



# St. Thomas More Catholic School

## Family Handbook 2023-2024

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

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

## **Preface**

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

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

## **School Mission Statement**

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

## **Parish Mission Statement**

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

## **School Accreditation**

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

# Admissions

## Admissions Policy

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Age and Registration Requirements**

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

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

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

### **Probationary Period of Admission**

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



# Finances

## Tuition Rates and Fees

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

## Tuition Assistance

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

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

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

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



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

### **Delinquent Accounts**

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

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

## **School Hours & Attendance**

### **Office Hours**

7:15am-3:15pm

### **Instructional Hours**

7:50 am-2:45 pm

### **Attendance**

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

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

\*\*\*Students in grades K to 8<sup>th</sup> are expected to arrive each morning between 7:30am and 7:50am to be ready for Prayer and announcements. Students who arrive at school after Prayer has begun will be counted as tardy. Parents must accompany their child(ren) to the office to sign them in if they arrive after 8:00 am.

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

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

\*\*\*When students leave during school hours, parents must provide written notification to the classroom teacher. It should state when the child will be picked up and the reason for their release. They will be called to the school office upon the arrival of their parents. Parents must sign out their child/ren before leaving. When returning to the school before regular dismissal, parents must accompany their child/ren back into school. Parents are asked to consult the school calendar before scheduling appointments during school hours. Students will not be allowed to be signed out during the last 25 minutes of school unless there is an emergency.

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

### **Arrival Procedure**

\*\*\*Children may be dropped off at 7:30 in the morning. Teachers and the Safety Patrol are on duty at that time. Cars may pull up slowly to the sidewalk in front of the preschool, elementary, and middle school buildings. Those on duty will help students out of the car and make sure they get safely into their perspective buildings . **Please do not park in front of the school buildings at arrival.** At no time should a student be dropped off in such a way that they must cross traffic or parking lots. Students should be seated on the right (passenger) side of the vehicles, and prepared to exit with their belongings.

### **Dismissal Procedures**

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

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

### **Withdrawal**

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

## **Student Life**

### **Curriculum**

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

worship, prayer, and service. Religion standards are provided through the Diocesan Office of Catholic Schools.

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

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

STM Catholic School is committed to ensuring that all admitted students succeed. If a learning difference is identified, requiring specialized instruction, we can provide remedial resources for most students.

Our academic curriculum is enhanced by an offering of co-curricular learning opportunities including Physical Education, Art, Music, Media, PLTW (Project Lead The Way), Technology and Spanish.

### **Resource and Guidance**

The Diocese of Raleigh Catholic Schools acknowledge that there are students who require special services to meet their full human potential. St. Thomas More Catholic School is committed to all students succeeding to the best of their abilities. If a student has a diagnosed special need (documented by licensed medical personnel), accommodations may be offered that can be reasonably made within the normal general education classes and when the school has the resources (academic/staff) available to accommodate the students' needs. However, modifications to academic requirements or alterations in the general course of studies will not be made.

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

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

Resource teachers are assigned to grades PreK-5 and 6-8. They are a valuable resource to both parents and students as academic needs are identified through evaluation.

**Christine Denny** (grades Pre-K -5<sup>th</sup>) [cdenny@stmcsnc.org](mailto:cdenny@stmcsnc.org)

**Wendy Wood** (grades 6<sup>th</sup> -8<sup>th</sup>) [wwood@stmcsnc.org](mailto:wwood@stmcsnc.org)

Our school counselor is also available to assist students in the development of healthy self-esteem, problem solving, peer relations, and other matters. Teachers may refer students to the counselor and students and/or parents may request an appointment with the school counselor. Parents are notified if the situation warrants.

**Colleen O'Brien** (counselor) [cobrien@stmcsnc.org](mailto:cobrien@stmcsnc.org)

### **After School Care** <https://www.stmcsnc.org/aftercare>

After School care is available on school days (Monday through Friday) from 2:45 p.m. until 5:45 pm for all enrolled STM students PreK 3 to 8th grade. Early dismissal dates are not included. Check our school calendar.

