



St. Thomas More Catholic School

**2023-24
Parent/Student
Handbook**

St. Thomas More Catholic School
Policy and Information Booklet for the 2023-2024
School Year

St. Thomas More Catholic School began as a Catholic elementary school with Grades 1-5 on September 19, 1960. One new grade was added each year thereafter until the school reached up to eighth grade. Groundbreaking for the new wing, which includes a preschool, kindergarten, library, computer lab, art room, and faculty lounge took place on April 13, 1992. St. Thomas More Catholic School is recognized by the [Diocese of Rockford](#) and the [State of Illinois](#) as a fully accredited educational institution. The curriculum for students in PK-8 is arranged to contribute to the total development of the child spiritually, academically, socially, and physically with technology to enhance the teaching and learning for all ages.

St. Thomas More School Faculty is comprised of lay teachers who are very committed to Catholic education. All of our staff endeavors not only to teach Catholic doctrine and values, but to help the students live the Catholic message in their daily lives.

The faculty gives generously of themselves to provide the best quality education for each child. Education begins in the family; in partnership with the family, the school will help each child develop to his or her greatest potential.

As an equal opportunity employer, St. Thomas More Catholic School allows for no discrimination in employment. In keeping with this commitment and the requirements of Federal and State law, the Diocese of Rockford prohibits discrimination against employees and/or candidates for employment on the basis of age, race, sex, color, handicap or disability, national origin or status upon discharge from military service.

This booklet explains St. Thomas More School policies and the general operation of the school. St. Thomas More School abides by all Diocesan policies. Policy statements are necessarily general, and the administration reserves the right to make a specific application as circumstances arise. If at any time it becomes necessary to amend or revise any portion of this handbook you will be informed. We ask that you read this booklet carefully and keep it as a reference during the school year.

St. Thomas More Catholic School

Elgin, Illinois

Mission Statement

The mission of St. Thomas More Catholic School is to provide an academic environment which is centered around Christ and designed to promote the total development of the child, intellectually, spiritually, and civically. This is accomplished by the St. Thomas More School and parish community empowering each child with a Catholic curriculum which instills faith, promotes academic excellence, fosters creativity, welcomes change and diversity, integrates technology, and fosters a sensitivity to the needs of our local and worldwide communities, all while spreading the Gospel message through words and actions.

Vision

St. Thomas More Catholic School's vision is to develop the community's next generation in faith, knowledge, leadership, and service grounded in the Catholic faith while living the corporal and spiritual works of mercy.

Philosophy of St. Thomas More School

We believe that Catholic education begins with faith. Through educational ministry, St. Thomas More Catholic School works together with parents, who are the primary educators of their children, to assist students in the development of their spiritual, intellectual, moral, and physical gifts. Recognizing individual talents and abilities, we provide an educational program that allows children to develop to their fullest extent as whole and responsible Catholic individuals. Guided by the grace and power of the Holy Spirit, we seek to empower students with the values, knowledge, and skills required to thrive and positively contribute in today's Catholic Church and world.

Non-Discrimination Policy

St. Thomas More School admits students of any gender, race, color, religion, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students in this school. The school does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, color, religion, or national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational or employment policies, athletic or other school administered programs.

If an individual believes that he or she is a victim of unlawful discrimination by the School, the individual should report this to the Principal or Superintendent of the School. If the complaint is against the Principal or Superintendent, the individual may instead report the matter to the Superintendent of Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Rockford. All complaints of unlawful discrimination will be investigated and treated seriously. The report will be investigated, and the investigation may include a review of the documentation as well as interviewing the alleged victim, potential witnesses, and the alleged accused. Upon completion of the investigation, a determination as to the merits of the allegation of discrimination will be made. The individuals involved will be informed of the results of the investigation.

Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Rockford shall be in compliance with all relevant case law interpreting the Illinois School Code, including Plyer v. Doe.
(Amended May 2016)

Right to Amend

The school administration reserves the right to change this handbook as needed. Notice of any amendments or other changes to the policies in this handbook will be sent via email.

Hold Harmless Clause

Upon enrollment of their children at St. Thomas More School, parents and/or legal guardians agree that they shall defend, indemnify and hold harmless St. Thomas More School, [St. Thomas More Church](#), the [Catholic Diocese of Rockford](#), and its representatives from any and all claims, causes of action, demands, costs, damages including both direct and consequential damages, specifically including attorney's fees and costs, expert fees and cost and mediation and/or arbitration fees and costs incurred, arising in any way out of the actions of their student.

They further agree, at their own expense, to defend any suit or action brought against St. Thomas More, [St. Thomas More Church](#), the [Catholic Diocese of Rockford](#), and its representatives founded upon the claim of such damage to persons or property. This indemnity agreement applies to both active and passive negligence on the part of St. Thomas More School and its representatives to the fullest extent permissible under law. Choice of counsel remains solely that of St. Thomas More School.

St. Thomas More School
www.stmcentral.org
2023-2024

Administration

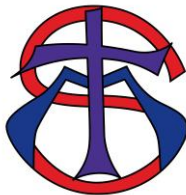
| | | |
|-----------|-------------------|--|
| Pastor | Fr. Ryan Browning | pastor@stthomasmorechurch.org |
| Principal | Mrs. Sonja Keane | skeane@stmelgin.org |

Teaching Staff

| | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|--|
| Preschool 3 & 4 | Mary Pradzinski | mpradzinski@stmelgin.org |
| Kindergarten | Sue Bilderback | sbilderback@stmelgin.org |
| Grade 1 | Molly Simmermon | msimmermon@stmelgin.org |
| Grade 2 | Valerie Ricotta | vricotta@stmelgin.org |
| Grade 3 | Linda Hansen | lhansen@stmelgin.org |
| Grade 4 | Lisa Gaston | lgaston@stmelgin.org |
| Grade 5 | Colleen Skiba | cskiba@stmelgin.org |
| Grade 6 | Erin Remes | eremes@stmelgin.org |
| Grade 7 | Theresa Tapley | ttapley@stmelgin.org |
| Grade 8 | Kimberly Turcotte | kturcotte@stmelgin.org |
| Music Instructor | Greg Comonal | gcomonal@stmelgin.org |
| PE Instructor | Karen Rizzo | krizzo@stmelgin.org |
| Tech Instructor | Amy Vassos | avassos@stmelgin.org |
| Art Instructor | Gaby Tessitore | gtessitore@stmelgin.org |
| Resource Instructor | Martie Skog | mskog@stmelgin.org |
| School Aide | Jennifer Krueger | jkrueger@stmelgin.org |
| Preschool Aide | Aurora Gutierrez | |
| Preschool Aide | Agata Koczwara | |

Support Staff

| | | |
|------------------|---------------|--|
| School Secretary | Kim Goto | kgoto@stmelgin.org |
| IT Director | Kristie Alvey | kalvey@stmelgin.org |
| Extended Care | Kim Goto | kgoto@stmelgin.org |



PTO Board

Sue Campbell – President
Liz Murillo – Vice President
Kim Goto – Treasurer
Evon Beck - Secretary

Athletic Director

Bob Lutzow

Admissions Policies

St. Thomas More School shall admit students of any race, color, gender, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. We shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, national and ethnic origin in administration of educational policies, admission policies, athletics and other school administered programs.

K – 8 Admission Policy

Class Size

Recommended max class size for Kindergarten through Eighth Grade will be 30 students. At the discretion of the Pastor and Principal, class sizes may be increased to accommodate special situations.

Admissions

A specific application period will be established by the principal and the day publicly announced. All prospective students must complete an application form. Application forms for new students may be obtained from the principal and/or the school office. All kindergarten students will be screened in the spring prior to admittance. If in the opinion of the principal and pastor, the applicant's character, personality, emotional stability, or scholastic record indicates that the applicant would require special training or counseling not currently available, the application may be denied.

Order of Acceptance

1. All students currently enrolled K – 8 will be re-admitted before any new applications will be considered.
2. Applicant K – 8 with older siblings having attended St. Thomas More.
3. Registered, contributing parishioners of St. Thomas More.
4. Consideration will be given to St. Thomas More parish members first, members of other Catholic parishes, and then to non-Catholic applicants.

Waiting lists are established for each grade. Parishioners have priority over non-parishioners. All new students' progress will be monitored for the first nine weeks. If in the opinion of the teacher and principal, the child is not ready or able to perform satisfactorily, he/she may be removed from the school. The Principal will resolve any conflicts or disputes on interpretation of this policy.

If a student has any special needs that would require specific interventions, counseling or other accommodations that would require special services not available at St. Thomas More Catholic School, admission may be denied at the discretion of the principal and/or the pastor.

Transfer students - Transfer students will be accepted after a six week trial period. Final approval will be the responsibility of the principal and/pastor.

Preschool Admission Policy

Class Size

Recommended size for the preschool class will be 20 students. Please note that enrollment and class size are subject to change based upon current need.

Age criteria

Child must be three or four years old on or before September 1st, must be completely toilet trained, and must meet the Early Childhood Development Center Guidelines.

