

**2025-2026
PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK
SAINT THOMAS
THE APOSTLE SCHOOL
50 BYRD AVENUE
BLOOMFIELD, NJ 07003**

PHONE: 973.338.8505

FAX: 973.338.9565

Email: staoffice@staschoolnj.org

www.staschoolnj.org





Christians are men and women who bless. The Christian, through his life, should always bless, should bless God and others. We Christians are people who bless, who know how to bless. It is a beautiful vocation.

Pope Francis, June 18, 2014

September 2025

Dear Parents and Students:

Welcome to Saint Thomas the Apostle School! In choosing Saint Thomas School, you have demonstrated a commitment to the values and philosophy of Catholic education.

The faculty and staff of our school look forward to working with you to promote academic excellence and spiritual development in the context of the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Together let us pray that God, who has begun this good work in us, may carry it through to completion.

God bless you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ellen Naughton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mrs. Ellen Naughton
Principal



Saint Thomas the Apostle School is a school under the sponsorship of the Archdiocese of Newark. Founded in 1940 in the town of Bloomfield, New Jersey, Saint Thomas the Apostle School offers a Pre-Kindergarten 2.5 through 8th Grade Program. The curriculum stresses academic achievement within a Christian community. At Saint Thomas, we are striving to “teach as Jesus did.”

PARISH MISSION STATEMENT

The Roman Catholic Faith Community of St. Thomas the Apostle recognizes God’s call to be a sign of His Kingdom in the communities we serve.

We respond to this call by:

- † Leading people to a deeper relationship with Christ by providing opportunities for spiritual growth, renewal, education, the celebration of the Sacraments, and the worship of God in the sacred liturgy;
- † Encouraging a commitment to justice and to service of those in need;
- † Promoting good stewardship of our time, talent and treasure;
- † Building a community of hospitality and support in the daily living out of Christian ideals by nourishing mutual respect and understanding within our Church, our families, our community, and other faith traditions.

SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

Saint Thomas the Apostle School provides students with a challenging and comprehensive education integrating spiritual values rooted in the Roman Catholic tradition. We cultivate and herald the growth of our students in mind, body, and spirit, preparing them to take their place in the Church and in the world, in roles of leadership and service.

OUR PROMISE

We promise . . .

- † To guide our students to grow in faith and knowledge in a God-centered environment, instilling the moral values necessary to enable our children to lead good Christian lives.
- † To awaken in each child, a love, desire, and appreciation for learning in a Catholic environment.
- † To educate the “whole person”, preparing our students to live joyfully, capable and confident that they, just as the Catholic school they attend, can make a difference.
- † To celebrate an attitude of successful achievement with each learner impacting his or her success with hard work and determination.

- † To teach our children to be aware of and care about the plight of other people, in our school community, our local community, national community, and global community.
- † To guide our children in their growth and development, integrating respect for the Creator, respect for self, and respect for others, to use their talents and gifts to serve others, so that they may become future leaders of the Catholic Church and the greater community.

ACCREDITATION

Saint Thomas the Apostle is accredited by the Middle States Association of Schools and Colleges.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Saint Thomas the Apostle School admits students of any race, color, national, ethnic, and religious origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the School. Saint Thomas the Apostle School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, athletic, and school-administered programs.

PURPOSE AND USE OF HANDBOOK

This handbook exists to foster the efficient operation of Saint Thomas the Apostle School. To meet this objective, the School administration has flexibility and the ability to exercise discretion. Inappropriate circumstances, the Principal **has the discretion to take actions other than those specified in the Handbook**. This Handbook is not intended and should not be considered to create any additional rights for students or parents/guardians. This Handbook is subject to change at any time when determined to be necessary by the School administration. If changes are made to the Handbook, parents/guardians will be notified promptly.

ADMISSIONS

Admission to Saint Thomas the Apostle School requires that the family and prospective student visit and tour the school, including an interview with an administrator or designee. The school administration engages in dialogue in order to create a relationship with the family and child enabling an informed decision and choice. Candidates chosen for admission must then complete the registration process prior to acceptance.

