given.

EARTHQUAKE

Signal: Announcement over PA system

Procedure:

Students take cover under a sturdy desk, table or other furniture or against an interior wall.

They get down on their knees and face away from the windows.

They use a book to shield the head from glass.
They hold onto the furniture.

SCHOOL EVACUATION

Signal: Announcement over PA system

Procedure:

Exit the room single file to an area announced over PA system (e.g. off-site location, church, gym, and cafeteria). In cases of broad evacuation, students will gather at Augustana Lutheran Church Of Hyde Park, 5500 S. Woodlawn.. They will stay there and parents will be notified through *School Messenger* for pick up from that location. Close the classroom door.
Teacher takes a roll book and checks attendance.

SHELTER IN PLACE

Signal: Announcement over PA system

Procedure:

Close and lock the classroom door.
Students gather in designated locations in the classroom along the wall away from the windows and out of sight.
Students remain silent.
Stay in place until the room is unlocked by the proper authority.

SNOWSTORM

School closings or school delays may be necessary in case of severe weather. STA School parents will be notified through our MailChimp Emails OR School Messenger. The information will also be posted on the school website and broadcast on radio stations WGN, WJPC, WCFL, WIND, WBBM, OR WMAQ. View local TV news broadcasts and listen for our full name: **St. Thomas the Apostle School-Chicago** so as to distinguish us from other schools with the name “Thomas” in them. Or check www.emergencyclosings.com

During a school closure, the Extended Day Program will NOT be available. School will not be open for instruction and students are not to report to school when school has been announced as closed for a snowstorm.

SCHOOL DELAY

If school will be open with a delayed start, the delay will be announced through MailChimp Email, ClassDojo OR the automated phone system, School Messenger, over local radio, and on the school website. School dismissal, on delayed start days, will be at the regular time. School lunches will be served. The Before-School Extended Day Program will begin at the regular time, 7.00 a.m. and regular rates will apply. For a one-hour delay, the school day starts at 9:00 a.m. For a two-hour delay, the school day will start at 10:00.

EMERGENCY SCHOOL DISMISSAL FOR WEATHER

In case of severe weather during school time, the school administration will determine whether St. Thomas the Apostle School would close. The following procedure is used:

1. Notify all parents through the automated phone system, School Messenger. Parents will be notified at all phone numbers, home, work and cell. Text messages will be broadcasted.
2. Send students to Extended Day if parents are unable to pick up the student or if the parents could not be reached within an hour of the emergency dismissal.

Parents may decide to take their children from school as a precaution in bad weather regardless of whether an early dismissal is announced. That is a parental choice. Students will be responsible for all school assignments missed during their early departure.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

AM & PM CARE PROGRAM

St. Thomas the Apostle School provides AM & PM Care to families for student supervision and care before and after school.

PM Care provides safety, supervision, recreation, and enrichment activities for children of working parents within a Catholic environment. After School Care is open to all students. Any student who is not picked up by the end of dismissal goes to After School Care.

Before Care is open every school day from 7:00 a.m. to 7:45 a.m. Before Care is not open before 7:00 am. There will be no adult supervision for any child dropped off before 7:00 am. It takes place in the Pre-K classroom and the gym. Afternoon Care is open at 3:45 p.m., which is 15 minutes after school dismissal at 3:30 p.m. On Wednesdays, the program begins at 2:45 p.m., 15 minutes after the 2:30 dismissal. The program is available until 6:00 p.m. It takes place in the school cafeteria and other designated classrooms in the school building.

All students who are not picked up by 3:45 p.m. will go directly to After Care so that supervision continues until the family arrives. The program is also open when there are delays due to weather and on early dismissal days. The program is not available on school holidays. Additions and exceptions to the schedule are communicated in advance through the school calendar and the parent newsletter. It is the family's responsibility to read all messages communicated from the school regarding schedules.

Students should bring a snack from home. An emergency information form must be on file. In the afternoon, children will not be released to any adult not listed on the emergency card.

The cost for supervision of children in After School Care is \$10.00 per any part of hour. Any part of the hour will be considered an hour. Attendance is tracked on a daily basis and the parent signs the roster daily. Starting at 6:00 p.m, the rate is \$ 6.00 per minute. Call the school office

(773-667-1142) to report if you will be late. Avoid circumstances that will result in late pick up at the end of the day. On the last day before Thanksgiving & Christmas break and the last day of school we do not have after care (see school calendar for other designated days). Also, we will not have aftercare on Teacher Conference days. Families who have a child here after the end of pick up on any of these days will be charged \$100.00 on FACTS after the initial 15 minute allotted time frame. An additional \$100.00 fee will be applied if the student has not been picked up after 45 minutes after the allotted 15 minute pick up window. No exceptions will be made as we consider this as notification to all families.

Payment for Am & Pm Care is required on a bi-weekly basis. Charges will be input weekly into the family's FACTS account and must be paid in accordance with the family's incidental due date schedule.

Failure to make payment will result in the child being excluded from the program. Conversations about delinquent accounts are addressed with the Tuition Manager. Aftercare supervisors do not resolve financial concerns.

After Care supervisors are trained in first aid. If your child needs medical assistance, the same procedures apply as during the regular school day.

All questions and concerns about the program should be directed to the Head Supervisor. Any issues that cannot be resolved should be brought to the attention of the assistant principal.

AFTERNOON EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

After School Enrichment Programs are provided in addition to the school sponsored Extended Day Program. St. Thomas sponsors many extracurricular activities for the enjoyment and enrichment of the students and the development of abilities not covered in the formal classroom setting. Some activities are free and some are fee-based. Participation in these extracurricular activities is a privilege. Students must be cooperative, courteous, and behave in a Christian manner to be eligible to participate in these activities.

A menu of Enrichment Program choices is offered for each of the three sessions. You will get a communication describing each program. Parents/guardians must *register for each* of the programs directly with the group/company that is offering them. The program choices are scheduled for an 11-week session with a few shorter interim sessions occasionally offered. Students must follow the guidelines of each program designated on the individual registration forms. Each enrichment offering is managed by a designated supervisor.

When the Enrichment activity is completed for the day, the students may go directly to the Extended Day Program or parents may pick them up from the security desk within 10 minutes after the program ends. Students not picked up within ten minutes go immediately to the Extended Day Program for supervision and regular rates will apply for the time spent there.

ATHLETICS

Parent Handbook Changes

"Participation in these extracurricular activities is a privilege. Students must be cooperative, courteous, and behave in a Christian manner to be eligible. If your student does not follow the outlined guidelines, they may be removed from the program, and no refund will be given."

Registration for the programs will be communicated to parents, and parents must register students via signupgenius.com. It is the responsibility of the parent to review class schedules for students participating in the afterschool programs. Each session offers a menu of Enrichment Program choices, and you will receive a communication describing each program. Parents/guardians must register for each program directly with the group or company offering them. Program schedules may vary depending on the availability of the programmers. Students must follow the guidelines outlined in each program's individual registration forms, and each enrichment offering will be managed by a designated supervisor.