Procedures & Guidelines

The Principal will establish a specific registration period, and this day will be publicly announced. All prospective students' parents must complete a registration form and meet with the Early Childhood Development Center teacher. If in the opinion of the teacher, principal and pastor, the applicant is not developmentally ready or if the character, personality, or emotional stability indicates that the applicant would require special training or counseling not currently available, the application may be denied.

Order of Acceptance

1. Priority for entering the four-year-old preschool will be registered, contributing parishioners.
2. Children of non-parishioner families.

Early Childhood Development Center students' progress will be monitored for the first nine weeks. If in the opinion of the teacher and Principal, the child is not ready or able to perform satisfactorily, he/she may be removed from the program. The Principal will resolve any conflicts or disputes on interpretation of this policy.

Extended Care

Before Care

St. Thomas More's Before Care program is open to all registered PK4 - 8th grade students.

Before Care is a convenient, safe place for students to go to before the school day. The program is operated from 6:30 AM – 7:30 AM before the school day.

The program rate is as follows: \$5.00 per child per morning.

All school rules apply. Before Care charges are NOT included on your tuition statement; families are billed separately.

After Care

St. Thomas More's After Care program is open to all registered PK4 - 8th grade students. After Care is a convenient, safe place for students to go to after school with their friends. The

program is operated from 2:30 PM – 6 PM after a full school day and 11:30 AM – 6 PM after a half day of school.

The program rates are as follows:

\$10.00 per hour for 1 child or \$25.00 per day *and*

\$18.00 per hour for 2 or more children in the same family or \$40.00 per day.

The hourly rate will apply until 4pm; after 4pm the daily rate will apply.

The late fee after 6 PM is \$10.00 for the first 10 minutes, and a \$1.00 per minute thereafter. If there is a chronic issue of a parent being late, the family will be asked to leave the program.

Families may register for a specific day(s) or use “as needed”. A light snack will be offered with allergies taken into consideration. All school rules apply. After Care charges are NOT included on your tuition statement; families are billed separately.

Arrival & Dismissal

Preschool and Kindergarten

Arrival: Students enter through Door 1 by the school office. There will be a separate drop off line for these parents and students.

Grades 1-8

Arrival: Students enter through Door 4 where they will be admitted beginning at 7:30 AM. They are to walk directly to their classroom. After 7:45 AM students must enter through Door 1 and check in at the school office for a tardy slip.

Dismissal: Parents are asked to park on the blacktop behind cones near the rectory or in the church parking lot for dismissal. All drivers are encouraged to exit onto St. Thomas More Drive instead of Highland Avenue.

Dismissal times: PK 2:30 PM; Kindergarten 2:35 PM; Grades 1-8 2:45 PM.

Please watch your speed in the parking lot during school hours from 7:30 AM – 3:00 PM and remain in line. Please do not pull around cars in front of you to exit.

*Parents, it is unlawful to use a **cell phone** while **driving** on the school / church property, (625 ILCS 5/12-610.2).

Attendance Policy

One of the keys to successful academic achievement is regular attendance at school. Even the absence of one or two days can have a surprisingly disruptive impact on progress. Therefore St. Thomas More requires daily attendance. Parents are urged to carefully evaluate any absence from school that is not necessitated by unavoidable circumstances. Parents are required to report absences by calling the school at (847) 742-3959 by 8:00 AM each day that a student will

be absent from school. Failure to call in attendance will result in a phone call by the school to the parent's home, cell and/or work phone. This does not take the place of the written absent note that is required upon the students return to school.

(Chronic) Absences/Tardiness

The first bell rings at 7:30 AM. Students are expected to be at their desks and ready for class at 7:45 AM. Students arriving after 7:45 AM will be marked tardy. If a K-8 student receives 4 tardy slips within a quarter, the parent will incur a \$5 charge to their FACTS Tuition account each time the child is tardy in that quarter. Only three tardies in a quarter are excused. Being on time for school is important to the student's education.

Chronic absences or tardiness can result in issuance of a detention and will be reported to the principal, and if necessary, to the Kane County Truancy Office.

Absences, excused & unexcused

Absences

Parents are asked to notify the school by phone before 8:00 AM each day the student is absent. If the school does not hear from the home, the secretary will call to ask about the absence. A **written note signed by the parent** explaining the absence is required upon the return of the student to school. A written note signed by a physician is required if the student has had a contagious disease, a serious injury, or has been absent 5 or more days. **Students who are absent from school or go home sick may NOT participate in or observe any school related activity that same evening including athletic practices & games, dances, and other activities.**

It is imperative that the school office has up-to-date emergency information. We must know whom to contact if we are unable to reach the child's parent/guardian. **Please contact the school office during the year if any changes occur.**

Parents should make requests for dismissal for doctor or dental appointments at least a day prior to the appointment. The note or email should indicate who will be meeting the child in the school office.

Excused Absences are those involving personal illness, bereavement, family emergencies, sanctioned school functions, and other requests preapproved by the principal. No assignments will be given in advance for events such as a vacation. It is the responsibility of the students to ask for make-up work. In cases of illness, the student is allowed one day for each day missed to make up their assignments.

Unexcused Absences are those such as trips, vacations, or absences not mentioned in the "excused" category. These kinds of absences are greatly discouraged; however, if such an absence is necessary, a letter of intent should be sent to the principal and the teacher prior to

the absence. Teachers are not required to provide assignments in advance for those students out for unexcused reasons. Upon returning to class, the student is responsible for asking for make-up work; the student is allowed one day for each day missed to make up their assignments.

Absenteeism and Truancy Policy (Diocesan Policy)

The Illinois School Code requires that any school, including a nonpublic school, receiving public funds through participation in the federal/state milk, breakfast, and/or lunch programs shall develop and communicate to its students and their parent or guardian, on an annual basis, an absenteeism and truancy policy, that contains certain provisions. The following is the Absenteeism and Truancy Policy to be implemented by those schools participating in the federal/state milk, breakfast, and/or lunch programs.

Definitions

1. "Valid cause" for absence includes:
the student's illness, including the mental or behavioral health of the student,
the student's attendance at a verified medical or therapeutic appointment or appointment with a victim services provider,
the student's observance of a religious holiday,
death in the student's immediate family,
the student's attendance at a civic event,
a family emergency,
As determined by the school administrator, such other situations beyond the control of the student, or such circumstances which cause reasonable concern to the student's parent for the mental, emotional, or physical health or safety of the student.

If the student is an expectant parent or parent, "valid cause" for absence includes the fulfillment of a parenting responsibility including, but not limited to, arranging, and providing childcare, caring for a sick child, attending prenatal or other medical appointments for the expectant student, and attending medical appointments for a child,

If the student is a victim of domestic or sexual violence, "valid cause" for absence includes addressing circumstances resulting from domestic or sexual violence, including, but not limited to, experiencing domestic or sexual violence, recovering from physical or psychological injuries, seeking medical attention, seeking services from a domestic or sexual violence organization, seeking psychological or other counseling, participating in safety planning, temporarily or permanently relocating, seeking legal assistance or remedies, or taking any other action to increase the safety or health of the student or to protect the student from future domestic or sexual violence. A school administrator may require a student to verify his or her claim of domestic or sexual violence prior to approving a valid cause for an absence of 3 or more consecutive days that is related to domestic or sexual violence.

2. A "truant student" is one who is subject to compulsory school attendance and who, without valid cause, is absent from such attendance for a school day or portion of the school day, when such absence amounts to more than 1% but less than 5% of the past 180 school days.
3. A "chronic or habitual truant" is defined as a student subject to compulsory school attendance and who, without valid cause, is absent from such attendance for 5% or more of the past 180 regular attendance days.
4. "Truant minor" is defined as a chronic truant to whom available supportive services, including prevention, diagnostic, intervention and remedial services, alternative programs and other school and community resources either have been offered and refused, or have failed to result in the cessation of chronic truancy.

Policy

1. School attendance is compulsory in the State of Illinois. The responsibility of compliance with the law belongs to the parents, but the school is required to keep a record of daily attendance. The record is placed in the student's permanent file at the end of each school year.
2. A student who is subject to compulsory school attendance shall not be absent from attendance without valid cause. A student who is absent without valid cause is a truant student.
3. When a student is truant: The School administrator or delegate shall be in contact with the parent/guardian and the student when a student is absent without "valid cause", when the school has not been notified by a parent/guardian of the student's absence and reason, when the student returns to school after an absence without a written doctor's or with a note of questionable validity, or when the student continues to be absent for no apparent reason. The School's contact with the parent/guardian is for the purpose of determining the reason for the student's absence and further discussion if the absence is without valid cause. If the parents/guardians cannot be reached, the School will contact all parties listed as emergency contacts in the student's file. If the administration is unsuccessful in reaching the parents/guardians or the emergency contacts, the School will notify police and request a well-being check on the student/family.
4. The School is to determine the reason or cause for a student's unexcused absences by interviewing the student, his or her parent or guardian, and any school officials who may have information about the reasons for the student's attendance problem.
5. When a student is truant or chronically truant, the School will use the following diagnostic procedures to identify the causes of unexcused student absenteeism: Interviews with the student, meetings or requests for meetings with the parent/guardian, and meetings with any school officials who may have information about the reason for the student's

attendance problem. The school is to offer the following interventions and supportive services for the truant student and chronically truant student: meet with the student, and meet with or request to meet with the student's parent/guardian to persuade the family and the student to regular attendance, encourage heightened engagement in School activities by the parent/guardian and student, and suggest student counseling with the school counselor if one is provided by the School, or with a specific outside provider or providers, family counseling with the Diocese of Rockford Catholic Charities counselling office or with a specific outside provider or providers, and provide parents with information about existing community services that are available to the student relative to his or her needs. The School is not required to pay for any services. Where the student is chronically truant, the above steps will be repeated.