***\$75 REGISTRATION FEE - will be billed with your first month AFTERCARE TUITION payment via FACTS!***

### **Aftercare** - *Hours of operation: Monday – Friday, 2:45pm – 5:45pm*

#### **OPTIONS and FEES -**

- **Option 1 - 5 Days: first child \$340 - second child \$245 - third child \$185**
- **Option 2 - 3 Days: first child \$295 - second child \$205 - third child \$155**
- **Option 3 - Occasional/Per Day: first child \$40 - second child \$30 - third child \$25**

Children may be enrolled using the standard procedures and pricing as Aftercare available for Lower and Middle School Students at the Lower School building. The options for preschool Aftercare are: occasional, 3 days per week, and 5 days per week. The aftercare program follows the same policy as the regular school for holidays and snow days. We provide nutritious snacks and beverages each day, but if your child needs more “fuel,” please send in extra snacks.

For your child's safety, please call or email your child's teacher **and** the aftercare director if there are any changes regarding your child's pickup or attendance in our aftercare program. Aftercare is not provided on 11:30 dismissal days. The director will email families two weeks prior to remind families. Please feel free to contact the director

with any questions or concerns.

**Brianna Farrar** (Aftercare Director) [bfarrar@stmcsnc.org](mailto:bfarrar@stmcsnc.org)

### **Media Center**

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

### **Chrome Books**

See ChromeBook guidelines for responsibilities and care.

### **Textbooks**

Students are responsible for the textbooks and workbooks issued to them. They are expected to protect their books and keep them clean. Books that are lost or damaged must be paid for at full replacement cost.

### **Sports Program**

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

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

### **Creative Arts Programs**

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

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

### **School Masses**

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

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

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

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

### **Altar-Serving**

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

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

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

### **Cafeteria and Food Allergy Considerations**

Hot lunch is available each day ( <https://www.myhotlunchbox.com/>). Prices and updated menus are on the website. A letter is sent home each year outlining the process to order lunch. This can also be found on our school website in the [Parents & Students Tab](#).

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

Forgotten lunches should be brought to the kitchen in the dining hall. Be sure all items are labeled with your child's name and grade level. Fast food, candy, and soda are not



to be brought in for lunch. If a student does not have lunch, the school will provide a small sandwich, bag of chips, and an applesauce for them. The cost for this will be \$5, which will be billed via the family's FACTS account. An email confirmation will be sent to the family.

### **Field Trips and Chaperones**

Field trips are a privilege. They are educational in nature and an extension of the curriculum and regular classroom experience. All school rules apply when students are on field trips. All applicable fees must be paid and parent signatures are required on a field trip permission form for students to participate. The field trip form indicates an acknowledgement by parents of the nature of the trip and the time supervision of the students will end. All appropriate documentation must be on file. Exemplary conduct is expected on all field trips. This is an opportunity for students to give witness to the values of the Saint Thomas More Catholic School Community.

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

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

### **Student Council**

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

### **Yearbook**

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

### **Lockers**

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

### **Lost and Found**

All personal and clothing items should be labeled with the student's name. Found items that are labeled will be returned to the student. Items found that are not labeled will be placed in the Lost and Found bin, which is in the cafeteria in the elementary building, and in the stairwell across from the office in the middle school. Periodically, the contents of the Lost and Found will be donated to STM's Caring and Sharing Center.

### **Birthdays**

Parents wishing to send in a treat for their child's birthday are asked to send in something simple and preferably healthy. The treat will be shared with the class at a time that works best for the teacher's instructional day.

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

### **Invitations to Parties**

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

## **Grading and Academic Policies**

### **Philosophy**

We believe...

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

### **Purpose of Assessment**

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

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

### **Types of Assessments**

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

- **Formative:** Whenever a student learns new material, he or she needs time to practice and gain familiarity with the material. It is expected that the student will make mistakes during this learning process. Any work done during this learning period is considered formative. The purpose of a formative assessment is not to judge a student's final competency on a topic or unit, but to evaluate where he or she is in the learning process, diagnose any problems, and motivate and help the student learn the material. Formative assessments also inform the teacher of learning areas that may need reinforcement or re-teaching.
- **Summative:** After a student has had sufficient instruction and practice on a topic, including assessments of a formative nature, it is then reasonable to judge mastery of understanding, content, or skills. The purpose of a summative assessment is to evaluate how well a student knows and understands the material after sufficient engagement and practice with it.