Student Attendance at Home Games

- **Students must be accompanied by a supervising adult.**
- **The cost of admission to games is determined by the facility hosting the event, including STA's home games. Please note that these fees are subject to change.**

League Sports for the 2024-25 School Year

Grades K-2: Co-ed Basketball

Grades 3-4: Co-ed Basketball

Grades 5-6: Co-ed Basketball

Grades 7-8: Co-ed Basketball

Grades 5-8: Girls Volleyball

Grades 5-8: Co-ed Track

Please note that some of the seasons will begin in late June with tryouts for the upcoming school year. Please be on the lookout for more information when the season begins.

Athletic Participation Guidelines for Grades 4-8

Students in grades four through eight must maintain a C average in all core academic subjects (Math, Reading, Social Studies, and Science) to participate in athletics.

Behavior

Students must also demonstrate appropriate behavior in the classroom, during all athletic activities, and in afterschool enrichment programs. This includes showing respect for teachers, classmates, coaches, teammates, opponents, and officials, as well as adhering to school conduct policies in all settings, including special classes (such as Music and Physical Education).

Every other week, students' behavior and academic performance will be sent to the Athletic Director for review. Students not meeting expectations will be placed on a one-week probation, during which they may still participate in sports. If there is no improvement by the next review cycle, the student will be placed on suspension.

A failing grade of "F" in a core subject will result in a three-week suspension from sports games to improve the score. Parents are reminded to follow student academic progress using PowerSchool, which provides immediate access to student grades and eligibility.

Academic evaluation for athletes will take place approximately every three weeks. If a student is not passing all of their classes, athletic ineligibility notices will be sent home to parents from the principal, who will then notify the Athletic Director and contact the involved coaches. If a student has received a major consequence for behavior, a notice will be sent home to parents and the Athletic Director, who will also contact the coaches involved.

The student will then be placed on probation for two weeks. Probation is a warning period during which the student may still participate in sports. The student must be passing within the next two weeks. If no improvement is reported, the student may be excluded from the team and will not be allowed to participate in practices, practice games, or league games for three weeks. The student on probation or suspension will be reevaluated at the end of every three weeks.

Students and parents must present themselves at all sporting events as the Christians we profess to be. Supporting our teams is commendable, but no abusive or improper language and gestures by spectators or students will be tolerated.

BIRTHDAY PARTIES

If parents are planning a birthday party outside of school and intend to invite students from school, invitations must be passed out in the classroom to the entire class or to all girls or all boys, rather than just inviting a select few. The teacher needs advanced notice about invitations being passed out so that they can be coordinated effectively. The child should give the invitations to the teacher to distribute to the entire class. There is no such thing as a “secret party.” Children should not be disrespected or excluded as this is very hurtful and disruptive to a classroom community. **The school does not permit families to bring or serve birthday treats to school, and does not host birthday parties at school. Teachers cannot provide the contact information of other families. This is something that parents can coordinate through their HSA Room parent.**

FIELD TRIP POLICIES

Field trips are integral to the curriculum because they provide authentic learning experiences; they are not optional events. Teachers are encouraged to regularly plan field trips that support academic growth and connections to the academic curriculum. Students represent St. Thomas the Apostle School on these trips and are accountable for their behavior. Students can be denied participation if they fail to meet academic or behavioral requirements. Parents may incur additional fees for field trips in order to cover admissions and other expenses. Generally, students wear their school uniforms on a field trip. Students do not take field trips to amusement parks.

Permission Form

Parents are notified of the field trip by letter at least two weeks prior to the planned trip. Written permission using the proper form is required; otherwise, the student will not be allowed to participate in the field trip. The student will bring home the form for a signature.

Chaperones

For kindergarten, the ratio of adult chaperones is one (1) adult per five (5) students. For grades one through five, the ratio is one (1) adult per seven (7) students. For grades six through eight, the ratio is one (1) adult per ten (10) students. Because this is a school activity, all chaperones and students are under the leadership of the classroom teacher. The *teacher will choose* the chaperones.

All chaperones must meet the Archdiocesan requirements for student supervision that includes:

1. Pass a criminal background check.
2. Be *Virtus* trained and in compliance
3. Complete the Child Abuse and Neglect Tracking System form. (CANTS).
4. Sign the Archdiocese Standards of Behavior
5. Provide The Mandated Reporter Certificate

Rules for Chaperones include:

- Verification of completion of all 5 requirements listed above and must be submitted prior to the field trip.
- Chaperones may not deviate from any guidelines for the trip that have been established by the teacher.

- Chaperones stay in contact with the teacher who is the supervisor and do not leave the group they have been assigned.

Participation in Field Trips

If the parent chooses not to send a child on a field trip, school work will be assigned for the student and counted as a class assignment grade. The student may complete this work at school or at home on the day that the trip is planned. If the child's non-attendance on a field trip is brought about by a school decision, the school will provide the assignment and supervision in another teacher's classroom. If a student misses school on the date of the field trip, the child is counted absent and work will be made up according to the class requirements.

Field Trip Transportation

Whenever possible, bus transportation will be utilized. When students ride on a bus for a field trip, they follow the rules outlined under the section on school safety. The use of private vehicles for a field trip is rarely used except for prekindergarten students who ride *with their own parents* in a booster seat. Private passenger vehicles will not be used for field trips.

Classes may walk or take public transportation to cultural and educational venues on occasion. The mode of transportation will be indicated on the permission form.

VOLUNTEERING WITH CHILDREN

PROCESS

Before volunteering with children at St. Thomas, all adults must create a Virtus account and complete Protecting God's Children, criminal background check, Archdiocesan Standards of Behavior, Mandated Reporter, CANTS 22 form, CANTS 689 and any other training that appears in your Virtus account to be compliant. Virtus training is continued education and you will receive monthly training in your account that you will need to complete and remain in compliance. A step-by-step guide to this process can be found in [Appendix H](#).

SAFE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM (*VIRTUS*)

What Is Virtus?

The Archdiocese of Chicago and over 50 other dioceses across the United States participate in a program to educate teachers, staff, and volunteers, who work with children at both the school and parish levels about the ways in which we can make and maintain a safe and secure environment for our children.

The training educates participants about child abuse and emphasizes prevention, identification, response, and reporting. The purpose of the training is to ensure that the highest codes of conduct are followed and that children who worship, study, or participate in activities in our parishes and schools are continuously protected.

Who must be trained?

All teachers, substitute teachers, teacher aides, catechists, school and parish staff, and 3rd party vendors must be trained. Additionally parents who are involved directly with children need Virtus training. This includes, but is not limited to, parents who serve as coaches, room parents, field trip chaperones, and those who work at school events such as school parties and Field Day.

What is involved in the training?