6. When efforts to persuade the student to regular attendance fails, and the student's absences without "valid cause" exceed more than five percent (5%) of the total student attendance days in the school year, the student is deemed a truant minor and written notice shall be sent to the parent/guardian stating that the student's truancy is being reported to the Illinois State Board of Education. This may be done through the truancy department of the Regional Office of Education. Additionally, the School may drop the student from enrollment.

7. The School is required to regularly collect and review its chronic absence data and determine what systems of support and resources are needed to engage and encourage the habit of daily attendance for chronically absent students and their families to promote academic success.

8. The School is required to post this *Absenteeism and Truancy Policy* on the School's website and include it in the School's Parent/Student Handbook. School administrators are also required to notify parents where/how this policy can be accessed by providing them with the **URL** address. This policy is also published on the Education page of our Diocesan Catholic Education Website.

9. The School is required to submit its Absenteeism and Truancy Policy to the Illinois State Board of Education; and to review and re-evaluate its Absenteeism and Truancy Policy every two years and submit its revised policy or a letter to the Illinois State Board of Education stating the policy was re-evaluated and no changes were deemed necessary. This statement must be submitted electronically to the Illinois State Board of Education via their Web Application Security system no later than September 30 of the year it is due.

Students Leaving the Building During the School Day

A parent must sign the student out in the office and back in if the student returns that day. Parents should notify the office in advance for student medical/dental appointments. In the event a child becomes sick or is injured during the school day, and it is necessary for the parents to pick him/her up, the same sign out procedures will be followed.

Birthdays

All treats must be individually wrapped and may be sent home at the end of the day. **Healthy treats are encouraged and should be chosen with peanut, wheat, and other allergies in mind.** Faculty and staff members will not distribute any treats that require creating individual portions. Delivery of balloons or flowers, etc. is not allowed.

Books

Since textbooks, workbooks, library books, and other materials are used on a rental basis, students are responsible for their care. When a book is lost or destroyed the student must pay a fine up to and including the replacement value of the book.

Bullying (Diocesan Policy) – updated 8/2023

Any action, word, or behavior which harasses, intimidates, or causes physical, emotional, or psychological harm to another student or students is strictly prohibited, whether the action, word, or behavior is based on a person's characteristic(s) or other matter. This prohibited conduct also extends to the use of technology ("Cyberbullying") as a tool to harass or cause harm.

Bullying is prohibited during any school-sponsored education program or activity; while in school, on school property, on school buses or other school vehicles, at designated school bus stops waiting for the school bus, or at school-sponsored or school-sanctioned events or activities; or through the transmission of information from a computer, a computer network, or other similar electronic device equipment. However, this policy is not limited to conduct that occurs on the premises of the Diocese school or during school hours or school activities.

"Bullying" means any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including made in person, in writing, or electronically ("cyberbullying"), directed toward a student or students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:

- (1) placing the student or students in reasonable fear of harm to the student's or students' person or property;
- (2) causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's or students' physical or mental health;
- (3) substantially interfering with the student's or students' academic performance; or
- (4) substantially interfering with the student's or students' ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

Bullying may take various forms, including without limitation one or more of the following: harassment, threats, intimidation, stalking, physical violence, sexual harassment, sexual violence, theft, public humiliation, destruction of property, or retaliation for asserting or alleging an act of bullying. Examples of "cyberbullying" include but are not limited to the use of e-mail, websites, text messaging, posting or sending of electronic photos or videos on social media or "Apps" (i.e. Face Book, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, Snapchat, etc.) to harass or intimidate. These lists are meant to be illustrative and non-exhaustive.

Reporting the conduct:

Any School employee who is made aware of conduct which violates this policy, or who receives a report of bullying, shall promptly report this information to the School administrator and, in the administrator's absence, to the administrator's designee, assistant principal, or dean of students. Any parent/guardian who has information that bullying involving a student(s) of the School is occurring shall promptly notify the School of this information.

Notifying the parents/guardian:

Within 24 hours of the School being made aware of a reported bullying incident, the school administrator shall notify the parents/guardian of each of the students reportedly involved. The School administrator shall make diligent efforts to notify a parent/guardian using all contact information available to the school or which the school within that 24 hours can reasonably obtain.

Investigating:

The School administrator shall investigate the matter, may involve school support personnel or others as deemed appropriate, and will make reasonable efforts to complete the investigation within 10 school days of the date the report is received by the School. However, information may be discovered during the investigation which extends the investigation beyond 10 school days.

Students who violate this policy will generally be subject to the discipline policy of the student's school, but where the nature or extent of the conduct warrants, violators of the policy may be subject to suspension and/or expulsion.

The School administrator or designee will provide to the parents/guardians of the students who are parties in the investigation (parties are the student(s) reported to be the target of the conduct, and the student(s) reported to be committing the conduct) information about the investigation and an opportunity to meet with the school administrator or designee to discuss the investigation, the investigation findings, and actions or interventions taken to address bullying, adhering to privacy rules and laws. To the extent appropriate, the School will identify to the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the involved student(s) school- or community-based resources, if available, to assist the involved student(s). The School may require the parent/guardian of the involved student(s) to participate in community-based resources for the involved student(s).

Procedure:

This policy is to be distributed annually by each Diocesan School to the school's students, their parents/guardian, and school employees, and to new employees when they are hired. If the School has a website accessible to the public, the policy is to be posted there as well. If the School has a student or family handbook, it is to be posted there as well. If the School posts policies, rules, or standards of conduct in the School, it is to be posted there as well. Effective with the August 11, 2023 revision, this policy will be reviewed every two years.

Cameras

Students are not allowed to use or have cameras in school, including those on cell phones.

Cell Phones/other Electronic Devices

Cell phone and other electronic devices are prohibited during the school day for students, including field trips. These personal items must be turned into the school office or left in backpacks **TURNUED OFF** each day and retrieved at the end of the school day. The school may provide a locked area for these devices. If the school officials confiscate an item, a parent/guardian must come to the school office to pick up the item.

The exception: if the student is using an electronic device for a class presentation and the teacher is aware of this request, then permission is granted to bring the device. The student may be asked to secure the device in the school office for safekeeping.

Concussion & Youth Sports (Diocesan Policy)

Definition A concussion is caused by a blow or motion to the head or body that causes the brain to move rapidly inside the skull. The risk of catastrophic injuries or death is significant when a concussion or head injury is not properly evaluated and managed. Concussions are a type of brain injury that can range from mild to severe and can disrupt the way the brain normally works. Concussions can occur in any organized or unorganized sport or recreational activity and can result from a fall or from players colliding with each other, the ground, or with obstacles. Concussions occur with or without loss of consciousness, but the vast majority of concussions occur without loss of consciousness.

Removal from Practice and Game if Suspected Injury When a student exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion or other head injury, such as a loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion, or balance problems, or when a coach otherwise suspects a student has suffered a concussion or other head injury, the student shall be removed at that time from participation in a practice or game or other competition.

No Return to the Practice or Game without Physician Clearance A student who has been removed from an interscholastic contest for a possible concussion or head injury shall not be permitted to return to that contest unless cleared to do so by a physician licensed to practice medicine in all its branches in Illinois or a certified athletic trainer. If not cleared to return to that contest, a student shall not be permitted to return to play or practice until the student has provided the School with written clearance from a physician licensed to practice medicine in all its branches in Illinois or a certified athletic trainer working in conjunction with a physician licensed to practice medicine in all its branches in Illinois. Part of this process requires signing the Post-concussion Consent Form.

Curriculum

St. Thomas More Catholic School offers instruction using the full range of Diocesan Standards in the curricular subjects including religion, math, reading/literature, phonics/spelling/vocabulary, English grammar and composition, science, social studies/history, physical education, art, music, and technology. Supplemental programs include band, reading resource, library, and other PTO sponsored activities. Extra-curricular programs include athletics, Student Council, Scouts, After School Enrichment, and more.

Dances

7th and 8th grade dances are scheduled in cooperation with other Catholic schools in our area. The dances are rotated among the schools with no more than one per month. Students will not be admitted without proper identification. Dances are a school related function, with all host schools and STM school rules and regulations in effect.