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

thinking, and reworking, before the final summative rendition. Homework is mainly formative in nature as students get familiar with or reinforce what was learned in the classroom.

### **Purpose of Grades**

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

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

### **Grade Composition**

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

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

### **Reporting Grades**

#### **Preschool:**

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

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

**Grades K – 8:** Can be viewed online via the FACTS portal.

## **Grading Codes**

### **Kindergarten to Grade 2:**

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

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

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

Not Assessed (NA)- Instruction on standards may have been provided, however summative assessments have not yet been given.

### **Grades 3 to 8:**

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

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

0	F	<b>NO EVIDENCE:</b> The student is unable to provide any evidence of addressing the target standards or expectations.	50 - 59
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### **Reporting Behavior and Conduct (Grades 3-8)**

The principles of respect and responsibility are the focus for conduct behaviors. The following are the indicators of respect and responsibility.

#### **Respect**

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

#### **Responsibility**

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

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

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

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

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

**3:** Consistently meets the expectations.

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

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

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

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

### **Parent-Teacher Conferences**

Parents are encouraged to be involved in their child's education and to establish communication with their child's teachers. Your child's teacher will request conferences as needed, throughout the school year. Conference requests may be made by parents via email or a note to the teacher sent with their child. The teacher will contact the parent within 24 hours to set a meeting time.

### **Assessments and Testing**

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

**CC1 Math Test:** NC State-mandated End-of-Course exams will be taken at the end of the year for 8th grade students in the high school level math course, Common Core I. This affords our students the records necessary for use in their math placement in high school. Cardinal Gibbons Catholic High School does not require these scores to place students in the next, natural math level in their freshman year.



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

### **School Records**

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

### **Academic Achievements and Awards**

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

- Principal's List - This consists of those students who have earned A's in all subjects and 3's or 4's in special classes, conduct, and electives.
- Honor Roll - This consists of those students who have earned A's and B's in all subjects.

### **Academic Probation**

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

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

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

Our goal at Saint Thomas More Catholic School is to instill success and confidence as students master academic skills. In the primary grades, the student must master the

necessary Language Arts and Math skills to be promoted. The decision to promote or retain a student is made by the principal in consultation with the student's teachers and parents.

The core subjects are Religion, Math, Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies. A student enrolled in a Catholic school who fails one core subject must participate in a remedial program. After these criteria have been met, further assessment may be administered by the school Principal to ensure proper placement.

Failure of two core subjects will result in remediation or retention at the discretion of the principal.

Failure of three or more core subjects will result in retention.

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

- In an individual program facilitated by a teacher who is certified in the subject area that the student needs for a predetermined number of contact hours. Be aware, neither the student's current teacher, nor any teacher who presumably will be the subject area teacher in the future, may tutor the student
- In a remediation program which has been approved by the principal

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

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

The following documentation guidelines will be followed meeting remediation guidelines:

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

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

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

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

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

Formative assignments that have been made up will be accepted up until the summative is given. At that time, a 50% will be given for each formative assignment missing prior to the summative test.

## **Code of Conduct**

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

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

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

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

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

### **Student Expectations**

**Respect for Others:** Students are required to show respect towards faculty, staff, administration, and classmates always. Behavior that disrupts classroom instruction, such as disrespect, excessive talking, not following teacher directions, making noises, or distracting other students is cause for disciplinary action.

Poor attitudes, poor behavior, or any conduct detrimental to the reputation of the school, whether inside or outside the school, may result in detention, suspension, or expulsion.

**Respect for Property:** Students are expected to respect school property, both inside and outside the school building. Students are expected to report any damage to school grounds, such as bathrooms and locker rooms, or items assigned for their personal use, such as laptops/iPads, textbooks, lockers, and desks, to the teacher immediately. Students who do not report damage immediately could be held responsible for covering the cost of repairing or replacing the damaged item.