1. Training will consist of one three hour group session if in person.. This is provided throughout the Archdiocese at various locations in the city during the entire year. The dates are noted on the school website and reminders will be announced in the parish and school bulletins. Most training can be done online.
2. Following the training session, your name and email address will be given to the archdiocese. You must sign on to the diocesan website to register. Click on VIRTUS and sign in and establish a password.
3. You will then have access to the follow-up training program entitled “Virtus.” You must read the printed article and answer the question posed at the end. You will receive online informational bulletins, one per month. You are required to read the bulletins and answer the question at the end of each bulletin.
4. Unless you have completed or are regularly completing the online portion of the training, you will NOT be permitted to work or volunteer at STA

Why Virtus Training?

Nothing is more important than the safety and protection of our children. St. Thomas the Apostle Parish and School already provides a safe environment and we wish to do everything possible to ensure that we continue to do so. We expect everyone’s cooperation and support in this important work.

Training Sessions

- You must register.
- No walk-ins are permitted.
- Sessions are online and in person.

PARENT—PARISH COVENANT

As a member of the Catholic Church, parents are required to support the spiritual growth in their children and witness to faith by praying with their child, teaching them to live a moral life, worshipping with them on the weekend, and participating at other spiritual opportunities throughout the year.

The Catholic Church teaches that parents are the first teachers of their children in the ways of faith. Simply put, children first learn the practice of faith at home by the example of their parents. At the appropriate time the parish church assists the parents by providing a more formal catechetical program that helps to educate and form their children in faith.

In no way does the Church envision that the parish is to take over the role of parents and become the primary teacher of children in the ways of faith. In other words, the parents must continue to practice the faith in word and deed. Minimally, practicing the faith means to faithfully worship each Sunday and to live a life that is in concert with the teachings of the Christ.

A Catholic school exists to support and enhance what the parents do in their role as mentioned above. The parish envisions this spiritual covenant between parents and St. Thomas the Apostle Church. Those who are registered members of the parish community and the universal Church will participate at St. Thomas the Apostle through stewardship of time, treasure and talent.

REGISTERED MEMBERS OF ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE PARISH

Some school families are members of St. Thomas the Apostle Parish. Rights and responsibilities are included in parish membership. Membership in the parish has some implications for St. Thomas the Apostle School families. **What is required of ACTIVE members of St. Thomas the Apostle church? An ACTIVE member does the following:**

1. Completes a registration form and submits it to the parish office. For the current school year, families should register in the parish before the start of the school year. Registration forms are available in the parish office.
2. Participates at Mass on all Sundays and holy days of obligation with the other members of St. Thomas the Apostle Parish community. Catholics may attend Mass at any parish throughout the year, however, attendance at Mass *at St. Thomas Church* indicates that *this* is your parish community, and thus regular attendance at St. Thomas is expected of the ACTIVE member of the church.
3. Leads a healthy sacramental life through a habit of regularly celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation and frequently receiving Holy Communion.
4. Fulfills your obligation to provide for the continuing religious education of your children. For parents who have children preparing to receive the sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist, and Confirmation, enroll your children in the Sacramental Preparation Programs offered at St. Thomas the Apostle Parish. The school will provide religious instruction for the sacraments, but additional involvement in the parish sacramental religious education program provides a fuller opportunity to be prepared specifically for receiving the sacraments with fuller understanding and participation is required.
5. Gives a sacrificial offering in the weekly collection basket or online through *Give Central*. *Each member of the parish* helps to support St. Thomas the Apostle Parish ministry. Parents model for their children an important lesson of stewardship by contributing regularly to the church. Each member of the parish prayerfully determines what is a just and fair sharing of one's income for the mission of the parish. A simple guideline is to tithe your household annual income to God for the work of the church (10 % is the guideline from Scripture).

6. Participates in service opportunities through parish and educational organizations of St. Thomas the Apostle Parish. Active parishioners step forward to assist at the weekend Masses by any of the various ministries (choir, carry offertory, usher, Reader, Communion Minister, greeter, etc.) and/or participate in parish events /activities/ organizations (for example, Sunday hospitality, outreach, teach catechism, youth ministry, committees, or fundraisers).

By fulfilling these responsibilities, an ACTIVE member of St. Thomas the Apostle Parish leads a Christian life by believing, professing, and practicing Christ's teaching in every facet of their life. An ACTIVE member of the parish who has a child or children attending St. Thomas the Apostle School is eligible for receiving a \$1,000 tuition scholarship per child per year.

Verification of one's ACTIVE status is conducted twice annually prior to the award of scholarships in the spring of the year.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

PARENT AGREEMENT WITH ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE SCHOOL

We understand that all parents whose children attend St. Thomas the Apostle School must be supportive of the school and actively involved. Our involvement is a condition of our child's/children's admission and continued enrollment.

We agree:

1. To participate actively in our child/ren's education. St. Thomas' educational program requires the joint efforts of teacher, parent, and child. We will help our child/ren succeed in school by helping him/her set aside time to do homework, by encouraging good study habits, and by reviewing with him/her any homework and tests.
2. To attend the Parent-Teacher-Student Conferences held in Fall and Spring and cooperate with suggestions to help our child's/children's progress in school.

3. To read the regular newsletters sent home by email every Friday by the principal, to carefully read any communication from the school, and to comply with any deadlines announced therein, so that our child/ren can participate fully in school programs and activities.
4. To participate in the life of the school especially through various opportunities provided by the Home and School Association.
5. To faithfully observe the policies, rules and regulations of the school and to inform ourselves by carefully reading the Parent Handbook.
6. To foster in our child/ren the Christian values of nonviolence in speech and action. We agree to discourage behavior and language at home and in all social media that does not align with Christian values, to encourage non-violent conduct in our child/ren, and to support the school's efforts to maintain a safe, happy, and non-violent environment. We also agree to model Christian values in our interactions with adults and other children in and around the school building.
7. To help develop self-discipline and a studious demeanor in our child/ren so that he/she and all the other students in school can learn. Disruptive behavior is not acceptable at St. Thomas. We agree to discuss these standards with our child/ren and to support the school's efforts to maintain a disciplined learning environment.
8. To always cooperate with all school staff and show them respect at all times. We agree to always work with the school and be receptive to any feedback that they may have. We agree to respond to any disciplinary notices or phone calls in a manner that will encourage our child's growth and development, and work with the school to remedy these issues.
9. To cooperate and comply with the policies outlined in the School Handbook.
10. To make tuition payments in full and on time. If a family is delinquent with tuition and/or with Extended Care fees, the child will be excluded from school on the 6th day following the scheduled payment. When an outstanding balance is due from a parent, the school may not

allow the child to participate in any extra-curricular activity or sport until it is paid in full if the school so chooses.

11. To support the fundraising efforts of the school. Families are not required to make a financial contribution, but they should work with the school to support these efforts for the benefit of our students.

We sincerely commit ourselves to support the school as outlined above.