DISCIPLINE/CODE OF CONDUCT (Diocesan Policy)

Introduction

The obligation of St. Thomas More Catholic School is to provide a climate conducive for all students to receive an appropriate education based on Catholic values and strong academics. To ensure this education is available to all students, the school also must have a proper atmosphere for learning. To that end, all students are asked to display appropriate behavior as outlined in this section.

While the school sets guidelines and reinforces appropriate conduct, ultimately the responsibility lies with the student and parents/guardians. The school shall work together with the student and parents/guardians to assist all students in succeeding with positive, successful changes to behavior.

St. Thomas More reserves the right to establish and enforce reasonable standards of behavior for all students in educational and recreational activities whether during regular school hours, on school premises, or in connection with school activities off school property. In the event of a violation of those standards, the school reserves the right to invoke appropriate disciplinary steps including, but not limited to, time out, principal interventions, detentions, suspensions, and expulsions. The level of discipline appropriate for a violation shall be determined on a case-by-case basis at the school's discretion based upon a review of a variety of factors including, but not limited to, the severity of the behavior, the student's academic and behavioral record, and similar such criteria.

Right to Amend

The school administration reserves the right to change this discipline code of conduct as needed. Notice of any amendments or other changes to the policy will be sent home with the students. Amendments and other changes will not take place until the day after the notice has been sent home.

Guiding Principles

Two principles shall guide all student conduct in this school and the school's response to misconduct:

1. The main purpose of the school is to help students achieve academic success; therefore, any misconduct that endangers or interferes with this purpose shall not be permitted and is subject to disciplinary action(s).
2. This is a Catholic school; therefore, any misconduct that is contrary to Catholic teachings and/or Christian values, including failure to respect the dignity of others, shall not be permitted and is subject to disciplinary actions(s).

Overview

Since each case is unique, the consequences for misconduct can vary between students and between instances. The school pledges to use the guiding principles listed in this code when determining an appropriate consequence, but reserves the right to decide what consequence is appropriate. All school policies, including this disciplinary code of conduct, apply to students while they are on the school campus and/or under the supervision of a school employee or volunteer. This includes, but is not limited to, before school, after school, on field trips, and participating in or attending sporting events.

Conduct Outside of School

Students represent this school even when they are at home or otherwise off campus. A student who engages in conduct, whether inside or outside of the school, which is contrary to Catholic virtues and/or detrimental to any individual or the school's reputation may face consequences as determined by the sole discretion of the school administration.

Violence and Threats

The school shall treat all threats and acts of violence seriously. Students who use such threats, or act violently, will be subject to disciplinary actions at the discretion of the school administration. If the school administration believes a student is a danger to himself/herself or to others, he/she may be required to inform the police or health professionals.

Misconduct and Consequences

Examples of misconduct include, but are not limited to the following:

| | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| Littering | Lying |
| Chewing gum | Academic dishonesty (plagiarism) |
| Disrespect to anyone | Unauthorized computer use |
| Possession of prohibited items | Inappropriate computer use |
| Missing school supplies | Offensive/racist language/symbols |
| Disturbing a lesson or the learning environment | Intimidating or threatening anyone |
| Eating/drinking during a lesson (without teacher permission) | Obvious disobedience |
| Violation of the uniform policy | Stealing school or personal property |
| Writing or passing notes | Vandalism |
| Use of vulgar or profane language or gestures | Leaving school without permission |
| Failure to complete assignments | Gambling |
| Defacement of school property | Truancy |
| Excessive tardiness to school or class | Gang membership or gang activities |
| Bullying | Inappropriate displays of affection |
| Physical conflict | Repeated misconduct |
| Possession or use of any of the following: tobacco or related tobacco products; weapons of any sort; alcohol; and/or obscene and/or pornographic material. | |

Types of consequences will depend on a number of factors including severity of the misconduct, the student's record of past misconduct, the facts related to the misconduct, and any factors the administration deems appropriate to consider.

Repeated Misconduct

If a student continues to display misconduct repeatedly, the school reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to administer additional consequences up to and including expulsion. There is no set number of consequences before expulsion becomes mandatory; each student's situation will be handled individually.

Prohibited Items

The following items are prohibited and should not be brought to school. Teachers may make exceptions only when there is a valid academic reason to possess the item in school, i.e. bringing a DVD to watch during class, or a personal laptop or iPad for class presentations. Possessions of prohibited items are an example of minor misconduct. Such items will be confiscated and will only be returned to the student's parent/guardian during regular school hours.

Prohibited items include, but are not limited to:

Laptops, iPads, iPhones, Smart Phones, Tablets, etc.

Video game systems

Music players (iPods, MP3 players, CD players, etc.)

Gum, candy, soda, or other sugary food

Cameras (digital or film)

Sporting equipment

Perfume, cologne, or body sprays

Grievance Procedures

Discuss the misconduct with the classroom teacher. If there is no resolution to the matter, consult with the principal. If there is no resolution to the matter, consult with the pastor.

E-Learning Day

This virtual learning program will be utilized on days that school is canceled due to inclement weather. An e-Learning Day is equivalent to a traditional day of school; therefore, students and staff would not be required to make up a snow day as in the past. There is no set number as to how many virtual days we will have, but instead Faculty will discuss the issues and concerns when the number of virtual days begins to cause complications in educational programming. Listed below are a few details about how an e-Learning Day would work here at STM.

- STM teachers would modify their instructional plans and deliver instruction and assignments no later than 9:00 AM on the day school is canceled. All assignments given will be posted on Google Classroom. Students would need to check every teacher they have instruction with to see if there is any work assigned.
- Teachers will be available during normal school hours by email. So if a parent or student has a question on an assignment they can email the teacher for the answer. Students would be required to turn in the work two days after an e-Learning day occurs (e.g.

Monday e-Learning day, work due Wednesday; Tuesday e-Learning day, work due Thursday, etc.). This way students will have a school day in between the e-Learning day and their assignment due dates to meet with teachers in order to go over information they do not understand. In the case of two e-Learning days in a row, there would be two school days in between the e-Learning days and the due dates. For example, if a Tuesday and Wednesday are missed, all e-Learning day work would be due Monday. In the case of more than two consecutive days missed, the e-Learning day option would most likely not be used.

- Internet is required for most of the e-Learning day work, especially for grades 3 - 8. For any students who experience a prolonged power outage, or who do not have an Internet connection, they may receive additional time to complete assignments if they make arrangements with the teacher. Again, students who do not have access to the internet need to discuss this with the teacher the following day at school (they will not be penalized).
- Students who do not have internet access at home will need to make other arrangements to complete assignments. Options for completing these assignments could be, but are not limited to, the following: visiting a local business with free Wi-Fi (such as Culver's or McDonalds), visit the local library, visiting a friend or family member that has Internet access, etc. , if you are able to safely travel. Safety is our priority and we do not want students venturing out of their home in an effort to connect to the Internet and/or complete a class lesson. Please note that assignments posted during an e-Learning day cannot be completed during a regular school day, however they may be completed at school before or after regular school hours if you make arrangements with the teacher.
- When planning instruction and assessments for days when the virtual option is taking place, teachers will take into consideration that students may not have access to textbooks or other classroom materials. Teachers will assign time-appropriate work for subject matter.
- In the case of widespread power outages, it may be decided to not have an e-Learning day or may extend the time for all students to complete assignments. In the case of teacher power outage, the teacher will contact another teacher to help him/her post instruction, assignments, messages, etc. for their class.
- E-Learning days will look different for each student, depending on the grade level. Teachers will plan their assignments with the student's technology abilities in mind. For example, a sixth grade assignment might require the student to do a small amount of research, whereas a Kindergarten assignment might require a worksheet to be printed

and filled out by hand. Teachers of primary grades may send home e-Learning day packets to be kept just in case as well.

- Students are expected to take e-Learning days seriously, as they are considered a full day of school / learning. Assignments may carry an associated grade as per the teacher's discretion. Students will have the entire day to complete their activities and assignments. The expectation is not for parents to do the instruction.
- Not every "snow" day will be used as an e-Learning day. Parents will be notified that it is an e-Learning Day through FACTS SIS in an email.

It is the intention of STM to utilize e-Learning days as instructional make up time on days that school is canceled due to inclement weather so that the education process is not compromised. While face-to-face learning will always be the goal for our students, e-Learning Days will provide a way to ensure the educational process is not unduly interrupted; this ensures that instruction is delivered in a timely manner. The continuity of instruction is important. This innovative solution to weather related school cancellations is a positive experience for our school community.

Emergency Closing

In the event of inclement weather or an emergency, an email and text will be sent via the FACTS SIS Alert System. Please make sure the school has correct phone numbers and e-mail addresses. Local TV stations or www.emergencyclosings.com will have the school closing listed. The STM administrator will place an alert on the website. Generally, if St. Edward High School or District U-46 closes school STM will close. If severe weather occurs at school and/or is close to the end of the school day, students will take shelter at school until the danger passes.