### **Illegal and Harmful Objects**

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

### **Social Media**

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

### **Bullying and Cyberbullying**

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

Every student is expected to respect the feelings of others. Language or behavior that is hurtful, threatening, or unkind will not be tolerated. Tripping, pushing, shoving, spitting, swearing, or making rude noises or gestures, are cause for disciplinary action. Students are to report disrespectful behavior to a teacher or administrator immediately. If inappropriate behavior continues after disciplinary action has been taken, students

may be asked to withdraw from the school, or be expelled. Information about our Anti-Bullying Program is found within the Discipline Policy below.

### **Cell Phones**

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

### **Personal Items**

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

### **Student Safety**

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

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

Chewing gum is not permitted.

## **Discipline Policy**

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

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

### **Early Childhood & Primary Discipline Policy and Procedures (Grades PK-2):**

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

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

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

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

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

### **Infractions and Consequences**

#### **An Infraction is:**

- A behavior that warrants a consequence whether verbal or written.
- Organized by their severity into Levels 1-3 as seen below.
- Trackable on FACTS.

Consequences will vary based on level and severity of the infraction.

**Level 1 Infractions**

- Level 1 infractions are cumulative and rollover from quarter to quarter.
- Three Level 1 infractions equal a detention.

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

**Level 2 Infractions**

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

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

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Level 3 Infractions</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">-Administration will be contacted when a Level 3 infraction occurs.          -Administration will meet with the student.          -Level 3 infractions equal an automatic in-school suspension.          -Depending on the severity of the behavior, the principal may determine that an out-of-school suspension, or even expulsion, may be necessary.</p>	
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L3: Bullying *see definition	Persistent bullying behavior, Cyber-bullying
L3: Cheating	Cheating, plagiarism
L3: Fighting	Physical Altercation or Fight
L3: Forgery	Forgery
L3: Harassment	Harassment of student, faculty or staff
L3: Illegal Activities	Possession of Drugs, Alcohol, Tobacco, Weapons
L3: Property Destruction	Destruction of School property or property of others
L3: Stealing	Stealing
L3: Technology: Inappropriate Websites	Visiting Inappropriate and/or offensive websites
L3: Aggressive Physical Behavior	Intentional tripping, bullying, etc...

### **Reporting Infractions**

- Students in Grades 3-5 will receive a written disciplinary referral for each Level 1 Infraction.
- Students in Middle School will track their Infractions using FACTS (see Middle School Discipline Policy Appendix).

- Three Level 1 Infractions equals a detention.

### **Detention**

- A Detention is given after three Level 1 infractions or immediately after a Level 2 infraction.
- Parents will also be notified by email.
- Detentions for Middle School will be held during lunch/recess
- Detentions for Lower School will be held during lunch
- Detentions will be proctored by a teacher or the counselor.
- Students will be expected to complete a Disciplinary Essay or Assignment during the detention period.
- Students will not be permitted to participate in school sponsored extracurricular activities on days that they serve detentions.
- After multiple detentions, a plan will be developed by teachers and administrators. (See intervention plan protocol.)

### **Intervention Plan**

- After three Detentions or one Level 3 Infraction, an Intervention Plan will be created and signed by parent/guardian, school administration, teacher, guidance counselor, and appropriate third-party resources, as needed.
- Intervention Plans, when necessary, can be carried over from year to year.

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

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

### **Administrative Probation**

- After a student has received five detentions, they will be put on Administrative Probation.
- A mandatory conference will be called with parent/guardian, school administration, guidance counselor, and appropriate third-party resources, as needed.

- Once a student is put on Administrative Probation, another infraction, of any level, as determined by Administration, may result in immediate expulsion.

### **Expulsion**

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

### **Parent Integrity**

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

### **Anti-Bullying Program and Policy**



## **Not in God's House**

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

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

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

#### **Report**

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

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

#### **Investigate**

Once a victim or upstander has reported bullying behavior to you, begin to investigate. Take notes (use attached reporting form) on when and where it happened, what actions

occurred, who else witnessed this. Interview anyone involved as a bully, victim or witness/bystander. Ensure that interviews are private and individual, allowing students to speak freely, honestly and without fear of repercussion.