*

_____	_____
Parent/Legal Guardian Signature	Date
_____	_____
Student	Grade
_____	_____
Student	Grade
_____	_____
Student	Grade in

****BY FILLING OUT YOUR STUDENTS ELECTRONIC REGISTRATION YOU HAVE FULFILLED YOUR
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT WITH AN ELECTRONIC SIGNATURE.***

APPENDIX B

TECHNOLOGY

KINDERGARTEN TO GRADE 3 STUDENTS

Before I can use the internet at my school, there are some promises that I need to make to my teacher, my classmates, my parents, and myself. These promises are made to help keep me safe and to make my time on the internet fun, interesting, and educational.

When I use a device:

- I promise to ask for help when I do not know what to do.
- I promise to share the device with my classmates and to be helpful if someone needs my help.
- I promise to follow my teacher's directions about using the device.

When I use the Internet:

- I promise to learn something new every time I use the Internet.
- I promise to stay on the Web pages my teacher shows me and directs me to locate.
- I promise to tell my teacher if I see something inappropriate on the Internet.
- I promise to give credit to the authors of the information I collect for reports.
- I will not copy and paste information for a report and then claim the words as my own writing. (I will not plagiarize).
- I will not send email or instant messages at school.

GRADES 4-8

Before I can use the internet at my school, there are some promises that I need to make to my teacher, my classmates, my parents, and myself. These promises are made to help keep me safe and to make my time on the internet fun, interesting, and educational. When I use the internet, I promise to:

- Act as a representative of my school, showing everyone that I can act responsibly.

- Tell my teacher or another adult when I see or my group sees something that is inappropriate or makes me feel uncomfortable.
- Follow all of the instructions my teacher gives and stay only in the areas the teacher advises.
- Actively use the information I find on the internet in my learning (projects, reports, discussions).
- Use the internet as a learning tool to help me discover my world. I should know the reason for using the internet for a certain task.
- Treat the people I meet on the internet with respect and never use inappropriate language, pictures, and gestures in any form on the internet.
- Give credit to the source of information when I copy from the internet. I will not take credit for someone else's words. I will not plagiarize: copy and paste information and claim it as my own words.
- Share the activities I do on the internet at home. It is important to let my parents/guardians know what I am doing on the internet and why.
- Be aware that there are consequences for choosing not to follow the internet rules.
- While at school, I also agree to not use Instant Messenger, check messages from my home account, access any other person's account or website, or purchase anything.
- I will use the computer only with the teacher's permission and will not change any settings, change or attempt to change any configuration program or password, or download, install and store software on the school computer without the approval of the teacher.

I understand my teacher knows how to keep me safe on the internet, so it is important for me to follow directions. If I find anything on the internet that makes me feel uncomfortable, I will share that with my teacher right away.

I have had the Acceptable Use Policy for Computers and Telecommunications explained to me. I understand its significance and I voluntarily agree to abide with all terms and conditions of it. I further understand that violation of this agreement would be unethical and might even constitute a criminal offense. Should I choose to violate this agreement, my privileges will be revoked and disciplinary action, and/or appropriate legal action may be taken.

PARENTAL CONSENT FORM

St. Thomas the Apostle School has chosen to permit students access to devices and telecommunication resources to further its educational goals and objectives. Reasonable care has been taken to assure the appropriateness and educational quality of the material available through the use of educational software and telecommunications. However, parents and guardians are warned that St. Thomas the Apostle School and the Archdiocese do not have total control of the information on the internet. The school uses a screening device to filter inappropriate material, but this is not perfectly effective.

Parents and guardians are the primary authority responsible for imparting the standards of ethical and legal conduct their child should follow.

As the parent/guardian of the student below named student, I have read the Acceptable Use Policy for Computers and Telecommunications ("The Policy") and I have either explained it to my child

("student") or I have assured myself that my child understands it. I understand my own and the student's responsibilities regarding computer hardware, software, and internet access at St. Thomas the Apostle School.

I hereby indemnify and hold harmless the Archdiocese of Chicago and St. Thomas the Apostle School from any claim or loss resulting from any infraction by the student of the policy or any applicable law.

GRADES 4-8 TECHNOLOGY POLICY

St. Thomas the Apostle School recognizes the role technology can play in the educational growth of students. As part of this goal, St. Thomas the Apostle School will provide students with Google Chromebooks to use during the school day. The purpose of providing Google Chromebooks in the classroom include but are not limited to classroom activities, homework, independent practice, and any other work designated by the teacher. Students should use their Google Chromebook during the instructional day solely to support their education. Students will maintain academic integrity in all their work at all times. It is up to the student to be responsible and aware of their device's use, care, and location.

Google Chromebook Procedures:

1. Each 4th-8th grade homeroom homeroom will have a cart with the Google Chromebooks for the students in this homeroom. Each Chromebook will have a number and each student will be assigned one Chromebook to use during the year.
2. At the beginning of the year, each student and their parent/guardian will sign an agreement for proper Chromebook use. Students will NOT be allowed to use their STA Chromebook until this agreement is signed and returned to the student's homeroom teacher.
3. Students must pass an exam about how to responsibly and correctly use a Google Chromebook before using the technology. Students will NOT be allowed to use their STA Chromebook until this test is passed.
4. All Chromebooks must remain at St. Thomas the Apostle School at all times. Students will NOT be allowed to bring their assigned Chromebook home with them or take them outside of the building.
5. At the end of the year, students will return their Chromebook to the school. Students in 4th-7th grade will receive the same Chromebook when they return the following year. They are responsible for the care of their Chromebook so that it lasts the duration of their time at STA.
6. Student's families are responsible for any lost, damaged, or broken Chromebooks assigned to their student. **They will be charged \$300 for a replacement Chromebook.** Any fees for lost/damaged/broken Chromebooks will be assessed on FACTS on June 1st after all Chromebooks are checked in at the end of the year.

Expectations:

1. Students will use appropriate technology only at teachers' discretion. They will use Chromebooks when directed/permitted.

2. No personal devices are to be brought to the classroom, including Kindles and tablets used for independent reading.
3. Students will only use appropriate applications on their Chromebook. They do not use them for games and/or non-school related tasks and functions.
4. Students are not to call, text message, email, use social media, or electronically communicate with others from their device, including contacting other students, parents, guardians, friends, and family while at school.

Enforcement of Unacceptable Device Use

Inappropriate use of a device can include, but is not limited to not meeting the above-mentioned expectations and the following:

- Obscene, profane, lewd, vulgar, rude, inflammatory, threatening, or disrespectful language or images typed or posted
- Information that could cause damage to an individual or the school community or create the danger of disruption of the academic environment
- Personal attacks, including prejudicial and discriminatory attacks
- Harassment
- Knowingly or recklessly posting false or defamatory information about a person or organization
- Communication that promote the destruction of property, including the acquisition or creation of weapons or other destructive devices

Any student who does not follow these expectations when using their Chromebook will receive a consequence from the teacher. This could result in loss of Chromebook privileges for the rest of the period. Repeated misuse of Chromebook can result in loss of Chromebook privileges, detention, suspension, and/or a meeting with school administration.

In line **accordance with** the Catholic values and mission of the school, all content **accessed** should be appropriate and clean content. The classroom teacher will approve web browsing in advance each time.