Emergency Forms

All students are required to have an emergency form on file with all the pertinent information completed. The forms are kept in the office and referred to in case of an emergency. **Parents are to notify the school office immediately concerning any change of name, address, email address, or telephone numbers.**

Field Trips

Field trips are designed to enrich our curriculum and are regarded as an extension of the classroom. The teacher is responsible to select appropriate excursions, structure groups, set trip rules, and secure parent volunteers to assist with supervision. Rules governing conduct and behavior are the same as during the regular school day and individual students may be excluded from trips at the discretion of the teacher. Parent chaperones/drivers must complete Protecting God's Children class, all Safe Environment forms, and appropriate insurance from the office. Siblings are not allowed to attend these trips.

Fundraising (Classroom)

All planned classroom fundraising events must be submitted and approved by the principal. No fundraising is permitted unless approved by the principal.

Fundraising (Parents)

ALL K-8 parents are required to participate in raising funds which supplements the operational budget of the school. All families must do the following:

1. Regular mass attendance and annual financial support of the church.
2. Volunteer for at least one of the fundraisers held.
3. Participate in the Script (*formerly Manna*) program.
4. Support the PTO fundraising efforts.
5. **A minimum of 3 volunteer hours per parent is expected in a school year.**

Health

All children entering **Kindergarten** must have a physical with immunization record, a dental exam, and an eye exam. **Sixth grade** and **first-time students in St. Thomas More School including Preschool** are required by State law to have a physical exam on file in the office by the opening day of school. Students will also receive vision and hearing screening as required by state law during the school year.

Diocesan Policy:

1. **Health Exam Required.** Each Diocesan school student shall have a health examination within one year prior to entering pre-school; prior to entering kindergarten or the first grade; and upon entering the sixth and ninth grades; and upon entering a school pursuant to a transfer, regardless of the child's grade level.
2. **Immunizations Required.** Each Diocesan school student shall receive such immunizations against preventable communicable diseases as are required by the Illinois School Code and the Communicable Disease Prevention Act, at the time those immunizations are required to be received, unless one of the exceptions listed in paragraph 5 below is satisfied.
3. **Proof of Health Exam and Immunizations Required.** A child's parent/legal guardian must supply proof of both the health exam and the required immunizations no later than the beginning of the school year. Where proof is not submitted, the school will notify the parent/legal guardian that he or she has until October 15th of the current school year in which to have the child examined and receive the immunizations, and present proof of same.
4. **Noncompliance with this Policy.** Failure to provide proof of required health exams and immunizations shall result in the child being excluded from school until the parent/legal guardian presents proof of the exams and the immunizations, and the parent/legal guardian is deemed in violation of the Illinois School Code during the period of noncompliance.
5. **Objections to Examinations and/or Immunizations.**
 - a. A parent/legal guardian who objects to his/her child being examined and/or immunized is eligible to be exempt from exams and/or immunizations only as follows:
 - i. **Medical Objection.** Any medical objection to an immunization must be presented by a physician licensed to practice medicine in all its branches indicating the reasons, and signed by the physician on the certificate of child health examination and placed on file

in the child's permanent record. Should the condition of the child later permit immunization, this requirement will then have to be met.

- ii. **Religious Objection.** An objection based on religious grounds shall be presented to the school by the parent/legal guardian in writing signed by the parent/legal guardian, detailing the grounds for the objection. The objection must set forth the specific religious belief that conflict with the examination and/or immunization. General philosophical or moral reluctance to allow examinations, immunizations, and/or screening shall not provide a sufficient basis for a religious exception to the requirement of exams and immunizations. Each objection will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

NOTE: In the event the objection to a vaccine is based on the vaccine containing aborted fetal cell lines, the school should inform the parent/guardian that the objection must be able to state that an alternative vaccine is not readily available to the parent/guardian's child.

- b. The school shall inform the objecting parent/legal guardian of measles outbreak control exclusion procedures in accordance with the Department's rules, Control of Communicable Diseases Code (77 Ill. Adm. Code 690) at the time the parent/legal guardian presents the objection. 665.510

6. Determination of Objection to Examination and/or Immunization. The school is to forward all objections to the Diocese, to the attention of the Superintendent of Catholic Schools, who will determine in a written statement whether the objection is valid religious objection.

7. List of Non-Immunized Students. An accurate list shall be maintained at every school of all non-immunized students at the school who have not presented proof of immunity against *diphtheria, pertussis (to age 6), tetanus, poliomyelitis, measles, rubella, mumps, Haemophilus influenzae type b, hepatitis B, or Varicella*.

Homework

Teachers give homework to help reinforce what has been presented during the school day. It provides the parents an opportunity to follow their child's progress in school and to assist them as needed. Both written work and studying assignments may be given. Whatever type of homework is assigned, the quality of homework is the child's responsibility, and it must be done consistently. Emphasis should be placed on accuracy and neatness. Completion of all homework and outside projects is expected. Failure to do so will result in a plan developed between student-teacher-family-principal to assist the student in meeting his/her responsibilities.

Absences: Students in all grades are given one day for each day of absence to submit make-up work. Continued delay of assigned work will result in disciplinary action.

Grades K-8 students and parents may track their progress through Google Classroom or the FACTS SIS.

Academic Probation Policy

A student who is academically deficient in one or more subject areas may be placed on academic probation by the principal upon the recommendation of a child's teacher or teachers.

A student on academic probation may lose certain privileges during the probationary period, including athletic eligibility and enrichment activities.

Summer School: A student who fails 2 or more quarters of a basic skills course (math, reading, English, social studies, or science) must successfully repeat the course or its equivalent during summer school. The parents must provide tutorial help mutually agreed upon by the teacher and principal. Promotion is conditional upon the successful and verifiable completion of course work. Parents will be responsible for the costs of instruction.

Retention: If, in the judgment of a child's teacher or teachers, a student does not satisfactorily complete a course of study for a particular year, the child may be retained at the discretion of the principal. The decision concerning retention will be made in consultation with parents and teachers.

HONOR ROLL

Students in grades 5-8 who achieve high academic standards will receive a certificate for achieving Honor Roll status. The Honor Roll is published four times a year at the end of each quarter. **High Honors** is reserved for students who receive a 3.67 and up grade point average in all core subjects and weighted averages for specials subjects. **Honors** is reserved for students who receive a 3.0 - 3.66 grade point average in all core subjects and weighted averages for specials subjects. GPAs are rounded to the hundredth place. Any "D" or "F" on a report card automatically disqualifies a student from being on the school Honor Roll. A student is also disqualified for any "1" in conduct or effort on the report card.

Grades are weighted according to the following:

| | | | | |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|
| A+ 4.33 | B+ 3.33 | C+ 2.33 | D+ 1.33 | F 0.00 |
| A 4.00 | B 3.00 | C 2.00 | D 1.0 | |
| A- 3.67 | B- 2.67 | C- 1.67 | D- 0.67 | |

Effort Honor Roll is awarded quarterly to students in Kindergarten through grade 4. Criteria for achieving Effort Honor Roll is **not** the effort shown on the report card, rather it is the teacher's discretion to set up the criteria for the award.

Inspections (Diocesan Policy)

In the interests of the health and safety of the School, its students and faculty, and in furtherance of its educational mission, the School reserves the right to conduct inspections of all areas of its property and objects that are brought onto its premises. The School reserves the right to conduct these inspections on its own or to request the assistance of a third party in the inspection process.

This right to conduct inspections includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Lockers (including those that bear a student provided lock)
2. Desks
3. Bags, purses, briefcases, tote bags, and other carrying devices brought onto School property

4. Vehicles located on School property
 5. Any other school equipment, devices, or property to which the use or access is allowed by the School.
 6. Any other item or property brought on to the School's premises by a student or others.
- The failure to cooperate with or other interference with an inspection allowed by this policy shall be grounds for disciplinary action as determined appropriate by the School. Further, should an inspection identify weapons, illegal substances, other contraband, or other material that is inappropriate for possession on this School's premises (as determined by the School), the School reserves the right to notify appropriate law enforcement and/or other authorities as well as the involved student's parent/guardian.
- In conducting inspections under this policy, the School shall, to the extent reasonably possible, attempt to minimize the scope of the intrusion upon the involved student's privacy. Nonetheless, the School reserves the right to determine the scope and extent of such an inspection. The School further reserves the right to require the assistance of other individuals, outside agencies, and/or third-party contractors in conducting such inspections.

Internet Access Policy and Authorization for Internet Use (Diocesan Policy)

Rockford Diocese - Acceptable Use Policy Grades K – 2

Purpose

St. Thomas More Catholic School (STM) has computers linked to the Internet and a schoolwide network. The use of these resources is for student learning. STM has this policy as a guide to behavior that is expected when using these resources. This Acceptable Use Policy:

- Establishes the privilege and reason for using these computers
- Gives direction for acceptable use of the resources
- Encourages fair and just use of the resources
- Provides guidelines for the protection and reliability of the school network
- Tells of loss of computer time for breaking acceptable use rules

Goals for Computer Use

Technology helps with learning. STM shall use technology to prepare the students for life in the digital world by:

- Teaching technology skills
- Using technology to learn
- Encouraging thinking and problem-solving skills
- Supporting simple research
- Teaching fair and just use of technology

Student Responsibilities

The hardware, software, and peripherals provided for students' use by STM is a privilege. It is the student's job to use the equipment correctly. A student experiencing any problem should tell the teacher immediately.