### **Separate to Prevent**

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

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

### **Reflect and Apologize**

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

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

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

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

### **Check Back In**


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

### **Repeated Bullying Behavior**

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

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

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

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

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

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

- **Physical bullying:** hitting, tripping, pinching, pushing or damaging property
- **Verbal bullying:** name-calling, insults, teasing, intimidation, homophobic or racist remarks, verbal abuse
- **Social bullying:** lying/spreading rumors, physical gestures, jokes that embarrass or humiliate, mimicking unkindly, encouraging others to social exclude, damaging someone's reputation or acceptance
- **Cyberbullying:** using digital technology to send abusive or hurtful texts, emails or posts to social media, including images or videos; excluding others online, spreading gossip or rumors, imitating others online or using their login

- **Active bystander:** someone who witnesses an act of bullying and attempts to perpetuate it (spreads the rumor, forwards the electronic communication to others, yells “fight, fight” ...)
- **Passive bystander:** someone who witnesses an act of bullying and does not step in to stop it and/or let an adult know
- **Upstander:** someone who witnesses an act of bullying and steps in to stop it and/or lets an adult know

### **Harassment and Discrimination**

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

### **Academic Dishonesty**

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

## **Communication**

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

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

**STM School Website** ([www.stmcsnc.org](http://www.stmcsnc.org)): This website is updated regularly to help keep you informed of school and classroom news. This site includes our links to the FACTS Parent Portal, Facebook, and Twitter..

### **Parent Notification System**

The Parent Notification System is an instant alert notification system used to notify parents of school closings, emergencies, and important meetings via text, voice

message, and e-mail. This service is intended to serve as a safety feature, as well as to keep parents informed. Parents must check that their contact information in FACTS is accurate to ensure the effectiveness of this system.

### **Emergency Contact Information**

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

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

### **School Closing and Delays**

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

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

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

### **Parent-Teacher Conferences**

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

### **Appointments with the Principal**

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

When parents have questions or concerns regarding a classroom situation, the school policy is to discuss the situation with the classroom teacher prior to contacting administration. This often brings clarity or a better understanding to an existing problem or concern. The principal also understands that there are topics that need to be

addressed directly with him first. After meeting with the school administration, if there is no resolution to parent concerns, parents may contact the pastor.

## Dress Code

### Uniforms

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

Students should pay attention to the proper appearance of the uniform, ensuring that basic standards are always met. For example, shirts should always be tucked in, unless wearing a PE or banded shirt, and uniform pants worn at the waistline. Socks should be solid white. Brown/black belts should be worn with all pants or shorts with belt loops, unless covered by a banded shirt.

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

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

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



## Middle School Mass Uniform (Grades 6-8)

**Male:** Required uniform for Mass day/dress-up day



**Female:** Required uniform for Mass day/dress-up day



### General Uniform Policies

- Students in grades 6-8 must wear the Mass Uniform (see above photo) on Fridays and all days we attend mass. The blazer/sweater must be worn to Mass from October through April. Students may remove the blazer/sweater/tie following the liturgy.
- Non-banded shirts must be tucked in at all times. Gym uniform shirts do NOT need to be tucked in.
- Student Athletes may wear their team uniform to school on game days; if pieces of the uniform are not appropriate for the learning day, the Athletic Director will provide information about modifications. **If student athletes do not adhere to rules, they lose privilege.**
- Black or brown belts should be worn with all pants or shorts with belt loops, unless banded shirts are being worn.
- Personal jackets and coats (non-Lands' End) may be worn at arrival, recess, and dismissal only. Lands' End sweaters/ fleeces, and PE uniform sweatshirts may be worn throughout the day in class.

- Accessories, cosmetics, and hair styles that distract from the educational environment, pose a safety concern for the student or others, or are deemed inappropriate by administration are prohibited.
- Hats and hoodies are not to be worn in the buildings, unless permitted by a special occasion.
- Hair will be neat and well groomed and kept out of the eyes.
- All clothing should be labeled with the child's name.
- All black or all brown, closed-toed shoes, any type, must be worn with the daily uniform. Athletic shoes must be worn on PE day. These can be any type and color athletic shoe, with non-marking soles. Shoes with laces are to have the laces tied.
- Students may not wear colored shirts or shirts with logos under their uniform.
- Brownie/Scout uniforms may be worn on meeting days.