Specific Usage Terms

- Students may not use any device to record audio or video media of any student or staff member without their permission.
- Students are permitted to access ONLY the school's network for accessing the internet.
- The school is not liable for the loss, damage, misuse, or theft of a student's personal device.
- The school reserves the right to monitor, inspect, copy, and review a student's Chromebook and/or personal device when administration or teacher has reasonable suspicion that a violation has occurred.
- Students may not utilize any technology to harass, threaten, demean, humiliate, intimidate, embarrass, or annoy their classmates or others in their community. This is unacceptable student behavior known as cyberbullying and is not tolerated by STA.
- Students must be aware of appropriateness of communications.

- The school expressly prohibits use of any devices in the bathrooms or any other private space.
- They may not use devices without expressed teacher/supervisor permission in the cafeteria, gym, library, or in the Extended Day program. Chromebooks cannot be removed from the classroom for use during Extended Day.

I have read this acceptable use policy for technology use at St. Thomas the Apostle School. I understand and accept my responsibilities. I will follow this policy and the other technology policies outlined in the STA Parent and Student Handbook. I understand that my child will not be allowed to use a St. Thomas the Apostle School Chromebook until this form is signed and submitted. I understand that I will be assessed a **\$300 fee if the Chromebook is lost, damaged, or broken.**

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____

*Parent Signature: _____

Date: _____

****BY FILLING OUT YOUR STUDENTS ELECTRONIC REGISTRATION YOU HAVE FULFILLED YOUR
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT WITH AN ELECTRONIC SIGNATURE.***

Inappropriate Technology Use Documentation Form

This is notifying that your student was inappropriately using technology in [classroom and teacher] on [date here]. The student did not meet the expectations established in the STA Parent and Student Handbook. The student [describe technology misuse here]. The student cannot use their device in class again until this form has been signed and returned. Your student will still be expected to complete all of their classroom assignments and will be provided the materials to do so without technology. Please acknowledge that you've received notification of this incident by discussing this with your child and responding to this message. Please refer to the Parent Handbook to review the policies for Chromebook and personal device usage at St. Thomas the Apostle.

Sincerely,
[Teacher's name here]

APPENDIX C

ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE PBIS MATRIX

Stay Safe
Take Responsibility
Act Christ-Like

STA	Lunchroom	Hallway	Classroom	Restroom/Water Fountain
Stay Safe	<p>Walk everywhere</p> <p>Stay seated until it is time for your class' clean up procedure</p> <p>Talk with people only at your table</p> <p>Walk to line up and follow your class's route when given permission by a teacher (voice level 1)</p>	<p>Keep hands to self (walls and others)</p> <p>Walk in a straight line at a safe pace to keep up with your class</p> <p>Hold one hand on the handrail as you descend the stairs</p> <p>Take one stair at a time</p> <p>Have your whole body face in the direction you are walking</p>	<p>Walk</p> <p>Hands and feet to yourself and in your area</p> <p>Manage and use learning tools appropriately</p> <p>Feet and all chair legs on the floor when sitting in a chair</p>	<p>Use facilities appropriately</p> <p>Wash hands with 1-2 squirts of soap</p> <p>Stand two squares behind the water fountain while you wait</p> <p>Come to and leave the bathroom empty-handed</p>

Take Responsibility	<p>Raise hand for teacher acknowledgment</p> <p>Clean up after yourself</p> <p>Check the floor and your table for extra trash Use a wipe or a rag to clean your table</p> <p>Put all trash in garbage can</p>	<p>Listen to teacher's directions</p> <p>Go directly from one area to your destination</p> <p>Have quiet feet when you walk</p>	<p>Be prepared (necessary supplies-homework and books)</p> <p>Accept and follow directions</p> <p>Listen to speaker at a voice level 0</p> <p>Do quality work - try your best Stay on task Be a problem-solver</p>	<p>Flush toilet after use</p> <p>Place used paper towels in the wastebasket</p> <p>Use 1-2 paper towels to dry your hands</p> <p>Use restroom in a timely manner</p> <p>Use the restroom on the floor your class is on</p>
Act Christ-like	<p>Say please and thank you</p> <p>Make room for everyone at your table</p> <p>Place any food you do not want on the counter before you sit down</p>	<p>Be considerate of others</p> <p>Move to the side and let others pass</p> <p>Wait your turn patiently in line</p>	<p>Have a positive attitude</p> <p>Use nice words and actions</p> <p>Work cooperatively with your group</p> <p>Clean up after yourself</p>	<p>Respect the privacy of yourself and others</p> <p>Keep bathroom clean</p>
Voice Level	3	0 (1 when you need speak to an adult)	0-3	0 (1 when you need to speak to an adult)

STA	Arrival/Dismissal	Church	Recess	Office
Stay Safe	<p>ARRIVAL</p> <p>Proceed to the staircase for your class at a voice level of "1"</p> <p>Walk carefully and use the handrail on the stairs</p>	<p>Sit, stand, and kneel up straight</p> <p>Follow the hallway procedure when coming to and from church</p>	<p>Immediately walk to your class' line when the whistle is blown by the teacher</p> <p>Face forward in a single line with jackets and other belongings</p>	<p>Walk in</p> <p>Remain seated, if asked</p> <p>Stand in front of the desk only</p>

	<p>Sit at your desk ready to learn by 8:00 am.</p> <p>DISMISSAL</p> <p>Dismiss at 3:30pm from the designated staircases for your classrooms escorted by teacher in a voice level of “1” Move carefully in a line.</p>		<p>Always stay visible to the recess monitors Gently tag others during a game</p> <p>Only use teacher-approved recess materials Always stay on school grounds Follow your classroom’s procedure for when moving cars are present Remain silent once your class enters the building until you enter the cafeteria</p>	
Take Responsibility	<p>ARRIVAL</p> <p>Walk in line facing forward at all times Keep your hands to yourself.</p> <p>DISMISSAL</p> <p>Walk in line facing forward at all times Keep your hands to yourself Walk to your class’ designated spot and wait for a confirmation from your teacher before leaving</p>	<p>Dip two fingertips into the Holy Water basin, face the altar, and make the Sign of the Cross Genuflect as a class before entering your pew Lower kneelers carefully with your hands before Mass begins Place song sheet on pew when not singing Clap appropriately During the Sign of Peace, shake the hand of the person to the left of you and the person to the right of you Raise kneelers with your hands and put your coat on after the group genuflect</p>	<p>Watch where other are when joining the class line Gather all belongings that were brought outside Agree upon the rules of the game before starting</p>	<p>Deliver materials Receive materials Take the shortest route to and from the office Report back to the classroom immediately When entering say “Hello Ms. Keith (or adult)” Follow adult directions</p>