Policy Rules

The following rules are for the protection of each student and the safe use of school equipment. The Rockford Diocese Office of Catholic Education and STM may amend, modify, or add additional rules and/or restrictions to this Policy at any time:

I understand that the computers at school are to be used as the teacher tells me. I agree to follow the rules and be a good computer user.

I will use clean and gentle hands while using the computer, even if I get mad. I will only touch the computer to which I am assigned. I will tell the teacher if something goes wrong. I will always raise my hand and ask for help from the teacher. I will not try to fix the problem or ask a classmate.

I will share the classroom computer, but not my password (if applicable).

I will stay at the website that the teacher has assigned when on the Internet. If I accidentally get into an unfamiliar place on the Internet, I will tell my teacher right away, especially if the web site makes me uncomfortable or it seems like someone is trying to talk to me. I will never tell my name, address, or phone number to anyone or any website on the Internet.

I will give credit to the rightful owner of my projects for the information I find on the Internet. I will not use the computer to bully, embarrass or bother anyone.

I will not type bad words or draw naughty symbols or pictures on the computer. I will not try to get into my classmates' documents or other files. I know that my teacher(s) can see what I am doing on the computer and can look at my saved work. I will tell my teacher if any computer rule is not followed.

Consequences

My teacher will carry out one or both consequences if I break the computer use rules:

- I understand that if I do not follow the rules for computer use, I might lose the right to use the computer.*
- I understand that if I misuse the computer or any equipment on purpose, my parents will be asked to pay to fix it.*

Rockford Diocese - Acceptable Use Policy

Grades 3 – 8

Purpose

St. Thomas More Catholic School (STM) has computers linked to the Internet and a schoolwide network. The use of these resources is for student learning. In keeping with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), every effort shall be made to provide a safe learning environment including Internet security software. However, it is impossible to fully control all the information available to students. STM has this Policy as a guide to behavior that is expected when using these resources. This Acceptable Use Policy:

- Establishes the privilege and reason for using these computers
- Gives direction for acceptable use of the resources
- Encourages fair and just use of the resources
- Provides guidelines for the protection and reliability of the school network
- Informs the students of penalties for violating these guidelines.

Goals for Computer Use

Technology helps with learning. STM uses technology to prepare the students for life in the digital world by:

- Teaching technology skills
- Combining technology use into various subject areas
- Encouraging thinking and problem-solving skills
- Supporting evaluation and synthesis of information
- Teaching fair and just use of technology

Student Responsibilities

STM provides the hardware, software, and peripherals for students to use in furthering their education. The use of electronic resources is a privilege. It is the student's responsibility to use the equipment correctly and respect the property of others as outlined in this Policy. A student should report any problems noted with hardware and/or software to his/her teacher.

Policy Terms

Abide by the following rules:

All Internet and electronic resources are to be properly cited.

Students are to respect the property of others.

Although STM has Internet security software in place, no Internet filter is 100% secure. Any site that makes a student feel uncomfortable is to be brought to the immediate attention of the teacher, librarian, or adult supervisor.

Do not use the equipment to bully, threaten, embarrass, or annoy an individual(s).

Do not use profane, vulgar, or rude language or material.

Do not publish false information about another individual.

Do not publish photos or videos of individuals without permission of the teacher.

Do not give out personal information such as name, address, age, phone number, or personal description about yourself or others.

Do not share your password, if applicable, or guess others' passwords.
Do not attempt to access files other than your own.
Do not install, download, delete, upload, or change any software, including preferences.
Do not attempt to repair any hardware; report any damage or changes to equipment to the teacher.
Do not access sites on the Internet other than necessary for the assignment.
Do not attempt to access social networks, emails, or live communications.
Do not burn copies of software.

System Security and Reliability

Network security is a high priority. Users must abide by the school and Diocesan Policy for using personal digital assistants (PDAs), calculators, gaming devices, cell phones, digital cameras, and any other electronic devices. Access will be determined by the school administration. STM or the Rockford Diocese Office of Catholic Education has the right to monitor the use of all electronic equipment and to change or add additional rules and regulations at any time. Users must be aware that the following are not allowed:

- Unauthorized access to the network through another user's account.
- Introduction and spreading of computer viruses.
- Wasteful use of technology resources, such as file space and unnecessary printing.
- Using the network in any way that could be disruptive to other users.
- Leaving open files or network connections unattended or unsupervised.

School laptops/Chromebooks are not allowed out of the school building for any purpose. This includes, but is not limited to the use of laptops/Chromebooks for homework, History and/or Science Fair. Laptops/Chromebooks remain in the school building at all times. There is NO exception to this policy.

Students should not expect privacy in their use of computers or school resources. The student must report any misuse of the school's computers and technology resources immediately to the Network Administrator or the teacher.

Penalties

Any violation of this Policy may result in any or all of the following:

- Loss of school network and internet use.
- Disciplinary action up to and including issuance of a detention, suspension, or expulsion.
- Parents will be held responsible for any monetary charges that result from student misuse of equipment where damage was caused intentionally or recklessly.

INVESTIGATIONS REGARDING STUDENT SOCIAL NETWORKING (Diocesan Policy)

An elementary school or high school may not request or require a student to provide a password or other related account information in order to gain access to the student's account or profile on a social networking website.

However, an elementary school or high school may conduct an investigation and may require a student to cooperate in an investigation, if there is specific information about activity on the student's account on a social networking website that violates a school disciplinary rule or policy. In the course of an investigation, an elementary school or high school may require the student to share the content that is reported, in order to make a factual determination.

A student's failure to cooperate in such investigation may lead to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.

Elementary and secondary schools are required under the law to notify its students and parents of this policy, by publishing it in the school's disciplinary rules, policies, or handbook, or communicating it by similar means.

Right to Privacy in the School Setting Act (105 ILCS 75/1, et al.)

Lunch/Recess Program

Students may bring their own lunch or purchase lunch at school. The lunch program is sold daily through School Eatery. No outside food deliveries are allowed from restaurants or franchises by services or by parents. Also, no sports drinks or soda or other sugary drinks are allowed. The lunch period is under the direction of the principal and adult monitors; children must respect their authority and follow their directives.

Gr. K-3 Lunch: 11:40 AM - 12:00 PM **Gr. 4-8 Recess:** 11:40 AM - 12:00 PM
Recess: 12:00 PM - 12:20 PM **Lunch:** 12:00 PM - 12:20 PM

Preschool Lunch: 11:40 AM - 12:00 PM

Study Hall may take the place of recess at the principal and teacher's discretion.

Medications

As a general rule, STM school personnel will not dispense medication; this should occur under parental direction at home. However, to provide for those certain exceptions when medication is required at school, the following school policy and procedure will be implemented:

- No medication (prescription or over-the-counter) will be given to the child without the completion of a **Medical Authorization Form** (signed by the parents AND the physician). These forms are available in the school office and on the school website.
- Medication must be brought to school in the original prescription container from the pharmacy or physician. The container must be properly labeled with dosage instructions and frequency of dosage. Medication is then stored in a locked cabinet and administered by school personnel only.
- Neither the school nor school personnel incur liability for injury or illness or other damage resulting from administering medication prescribed by a licensed physician or other licensed medical personnel, and administered in accordance with the prescribed dosage.

- In circumstances where the student must have immediate access to a medication due to the nature of the student's medical condition, it must be maintained in the original container and must be stored in a location/facility where individuals other than the student may not access it. The principal/teacher must be notified of such conditions and the presence of the medication in the classroom/facility.
- Cough drops require a parental permission slip and may NOT be shared with other students or school personnel.

Neither the school nor school personnel incur liability for injury or illness or other damage resulting from administering medication prescribed by a licensed physician or other licensed medical personnel, and administered in accordance with the prescribed dosage.

Milk

White or chocolate 1% milk is available for purchase during Fee Day in August. The government Milk Program supplements costs.

Mystery Readers

Some primary classes offer the opportunity for Mystery Readers. This invitation is given to parents of the students only and requires the Diocesan required paperwork to be completed beforehand (i.e., Protecting God's Children certificate and all Safe Environment Forms completed on Virtus). Please contact the school office for information.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Teachers and parents share the responsibility for arranging conferences when either academic progress or conduct warrants a meeting. Any parent who wishes to have a conference with a teacher at any time must do so by arranging a conference either by a written note, email request to the teacher, or by calling the school to arrange an appointment. **Any problems relating to academic progress or behavior should first be discussed with the classroom teacher before consulting the administration.** Parents/students in Kindergarten – Gr. 8 may track their progress on Facts SIS.

Please note: Teachers are not available for conversations/conferences before school without a specific appointment; their first priority is the safety and well-being of all students at the beginning of the school day.