### **Uniform Closet**

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

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

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

- Leggings/spandex are not considered pants and should be worn with a dress/tunic for grades 6-8.
- No clothing with inappropriate slogans or images
- No halter tops, spaghetti straps, bare midriffs
- No pants with holes or tears in them

### **Spirit Shirts**

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

## **Volunteers**

### **Visitors and Volunteers**

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

Volunteers are the backbone of what we accomplish at our school. Your time and work are valued and truly make a difference for our students and faculty. We welcome

parents into our school and are happy to help connect families with volunteer opportunities, as well as encourage families to participate in fundraising and celebratory events all throughout the school year.

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

- Complete a Level C [Volunteer Form](#)
- Complete the Diocesan Safe Environment Training through a local Parish or school. To obtain a current listing of dates and time for upcoming training sessions please visit the Parish website. The training and background check must be updated every five years.
- Visit the classroom with prior teacher approval only
- Dress appropriately and modestly. Exercise clothing, spandex, short shorts, low cut shirts or dresses, and tight clothing should not be worn while volunteering.

## Health & Safety

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

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

### Illness

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

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

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

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

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

### **Medications**

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

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

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

### **Health Policies and Procedures**

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

## **Emergency Drills**

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

- **Fire Drills:** Students are taught where and how to exit the building in case of fire. For fire drills or fire emergencies, the fire alarm will signal to evacuate the building. Teachers regularly instruct students regarding specific procedures.
- **Inclement Weather Drills:** Students are taught the “duck and cover” procedure for hazardous weather drills and emergencies. For both drills and emergencies, students will be notified through the intercom system. Teachers regularly instruct students regarding specific procedures.
- **Lockdown Drills:** In some situations, it may be necessary to perform a school lockdown. Teachers regularly instruct students regarding specific procedures. Law enforcement recommends the following procedures, which STM performs during a school lock down: An alert will be broadcasted to initiate the lockdown. All interior and exterior doors will be locked. No one (including parents) will be permitted to enter or leave the buildings. The lockdown will continue until the school receives an “all clear” signal from emergency personnel

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

- **School Evacuations**

If Saint Thomas More Catholic School has to be evacuated, students will be walked to the UNC Administration Building or the St. Thomas More South Campus, depending on the location of the emergency. The fire department will determine when it is safe for students and staff to return to the building.

## **Technology Policy**

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

Saint Thomas More Catholic School provides technology for students in order to support learning and enhance instruction. Internet access is available to our students and allows them to utilize unique and diverse resources. Use of the internet is a

privilege, not a right. Students who misuse this privilege may be denied access to school technology and face disciplinary action.

It is the expectation that all students regardless of grade level, will treat all school devices including but not limited to Chromebooks, iPads, printers, SMART Boards, and Interactive Flat Panel Displays (IFPDs) with respect and care. While students have the privilege of using different technological devices, all devices are the property of STM School. Intentional abuse or neglect of devices can result in fees and/or disciplinary consequences.

Students will refrain from eating/drinking while using or near devices. Devices should be protected from extreme temperature changes. Students will use great care when interacting with screens. This includes not using excessive pressure and only using appropriate methods/tools when touching screens. Students will not attempt to change or modify any school devices and will always use devices both on and off campus in an appropriate school manner. Students and/or parents will not attempt to repair any device and will report any issues immediately to the administration and the IT Department. Any damage to a device, device covering and/or accessories should be reported immediately to the student's teacher, a member of the administration, and the IT Department. Theft of a school device should be reported to law enforcement by the student's parent/legal guardian and communicated to the administration and IT Department. Students and their parent/legal guardian are responsible for any fees accrued regarding damage caused by neglect, loss, and/or theft of any school devices and/or accessories.

COPPA puts special restrictions on software companies about the information they can collect about students under 13. Students under 13 cannot make their own accounts, teachers have to make the accounts for them. In making the accounts, teachers need to be aware of their responsibility under FERPA. Your review of this handbook is your acknowledgement that you are entrusting St. Thomas More Catholic School (STM) employees to act in loco parentis (in place of parents) as there may be software that is educational but requires parental consent. So as to not have to contact parents for consent whenever this may occur during the school year, your signature/agreement/acknowledgement, is giving permission for the duration of the school year and must be updated at the beginning of each school year and/or during enrollment/reenrollment.

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