Act Christ like	<p>ARRIVAL/ DISMISSAL</p> <p>Be aware of the student in front and back of you at all times. Greet others (voice level = 1)</p> <p>DISMISSAL</p> <p>Stand attentively waiting with your teacher leaving snacks and electronic devices in your backpack</p>	<p>Receive Eucharist or blessing with reverence Sing and say the responses prayerfully Be attentive at all times</p>	<p>Be positive, compassionate, and include others Respect other people's space and bodies If a problem cannot be solved peacefully, seek help from teachers on duty</p>	<p>Use please and thank you when speaking Use the adult's name you are addressing Wait to be addressed</p>
Voice Level	Arrive and dismiss at a voice level of "1".	<p>Enter and exit at a voice level 0-1</p> <p>Sing and respond at a voice level 3</p>	<p>0-4 playing 0 walking into building</p>	Not above 2

STA	All School Gatherings	Field Trips	Voice Level Expectations 0 = Silent 1 = Whisper 2 = Partner Talk 3 = Discussion 4 = Outdoor
Stay Safe	<p>Walk in to your class' assigned seating place in the gym Listen to principal and teacher directions Sit upright and face forward</p>	<p>Stay with your class and chaperone at all times Ask the teacher or chaperone for permission to leave the larger group</p>	
Take Responsibility	<p>Participate actively when appropriate Say any responses, prayers, or songs with the school community</p>	<p>Be prepared for the trip Listen to your teachers and chaperones directions</p>	
Act Christ-Like	<p>Applaud presenter positively Listen silently</p>	<p>Listen to directions and presentations given by the host of the field trip Use your manners and be polite to the host of the field trip and the chaperones on the trip.</p>	
Voice Level	0 when seated for the assembly or presentation	<p>0 during presentation 1 on the bus</p>	

	1 for entering the gym 2 for applause and participating	2-3 during exploration
--	--	------------------------

APPENDIX D

UNIFORM DRESS CODE FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

DRESS	CODE	UNACCEPTABLE
SWEATSHIRT	St. Thomas sweatshirt with the STA logo Spirit Wear Fleece	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anything other than STA style Hooded sweatshirts or zip jackets in any other color or with any other logo than STA
SWEATER	Solid navy blue, gray, or white pullover with sleeves, vest, or a cardigan sweater School logo is allowable but not necessary.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any color or design other than a solid navy blue, gray, or white sweater.
GYM UNIFORM	STA t-shirt or sweatshirt and STA green gym shorts or sweatpants depending on the weather STA spirit t-shirts are permitted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other pants, shorts, or shirts than indicated Any non-STA athletic wear underneath STA gym uniforms
SHOES FOR GYM	Only athletic shoes worn with socks; laces must be securely tied Any color gym shoe may be worn on PE days only	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any shoe that is not an athletic shoe, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crocs Gym shoes with lights/wheels
JEWELRY	Limited to a wristwatch a simple gold or silver chain necklace; chains must not be longer than 18" and crosses must be very small One pair of stud earrings are allowed in the ears No more than one small ring per hand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hoop earrings or any face jewelry on boys or girls Wristbands, chokers, or longer, colorful, or distracting jewelry on boys or girls Apple, Fitbit or Smart Watches on boys or girls

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • boys with earrings
HAIR	<p>Hair is to be neat, clean, and well-groomed.</p> <p>It must be of a natural hue and all dye/highlights removed by the first day of school.</p> <p>Hair may not hang in the eyes or obscure eyesight.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extreme or distracting hair styles • Any non-natural coloring (ex: red, blue, purple, pink) • Partially dyed/highlighted hair in various colors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • feathers in hair • Students should not bring any hair grooming items with them • Bandanas or decorative headbands <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • beads
MAKE UP	Not permitted at any time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All makeup
NAILS	<p>Groomed neatly; only clear or neutral nail polish in one solid color is permitted</p> <p>Nails may not be longer than the tip of the finger</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artificial nails, extreme lengths, designs, or glitter <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acrylic nails • Bright, dark or bold colors
HATS, CAPS, SCARVES	Worn at recess only	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hats worn inside

UNIFORM DRESS CODE FOR BOYS

DRESS	CODE	UNACCEPTABLE
SHIRTS	<p>Light blue oxford/broadcloth shirt or light blue polo shirt with collar</p> <p>Shirts must be tucked inside the pants for Grades 3-8</p> <p>Undershirts are solid white</p> <p>Spirit Wear polo shirts with school logo are permitted. They may be white, gray, or green.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • T-shirts worn under the uniform shirt that are not solid white or have a design. • Spirit Wear t-shirts • Long-sleeve undershirts worn under polo shirts
SHORTS (optional for Aug, Sept, May, & June)	<p>Solid navy blue walking shorts with or without a cuff and no pockets on pant legs (uniform vendor style)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any shorts other than uniform shorts • Spandex-type shorts • Rolled up pant leg <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sweatshorts • running/exercise shorts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • board shorts
PANTS/SLACKS	<p>Solid navy blue dress pants with optional elastic back; They may be twill zip front or corduroy zip front.</p> <p>Pants must fit to the waist and not hang low.</p> <p>Must be dark blue</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% cotton or denim pants • Pants with contrasting, stitching, metal studs, or rivets • Dockers brand or any brand that fades from dark navy
BELTS	<p>Solid navy, black, or dark brown with a small buckle must be worn with all pants and shorts in grades 3-8</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any color other than solid navy, black, or dark brown <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cinch belts • Large, decorative buckles
SHOES	<p>Only white, black or navy blue athletic shoes worn with socks; laces must be securely tied</p> <p>Any color gym shoe may be worn on PE days ONLY</p> <p>Navy, black, or dark brown dress shoes are an option</p> <p>Laces must be securely tied.</p> <p>Shoes are always worn with socks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slippers, flip-flops, jellies, croc shoes, sandals, platforms, open-toed, backless shoes • Hiking boots, combat boots, dress boots, cleats, or steel-toed shoes/boots • Athletic shoes with sparkle/ lights/glitter or with colored laces/wheels • Snow boots when indoors

	Snow boots are only worn outside	
SOCKS	Solid navy blue, black, or white socks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other colors or anything not a solid color

UNIFORM DRESS CODE FOR GIRLS

DRESS	CODE	UNACCEPTABLE
BLOUSES & SHIRTS	<p>White tailored blouse (no frills) with short or long-sleeves and peter pan or open collar or white polo shirt</p> <p>Shirts must be tucked in for Grades 3-8</p> <p>Undergarments are solid white</p> <p>Spirit Wear polo shirts with school logo are permitted. They may be white, gray, or green.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lace or scalloped collars • Undergarments that are a color other than white and can be seen through the shirt or above pants • Spirit Wear t-shirts
SHORTS (optional for Aug, Sept, May, & June)	<p>Solid navy blue walking shorts with or without a cuff and no pockets on pant legs (uniform vendor style)</p> <p>The shorts are no shorter than fingertip length.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any shorts other than uniform shorts • Spandex-type shorts • Rolled up pant leg • Shorts that are shorter than fingertip length <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • micro shorts • biking shorts • running/exercise shorts • Board shorts
PANTS/ SLACKS	<p>Plaid or solid navy blue dress pants with flat or pleated front; They may be twill zip front, elastic back, or corduroy zip front.</p> <p>Pants must fit to the waist and not hang low.</p> <p>Must be dark blue</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% cotton or denim pants • Pants with contrasting, stitching, metal studs, or rivets • Dockers brand or any brand that fades from dark navy • Leggings of any kind • pants sitting below a students waistline/yoga pants
BELTS	Solid navy, black, or dark brown with a small buckle must be worn with all pants and shorts in grades 3-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any color other than solid navy, black, or dark brown <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cinch belts