Parental Cooperation (Diocesan Policy)

As members of the community of St. Thomas More Catholic School, we each have a moral and ethical obligation to foster and promote the Catholic values that our faith represents. The cooperation of parents is especially vital. While we recognize that issues may arise during the course of the school year that will be of concern to parents, the manner in which parents address their concerns through their personal conduct must be consistent with these values, whether at School and/or during any School-related function. The failure to meet these conduct expectations shall be addressed in accordance with this policy.

While many different types of conduct by parents are unacceptable under this policy, the following are examples of conduct that will not be tolerated:

1. Disrespect to any person at School or at a School-related function;
2. Raising of voices, foul language, or name calling directed at any staff member, teacher, child, coach, volunteer, other parents, administrator, religious or clergy member;
3. Any physical assault;
4. Any other activity considered by the School's administration to be threatening or disrespectful to another, disruptive to the School, and/or inconsistent with the Catholic values that the School strives to uphold.
5. **No animals are allowed on the school/parish campus and must remain in the family car.**

Student Withdrawal

STM School recognizes parents as the primary educators of their children. The education of students at our school is a partnership between parents and the school. If, in the opinion of the administration, the partnership is irretrievably broken, the school reserves the right to require the parent to withdraw the child.

Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO)

All teachers, parents, and guardians of children presently attending St. Thomas More Catholic School are automatically active members. The purpose of the organization is:

- To enlist the spiritual, educational, and social resources of home and school to provide the best Catholic Education possible.
- To provide a forum for an exchange of ideas for parents and teachers in an informal function for social events ONLY to present to the school administration for approval.
- To foster the integration of families into the life of the parish community.
- To provide a solid organization to improve the school's fundraising efforts and financial responsibility of parents' contribution to the overall school budget.

Plagiarism and Cheating

STM adheres to a strict no plagiarizing and/or cheating policy. Such acts are unacceptable and will result in disciplinary action and may negatively impact a student's grade in the subject where plagiarism or cheating has occurred. Cheating is defined as copying work from other students, taking another student's work, or using material without citing the source. **Cheating also includes the use of artificial intelligence of any kind to complete class work.** Plagiarism is taking the writing or ideas of another person and using them as one's own.

Physical Education

St. Thomas More offers physical education classes to children in grades PK – 8. It is expected that each child wear proper clothing, gym shoes, and a hair tie as needed during physical education classes. This promotes safety and age-appropriate hygiene. **Students need a doctor's note to be excused from P.E. class and to return to class after an injury.**

PE UNIFORMS: All K-8 students are also required to wear **gym shoes, which are kept at school and worn ONLY during PE class.**

Report Cards/Progress Reports/Grading Scale

Kindergarten – Grade 8 grades can be viewed through your FACTS SIS account throughout the quarter. Since your child's grades are posted on FACTS SIS, paper progress reports for students will not be issued. During the final days of each quarter, parents will not have access to grades (FACTS SIS will be temporarily blocked), so teachers may input their final quarter grades. Families will be notified via email when report cards are published. **Parents only have a two-week window at the end of each school year to view/download the report card.**

The following grade scale for grades 4-8 is used:

A+ = 99 – 100

A = 95 – 98

A- = 93 – 94

B+ = 91 – 92

B = 88 – 90

B- = 86 – 87

C+ = 83 – 85

C = 79 – 82

C- = 76 – 78

D+ = 74 – 75

D = 72 – 73

D- = 70 – 71

F = 69 and below

Religious Formation

Students at St. Thomas More Catholic School participate in and learn about their Catholic faith in a variety of ways. The students in grades K - 7 study religion daily using the text Christ Our Life (Loyola Press), and the 8th grade students use Chosen (Ascension Press). The student community plans and celebrates weekly all school Masses on Wednesdays at 9:30 AM. Teachers also may schedule their students for monthly Eucharistic Adoration. Students also pray the Stations of the Cross, celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation and First Communion in second grade, and other Para liturgies on special occasions for Advent, Lent, and Marian celebrations in May.

To put their faith into practice, students participate in many service projects that occur throughout the year. Grades 5-8 participate in retreat experiences and STM Parish Youth Ministry activities. Students gather for daily prayers each morning, and recite the *Grace Before Meals* prayer before lunch, and close the school day with prayers in their classrooms.

Sacramental Programs

Grade 2 baptized Catholic students receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation during the winter of second grade and the Sacrament of the Eucharist in the spring. Our pastor, Director of Religious Education, principal, and grade 2 teacher prior to the reception of each Sacrament may offer special paraliturgies and parent programs; parents will be expected to participate in these programs with their children. Parental example at this time and throughout the school year is of critical importance in every child's spiritual development.

School Commission

The School Commission at St. Thomas More recognizes the ministry of education in the parish and is dedicated to the academic and spiritual welfare of each student as defined in the school philosophy.

The function of the Commission is shared decision-making. The pastor, the principal, and the School Commission members together determine the policies of the school. Policies are formulated in response to the needs of the school. These policies must be consistent with and supportive of the policies of the Bishop, the Diocese, and the Elgin Deanery policies.

School Communications

STM School is open from 7:30 AM to 4:00 PM Monday through Friday according to the academic calendar. Please allow 24 business hours for responses to email or phone calls from teachers and staff. The school and office is closed on the weekends and during school days off. Communications received during those times will be responded to within 24 hours of the first day back in the building.

School Supplies

Each summer the school issues a school supply list for the upcoming school year. Every student is required to come to the start of the school year with all their supplies so that they are prepared for their classes. Please follow the supply list as written. NO wireless earbuds are allowed.

Special Services

Special services are available through the U-46 school district. Student services must be requested by the parent after working in cooperation with the teacher. If appropriate, the teacher and/or principal will meet with the parents to inform them of their observations and recommendations.

Sports

Students in grades 5 - 8 are encouraged to participate in the STM athletic program. STM offers boys' and girls' basketball, volleyball, cross country, and cheerleading. Sports screenings or a recent physical (within 12 months), parental permission slips, proof of insurance, and payment of fees are mandatory before a student can participate in school sponsored sport activities.

All students who try out for a team are automatically members of that team and are eligible to practice and play in games according to diocesan and Tri-county Conference rules providing they maintain academic and behavior standards set forth in the STM Eligibility Policy. **A student will be declared ineligible from participating in athletics if he/she has 1 cumulative “F” for the grading period in any class or 2 cumulative “D’s” for the grading period in any classes, violation of the STM disciplinary policy, and/or poor sportsmanship.**

Academically ineligible students may not attend practice and they may not dress for or play in games; this time should be spent studying in order to improve grade averages. Eligibility status will be reviewed every week; the principal will notify the Athletic Director and parents of student eligibility status. It is the responsibility of the AD to inform coaches of student eligibility status.

Absence due to illness: Any student who is sick the day of the game may NOT attend or participate in the game.

Student Wellness Policy (Diocesan Policy)

The [Diocese of Rockford](#) and St. Thomas More Catholic School are committed to providing a learning environment that supports and promotes wellness, good nutrition, and an active lifestyle as well as recognizes the positive relationship between good nutrition, physical activity, and the capacity of students to develop and learn. The entire school environment will be aligned with healthy school goals to positively influence students’ beliefs and habits as well as promote health and wellness, good nutrition, and regular physical activity. In addition, the school staff shall be encouraged to model healthy eating and physical activity as a valuable part of daily life.

Testing

Grades 2 - 8 are tested each year with the Iowa Test of Basic Skills Program. Grades 3, 5, and 7 also take the COGAT as required by the diocese. Results of the ITBS/COGAT testing are shared at the first Parent-Teacher Conference. Test results should be received as only one indicator of a child’s academic performance. Students in grade 2-8 also take a Reading and Math test three times during the school year on IOWA Flex for teachers to use for academic planning purposes.

Visitors

All visitors (parents, volunteers, and others having legitimate business) must enter the building through the west entrance (Door 1) and **sign in** at the reception desk before proceeding to their destination in the building. The identification badge given to by office staff must be shown before going anywhere in the building. All visitors **must sign out** and return the badge to the school office before leaving the building. Visitors must go to the appropriate destination without disrupting/interfering another teacher’s instructional time.

Volunteer Programs

Because of the generosity of many volunteers, STM is able to offer extra programs including the Learning Resource Center, teacher aides, and Enrichment programs. A child’s education is facilitated and enriched by the use of a variety of resources and people who can provide

services beyond the usual scope of the regular curriculum. All volunteers must participate and provide the school office with a copy of [Protecting God's Children](#) (PGC) certificate and complete all [Safe Environment forms](#) disseminated by the school office on Virtus. PGC certification and documents must be on file in the school office prior to ANY volunteer participation. **All Diocesan mandated forms must be on file on Virtus PRIOR to volunteering.**

UNIFORM POLICY 2023-24, Grades Kindergarten – 8th

GIRLS:

- Official STM plaid or navy jumper (grades K – 5)
- Official STM plaid or navy **skirt** (grades K – 8)
- Official STM plaid or navy **skort** (grades K – 8)
- Navy blue walking **shorts** (May 1 – September 30) – NO logos or cargo style
- Jumpers, skirts, skorts, and shorts should be **no shorter than 2 inches** above the knee
- Navy blue cotton, cotton twill, or corduroy **slacks** -- NO logos or cargo style. NO low-rise slacks/shorts
- Plain white, long or short sleeved **blouses**, knit or oxford, with collar – NO logos
- Long sleeved white, red, or navy turtleneck – NO logos
- White, navy, or red long or short sleeved polo
- Grades 2 – 8 must wear belts, black or brown or navy, with pants and shorts

Socks – red, navy blue, or white at least 2 inches over the ankle, knee-hi, or tights; NO logos, leggings, footless tights, or patterns.