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large, decorative buckles
JUMPER/ SKIRT	<p>The jumper and skirt are navy and green plaid. They may not be shorter than 2 inches above the knee.</p> <p>Tights (white, navy, black, neutral colors)</p> <p>Solid black leggings underneath skirt during winter months</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jumper or skirt not in St. Thomas uniform plaid design • Patterned leggings or logos • Patterned or colored tights • Shiny exercise leggings
SHOES	<p>Low top solid black or low top solid white athletic shoe with black or white laces; Navy, black, or dark brown dress shoes are an option</p> <p>Any color gym shoe may be worn on PE days ONLY</p> <p>Laces must be securely tied. Shoes are always worn with socks</p> <p>Snow boots are only worn outside</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slippers, flip-flops, jellies, croc shoes, sandals, platforms, open-toed, backless shoes • Hiking boots, combat boots, dress boots, cleats, or steel-toed shoes/boots <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Athletic shoes sparkle/glitter, lights, or with colored laces/wheels • Snow boots when indoors • Dress shoes with a heel taller than 1 inch
SOCKS	<p>Solid navy blue, black, or white tights, leggings, knee socks, or ankle socks that extend above the shoe</p> <p>Tights and anklets worn together must be the same color.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other colors or anything not a solid color • Anklet frills or other colors on socks

PURCHASE OF SCHOOL UNIFORMS

There are three resources for ordering school uniforms or gym uniforms. They include

- **Schoolbelles** 79th & Harlem at the Bridgeview Court Plaza, Bridgeview, IL 60455; 708-598-8008.
OR
- **MartiNelli's** 3517 W. 95th Street, Evergreen Park, IL 60805; 708-425-6287.
OR
- Purchase **gently used uniforms from the school supply closet** at \$5 per item,. Gently-used school uniforms are available for sale throughout the year.
- **SPECIAL NON-UNIFORM DAYS:** School Spirit Days, *NU Card* Days, Dress Up Days

SCHOOL SPIRIT DAYS

School Spirit Days are held on a designated day. These days are a special privilege for everyone at school. On School Spirit Days, the students may choose to wear either Spirit Wear or the designated school uniform. The following chart outlines the parameters of the non-uniform day.

SCHOOL SPIRIT DAY	SPIRIT WEAR	ALTERNATIVES	UNACCEPTABLE
Shirt	Official STA Spirit Wear T-shirts, gym T-shirts, STA sweatshirts.	Solid, plain green tee shirts.	Sweatshirts or Tee-shirts with a design, sports insignia, or other graphics or logos, torn or fringed.
Pants/slacks	Official STA gym sweatpants, Spirit Wear sweats, or jeans that are either blue, black, or gray with no rips in them	School pants.	Sweatpants or warm-up pants/yoga pants with sports logos. Torn oversized or low-cut jeans, jeans w/holes, School Sports Uniforms. Any other color jeans.
Shorts	Official STA gym shorts	School shorts.	Jeans shorts or any other style. School Sports Uniforms

CONSEQUENCES FOR NONCOMPLIANCE ON SCHOOL SPIRIT DAYS

Students who do not wear the school uniform or school spirit wear on Spirit Day will call home to get the acceptable clothing. If there is no opportunity for the correct clothes to be brought to school, students will be provided with spare STA clothes to wear for the day if available. It is up to the administration's discretion if the student loses the next School Spirit Day privilege. Students may wear school uniforms on School Spirit Days as an option.

If an article of clothing is deemed inappropriate by the administration, the student will be asked to call home for a change in clothing or for their school uniform and will receive a uniform violation. Students unable to reach a parent may be asked to put on a school uniform from the extra uniform closet instead of continuing to wear the article of clothing that was deemed inappropriate if available. Repeated noncompliance will be noted on the student's report card and the student will receive a \$25.00 fine.

NU Card DAYS

For special occasions or as a reward, the principal may declare a NU Card Day or *Dress Up Day*. NU Card. stands for **Non Uniform Card**. Students may come to school out of uniform on this day. Their clothing must be appropriate for a Catholic School—**modest and properly worn**.

Students will be given a NU Card on their birthday to use for the future. All summer birthdays will be given their NU Card on the first 2nd Friday of the school year (students should make requests to teachers). All birthdays taking place during an extended holiday break (Easter, Thanksgiving, etc.) will be given to students before or after the break.

In order to take advantage of this special permission, the student must submit a school issued NU Card signed by the principal or assistant principal. NU Cards may not be used on days with Mass. The privilege of using a NU Card can be used on all other days, unless specifically stated otherwise by the principal. Students may use NU Cards on gym days; however they must still participate in all of the gym activities

NU CARD Day clothing is never permitted on a School Spirit Day or on a field trip day.

NU CARDS received in the current year expire at the end of the year they were issued NU CARD. cards cannot be transferred to another student.

NON UNIFORM CARD (NU Card)	ACCEPTABLE	ALTERNATIVES	UNACCEPTABLE
Shirt	Non-uniform shirts/tops or Official STA Spirit Wear T-shirts or sweatshirts. Clothing must be neat and modest.	Shirts or sweatshirts with religious symbols, sports names, vacation areas, and clothing brand names.	Sweatshirts or t-shirts with smoking, alcohol or beer ads, derogatory remarks, or gang symbols/names. Shirts that are low-cut, tight, mesh, cut-off. Graphic Tees, transparent tops
Pants/slacks	Jeans or slacks, capri pants, official STA Spirit Wear sweatpants. Clothing must be neat and modest.	School pants or dress pants. Girls may wear modest skirts or dresses.	Jeans that are torn, have holes too tight, oversized or low-cut; skirts that are shorter than 2 inches above the knee. Leggings
Shorts	STA school shorts may be worn in August through September and May to June. Clothing must be neat and modest.		Jeans shorts, or any other style shorts than the uniform shorts are unacceptable.
Miscellaneous	Nail polish is acceptable for girls following the regular guidelines.		Makeup is <u>Unacceptable.</u>

CONSEQUENCES FOR NONCOMPLIANCE ON NU Card DAYS

Students who do not wear the correct clothing for their NU Card Day will call home to get the acceptable clothing. If there is no opportunity for the correct clothes to be brought to school, students will be provided with spare STA clothes to wear for the day. It is up to the principal and assistant principal's discretion if the student loses the next School Spirit Day privilege. If an alternative school uniform is available in the used Uniform closet, this will be worn as an alternative.

If an article of clothing is deemed inappropriate by the principal, the student will be asked to call home for a change in clothing or for their school uniform and will receive a uniform violation. Students unable to reach a parent may be asked to put on a school uniform from the extra uniform closet instead of continuing to wear the article of clothing that was deemed inappropriate. Repeated noncompliance will be noted on the student's report card. Administrators can suspend NU CARD use for a period of time.

DRESS UP DAYS

A Dress Up Day is optional (students must follow all clothing rules) and students may choose to wear a school uniform instead of dress up clothes that are best described as not casual—more like a special event. On *Dress-Up Days*, no special card is required as it is for NU CARDS.

APPENDIX E

ASBESTOS INFORMATION LETTER

ST THOMAS THE APOSTLE SCHOOL

DATE: **Fall 2023**
TO: Parents, Teachers and all other School Employees
FROM: **Kenneth Koll**, Principal
RE: Notification Letter Concerning Asbestos Content & Management Plan for our School

In 1986, Congress passed the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act. (AHERA). That law requires all schools, kindergarten through twelfth grade, to be inspected and identify any asbestos-containing building materials. The law further requires the development of a Management Plan, based upon the findings of the inspection, which outlines our intent in controlling the potential for exposure to asbestos fibers in our schools.

In the past, asbestos was used extensively in building materials because of its insulating and fire retarding capabilities. Virtually any building built before the late 1970's contains at least some asbestos in pipe insulation and structural fireproofing. We too have buildings that contain asbestos material. The primary concerns arise when these materials begin to deteriorate or become damaged.

Our school has been regularly inspected and some asbestos containing materials were identified in our building but they are encapsulated and maintained. The materials are distributed in various locations and include floor tile, pipe insulation and mechanical areas not readily accessible to building occupants or students.

Our school's Inspection Report and Management Plan outlines in detail the methods used to maintain the materials in a safe manner. In addition, as required by law, appropriate school staff members have been trained to administer this program.

A copy of the inspection report and the management plan is on file at our school office for review if you so desire.

Sincerely,

Kenneth Koll

Principal

APPENDIX F

PARENT/GUARDIAN VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS

Listed below are the specific instructions to fulfill requirements to be a Volunteer at the school and parish, as directed by the Archdiocesan Office of the Protection of Children and Youth. Unless a person has completed the entire application, they cannot volunteer at Saint Thomas, and attendance of Virtus training is necessary within the first two months of volunteering.

- **Protecting God's Children Training and Continued education**
- **The Criminal Background check must be completed**
- **The CANTS 689 Form must be submitted on a yearly basis.**
- **Mandated Reporter Training must be completed every 3 years**
- **The remaining requirements are done as needed for compliance purposes.**

Go to www.virtusonline.org.

VIRTUS training is a requirement that must be fulfilled

- You must register online to attend a workshop at www.virtusonline.org. You can read more about this requirement under the Protecting Children link at www.archchicago.org
- VIRTUS training must be completed before volunteering and Monthly VIRTUS online readings are required and reported to the school.
- VIRTUS Training Workshops are offered at many locations within the Archdiocese and online as you will see on their website. You can register at any one of them - whichever location, date, and time suits your schedule better. **Note:** If you have attended VIRTUS training in another diocese or at a different school, please call 888-847-8870 to ask that your VIRTUS registration be transferred to the Archdiocese of Chicago and mention your current school. Please give a copy of your VIRTUS Certificate to the School Office. You must also add St. Thomas the Apostle School to your current Virtus account as a location. *If you have any problems, Please contact the School Office – 773-667-1142*

APPENDIX G

ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE SCHOOL FUNDRAISING POLICY

St. Thomas the Apostle School is grateful to have the support of current families, alumni, parishioners, and friends who want our students to have the best educational program possible. The Advancement team at St. Thomas the Apostle School is committed to making sure that our school gets the resources it needs most. In order to run the most efficient Advancement program possible, we ask that you please contact the Director of Advancement, regarding any efforts connected to fundraising for St. Thomas the Apostle School.

- St. Thomas the Apostle School welcomes expressions of interest and financial support, solicited or unsolicited, regardless of size or form, from any individual, family, business, corporation, foundation or similar source.
- The Director of Advancement and the Principal are available to meet with any prospective donor(s) and their financial advisors, without obligation, to discuss areas of interest, the plans of St. Thomas the Apostle School, types of gift commitments, options for payment, etc. so as to provide every possible assistance to a prospective donor.
- Although representatives of St. Thomas the Apostle School will provide all appropriate assistance, the ultimate responsibility regarding asset evaluations, tax deductibility, and/or similar federal, state and/or local legal compliance rests with the donor(s).
- No volunteer or member of the faculty and staff acting in the name of St. Thomas the Apostle School will contact a prospective donor or solicit a gift or service without the expressed permission of the Director of Advancement and Principal.
- The Director of Advancement and the Principal will meet regularly to discuss solicitation and stewardship plans for major donors.
- Group solicitations require the approval of the Director of Advancement.
- Requests for mailing lists to alumni, parents or other donors require the approval of the Director of Advancement.
- All special events, outside of the normal schedule of school events, which raise funds for the benefit of St. Thomas the Apostle School require prior approval of the Director of Advancement.
- Solicited gifts to St. Thomas the Apostle School may take the form of one, or a combination, of the following:
 - Cash
 - Checks made payable to: “St. Thomas the Apostle School”
 - Matching gifts

- Monthly and multi-year pledges
- Marketable securities
- Closely held stock and non-marketable securities
- Real Estate and other Tangible Personal Property
- Paid-in-full insurance policies with cash values
- Corporate Gifts
- Gifts-in-kind
- Gifts of Services
- Deferred or planned gifts including:
 - Trusts
 - Annuities
 - Insurance policies
 - Gifts of residence, with or without a retained life interest
 - Charitable remainder unitrust
 - Charitable remainder annuity trust
 - Bequests
- Gifts will be accepted by St. Thomas the Apostle School, provided they are considered consistent with St. Thomas the Apostle School's mission, goals, and objectives. All proposed gifts, gifts-in-kind (equipment, art objects, real estate, etc.) and restricted gifts will be reviewed by the Director of Advancement and the Principal.
 - A gift may be deemed unacceptable if it:
 - Is not conducive to the best interest of St. Thomas the Apostle School
 - Is in contravention of applicable Federal or State laws or school policies
 - Is clearly a commercial endeavor for the sole benefit of the donor
 - Presents an unreasonable or unacceptable degree of risk due to environmental or health/safety issues
 - Is hampered by restrictions to the extent that usefulness and desirability are affected
 - Would obligate St. Thomas the Apostle School to undertake responsibilities, financial or otherwise, which it feels are inappropriate or onerous
 - St. Thomas the Apostle School reserves the right to refuse such gifts or to counsel the donor to remove or modify the restrictions or terms and conditions of the gift.
- The Principal, the Director of Advancement or their designees may accept gifts on behalf of St. Thomas the Apostle School. Formal recognition of a received gift is completed with the presentation of a receipt or formal acknowledgement.