BOYS:

- Navy blue cotton, cotton twill, or corduroy **slacks** -- NO logos, joggers, or cargo style
- Navy blue walking **shorts** (May 1 – September 30) – NO logos or cargo style
- Plain white, long or short sleeved **shirt**, knit or oxford, with collar – NO logos
- White, navy, or red long or short sleeved polo
- Long sleeved white, red, or navy turtleneck – NO logos
- Grades 2 – 8 must wear belts, black or brown or navy, with pants and shorts

Socks – at least 2 inches over the ankle, white, navy, or black; NO logos or patterns.

ALL K - GRADE 8 STUDENTS:

Sweaters/Sweatshirts - Solid red, navy, or white sweater or sweater vests, cardigan, V-neck, or crew neck style, button or zipper front – NO logos, unless purchased through the uniform company. NO hooded sweatshirts or sweaters.

Shoes - Solid black, dark brown, white, or navy-blue dress shoes, which do not leave black marks. NO glitter, sequins, sparkles, patterned, fluorescent colors, or light up shoes. Girls may wear a “Mary Jane” type shoe, NO ballet slip-ons, NO clogs, open toes or heels, moccasins, or boots.

Gym shoes may be worn as school shoes if the shoe is all black, dark brown, navy blue, grey, or white. If there is an insignia on the gym shoe it must be black, brown, navy blue, grey, or white (no bright or fluorescent colors), and original laces only. No light up gym shoes. Shoes must remain completely tied always. NO HIGH TOP or MID-TOP GYM SHOES. Regular gym shoes only.

PE Gym Shoe requirements: The shoes should be supportive and can be any color and any brand. They are to be kept at school for use during P.E. class only.

****Uniforms are required on the first day of school. Parents will be called and ask to bring in acceptable uniform items if their child is not dressed according to code. ****

GENERAL

- Students are to be well groomed, and their uniforms clean at all times.
- Slacks/shorts are to be worn at the waist. Shirts are to be tucked in at all times. T-shirts worn under shirts are plain white only.
- Girls may only wear ONE stud earring per lobe. **No glitter, sequins, sparkles, or fluorescent colors.**
- NO necklaces or bracelets, except religious medals/symbols which are limited to one each and must be conservative in style and color. They may not be disruptive in any way. **No glitter, sequins, sparkles, or fluorescent colors.**
- No rings may be worn in grades K – 2. Grades 3 – 8 may wear one ring only that is simple and not disruptive in any way.
- **NO** nail polish may be worn. No “press-on” or fake nails. Nail polish remover will be used to remove any polish worn to school.
- **NO** make-up allowed. **NO** body piercing or tattoos (temporary or permanent) allowed.
- No fad hairstyles or colors or dye. Hair should not obstruct eyes and be conservative in length and style. Hair color should be the natural color for the child.
- No extreme styles, long sideburns, mohawks, or otherwise inappropriate styles will be allowed.
- No facial hair is permitted.
- Boys’ hair must be above the collar, above the eyebrows, and above the ears. No ponytails, braids, bobby pins, or barrettes.
- Girls ONLY - Simple hair accessories – No bandanas. **No glitter, sequins, sparkles, or fluorescent colors.** NO huge bows or flowers or fake ears.
- NO SMARTWATCHES.

A student's appearance, including dress and hygiene, must not disrupt the educational process or compromise standards of health and safety. The school will not prohibit hairstyles historically associated with race, ethnicity, or hair texture, including, but not limited to, protective hairstyles such as braids, locks, and twists. Any student's appearance that disrupts the educational process or compromises health and safety standards must modify their appearance.

PLEASE NOTE: The principal reserves the right to interpret the uniform policy as needed. The principal reserves the right to grant out-of-uniform days per her discretion.

SPIRIT WEAR: A variety of St. Thomas More spirit wear is available to order online throughout the school year. Approximately once a month there will be Spirit Wear Days at school when students can wear their STM Spirit Wear to show some school pride. Spirit Wear is NOT considered uniform and cannot be worn on regular schools days.

DRESS DOWN DAYS: Students must still follow the uniform guidelines on Dress Down Days. On Dress Down Days no ripped jeans, denim, or ripped clothing of any kind is acceptable. If leggings or tight jeans are worn a long shirt must be worn over it that comes down to their fingertips. Longer shorts can only be worn when uniform shorts are allowed. All other uniform policies in regard to jewelry, make-up, hair, etc. must still be followed. Any student not following the policies of the school on a Dress Down Day will not be able to participate in the next Dress Down Day or Spirit Wear Day. Parents will also be notified if this occurs.

CONSEQUENCES: If a student is not following school uniform guidelines, they will receive an infraction notice that the parent(s) need to sign. If the same infraction occurs a second time the student will need to pay a fine to the school office of \$1.00 (all money collected will be given to St. Vincent de Paul). If the same infraction occurs a third time, then the student owes a Dress Down Pass to the office or cannot participate in a no uniform or Spirit Wear Day with the rest of the school. If there is a fourth occurrence the parents will be called in to meet with the principal.

It is the parent's responsibility to make sure their child is dressed appropriately for school and is following the school's uniform policies.

THE SCHOOL RESERVES THE RIGHT TO DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT CERTAIN DRESS, ACCESSORIES, AND HAIR STYLES ARE APPROPRIATE FOR ITS STUDENTS.

THERE WILL BE REGULAR UNIFORM INSPECTIONS THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL YEAR.

PE Class: Students are required to wear gym shoes which are kept at school and worn during PE class only. Girls should also have hair restraints to keep their hair out of their eyes during class.

School Uniform Company: **Schoolbelles** 1-888-637-3037
www.schoolbelles.com STM school code: **S2419**

The principal reserves the right to amend this handbook. Parents will receive notice when such changes occur.

The school agrees to comply with any other applicable State or federal law or regulatory requirement.

Revised 08/23



Uniform Code Infraction

Student's Name: _____ Grade: _____

Date: _____

Staff member writing infraction: _____

Description of infraction: _____

Consequence: _____

Parent Signature _____

Return form by _____

STM DETENTION NOTICE

Students in K-4th grade will receive lunch active recess detentions.

Students in 5th-8th grade will have detention from 7:00-7:30 AM or 3:00-3:30 PM.

Student's Name: _____ Grade: _____ Teacher: _____
 Date of Incident: _____ Location: _____ Time: _____
 Detention Assigned Date: _____ M T W TH F Room: _____
 (Circle Appropriate Day)

REASON FOR DETENTION

| | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disruptive Behavior | <input type="checkbox"/> Disrespectful |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Uniform violation | <input type="checkbox"/> Recess behavior |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lunchroom behavior | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Infraction: |

Teacher Comments:

 (Teacher Signature/Date)

 (Principal Signature)

Student signature: _____ Parent signature: _____

St. Thomas More Catholic School Academic & Behavior Eligibility Policy

Participation in either athletics or cheerleading at St. Thomas More Catholic School is encouraged. Sports are offered to enrich and complement the academic education of all students. If ineligibility is determined, it means that a student may not participate in or attend practice, games, or any other school-sponsored extracurricular activities for a set period of time.

Please note:

- A. Academic effort/performance will be evaluated on a weekly basis. Every Thursday, teachers will inform the principal if a student is ineligible. Conference rules state that the student will be declared ineligible from participating in contests if she/he has 1 cumulative "F" for the grading period in any class or 2 cumulative "D's" for the grading period in any classes. Unsatisfactory academic effort will bring a one-week ineligibility, which begins that Friday. The principal will have final authority regarding academic effort eligibility.
- B. Serious misconduct will be evaluated by the staff and principal on an individual basis and may bring about an immediate ineligibility for a period of time to be determined by the staff and principal.
- C. If a student receives a third ineligibility, she/he will be removed from a sport or school-sponsored extracurricular activities for the remainder of the season or quarter.

Date

A copy of the above policy is found in the Parent/Student Handbook.

_____ in grade ____ is ineligible according to guideline ____ above.

This ineligibility begins on _____ and ends _____.

Teacher

Teacher

Teacher

Teacher

Parent Signature

Please sign and return to the school office by the next day.

Cc: Principal
A.D.
Coach

Think Sheet

Student's Name _____ Date ____/____/____

Grade _____ Teacher who observed your behavior _____

The rule that I broke was: _____

I chose to break this rule because: _____

How did my behavior affect the class? _____

Whose rights were violated when I broke this rule? _____

This is what I could have done instead: _____

Student signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent signature: _____