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

General requirements

The following items are required **at the time of registration**:

- Original Birth Certificate
- Original Baptismal Certificate
- Immunization Records
- Buy Now button for the non-refundable registration fee
- Proof of Parishioner status - Parish envelope
- Families of other Catholic parishes must obtain a letter from their pastor stating their Parishioner status.

Technical Requirements

Proof of Age: An original birth certificate must be submitted for proof of age.

The following is a list of birth date guidelines:

- The PreK 2.5 child must be 2.5 years of age on or before October 1st
- The Pre K 3 child must be 3 years of age on or before October 1st
- The Pre K 4 child must be 4 years of age on or before October 1st
- The Kindergarten child must be 5 years of age on or before October 1st
- The First Grade child must be 6 years of age on or before October 1st *The key date, which controls age requirements, is the date designated by the Bloomfield Board of Education.*

Health Requirements

Please refer to the school web site or the 2025/2026 Registration Handbook for specific requirements.

Uniform Philosophy

- Uniforms indicate membership, community, cooperation, spirit of camaraderie, and a common agreement of values among those who wear them. Saint Thomas the Apostle School uniforms enable students to represent and participate in the membership of a strong, loving, Christian community.
- Students wear the Saint Thomas the Apostle uniform with pride: pride in themselves and in their school. Saint Thomas the Apostle School encourages each student's uniqueness within the learning community.
- Our uniforms provide choices, acknowledge individuality, and maintain a dignified presence.
- Saint Thomas the Apostle School takes great pride in the students who wear the uniform and all that the uniform represents.
- Saint Thomas the Apostle School Uniforms must be purchased from the vendors listed:

Kindergarten Uniform

- Green Gym Sweatsuit
- Green Gym Shorts
- Gray Short-Sleeved Gym T-Shirt w/STA logo
- Sneakers (any color/no platforms)

Boys Grades 1 through 5

Fall & Spring Uniform

- Navy Shorts
- White Short-Sleeved Knit Polo Shirt w/STA logo
- White Socks & White Sneakers

Winter Uniform

- Khaki Pants
- Light Blue Long-Sleeved Oxford Shirt w/Choice of Tie
- Navy Socks & Dark Shoes (no sneakers, boots, or work boots)
- *Belts required to be worn with shorts & pants.

Boys Grades 6 through 8

Fall & Spring Uniform

- Khaki Shorts
- Navy Short-Sleeved Knit Polo Shirt w/STA logo
- White Socks & White Sneakers

Winter Uniform

- Khaki Pants
- Oxford Long-Sleeved Shirt w/Choice of Tie
- Navy Socks & Dark Shoes (No sneakers, boots, or work boots)
- *Belts required to be worn with shorts & pants.

Girls Grades 1 through 5 Fall & Spring Uniform

- Navy Shorts
- White Short-Sleeved Knit Over blouse w/STA logo
- White Socks & White Sneakers
- Plaid Jumper w/ Short Sleeved Blouse w/ Peter Pan Collar
- Navy Socks & Dark Shoes**

Winter Uniform: Combination A or B (No Mixing Items) Combination A:

- Plaid Jumper ***
- Light Blue Long-Sleeved or Short-Sleeved Blouse w/Peter Pan Collar
- Navy Blue Criss-Cross Tie
- Navy Knee Socks or Tights & Dark Shoes**(No sneakers, boots, or work boots)

Combination B:

- Khaki Pants
- White Long-Sleeved Knit Over blouse w/STA logo
- or**
- White Long-Sleeved Turtleneck w/STA logo
- Navy Socks & Dark Shoes**

Girls Grades 6 through 8 Fall & Spring Uniform

- Khaki Shorts* or Plaid Kilt ***
- Navy Short-Sleeved Knit Over blouse w/STA logo
- White Socks & White Sneakers with shorts
- Navy Socks & Dark Shoes** with kilt (No sneakers, boots, or work boots)

Winter Uniform: Combination A or B (No Mixing Items) Combination A:

- Plaid Kilt
- Light Blue Long-Sleeved Pointed Collar Blouse
- or**
- Navy Long-Sleeved Knit Over blouse w/STA logo
- Navy Knee Socks or Tights & Dark Shoes**(No sneakers, boots, or work boots)

Combination B:

- Khaki Pants
- Navy Long-Sleeved Knit Over blouse w/STA logo
- Navy Socks & Dark Shoes** (No sneakers, boots, or work boots)

****No open heels; heels & soles no higher than 1".**

***** Hem length should be no shorter than 2" above the knee.**

Boys & Girls Grades 1 through 8 Gym Uniform

Fall & Spring Uniform

- Green Shorts
- Gray Short-Sleeved T-Shirt w/STA logo
- Sneakers (any color/no platforms)

Winter Uniform

- Green Sweatsuit
- Gray Short-Sleeved T-Shirt w/STA logo
- Sneakers (any color/no platforms)

Boys & Girls Grades 1 through 8 Optional Items

Please note that only STA School Uniform Items may be worn in the classroom.

No other sweaters/sweatshirts are acceptable in the classroom.

- Navy Fleece Vest
- Navy Fleece Jacket
- Navy Microfiber Vest
- Navy V-Neck Sweater Vest

Dress Down Days (Tag Days)

On **Dress Down Days** students may wear their own clothes. However, this attire **must be school appropriate. The school administration has the right to judge the appropriateness of any attire or hair style worn at school.**

The following are not permitted to be worn on Dress Down Days:

- No Leggings, torn pants/jeans
- No shorts hemmed higher than 3" above the knee.
- No flip flops
- No Tank tops
- No Explicit or inappropriate wording on apparel.

	Lobel's Uniform Outfitters*
	5819 Bergenline Avenue West New York, NJ 07093
	Phone: 201-864-1700 www.lobels.net
*Lobel's Uniform Outfitters is the exclusive supplier for the Girls' Jumpers & Kilts and the Girls' & Boys' Gym Uniform components.	
LANDS' END	School Uniforms Preferred School #9000-6907-1 Preferred Logo #0280874K
Phone: 1-800-469-2222 www.landsend.com/school	

GENERAL INFORMATION

Financial Policy

The Saint Thomas the Apostle Parish Finance Council and Committee, in conjunction with the Pastor, establish the regulations under which the tuition and fees be paid. The Principal is charged with the duty of impartially enforcing these regulations. A student's class registration is provisional until such financial obligations have been satisfied. See Tuition Policy signed upon admission and refer to school website www.staschoolnj.org.

Tuition

Tuition rates are announced annually. All financial policies and obligations are described in the tuition contract, which is signed yearly by parents/guardians.

Federal & State Funded Programs

Students in Saint Thomas the Apostle School benefit from several State and Federal Funded grants and programs which provide remedial academic services, examination, and classification, transportation, etc.

Aid-In-Lieu Transportation Information

It is each family's responsibility to confirm their local Board of Education's participation in the aid-in-lieu transportation program regarding reimbursement. If your town participates, you must complete a *B6T Application for Private School Transportation Form*. Forms are available in the school office or on the school web site.

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

The gym/cafeteria door is used for arrival to the school building. Parents/guardians enter the church parking lot before the church via Byrd Ave and park in the lot behind the church. Cones are set up for safe arrival and dismissal. K-8 students will enter the schoolyard by the crossing guard, proceed from the parking lot to the designated school area (coned area) where they assemble until the first bell rings at 8:05 a.m.

At dismissal, parents enter the church parking lot before the church building via Byrd Ave and park in the lot behind the church. K-8 teachers escort students to the designated school area (coned area) where the students are released to the parent/guardian.

PreK students' arrival is at 8:10AM through the green doors at the front of the

building. Parents follow the same arrival procedures as K-8th grades for parking. Parents must escort students through the designated school area (coned area), around the school building to the ramp and green doors in the front of the school. PreK dismissal is at 2:40PM. Parents follow the same dismissal procedures as K-8th grades for parking. Parents/Guardians need to pick up their child at the green doors.

Parents must send in a signed note for any individuals allowed to pick up a student if a parent/guardian is not available. The exit is only via a right turn onto Byrd Avenue. **Children are not to be left off or picked up in the front of the school on Byrd Avenue, on the side of the school on Day Street, nor in the staff parking lot directly across from the school. Please note that the driveway between the Rectory and Church is a one-way for EXIT to Byrd Avenue only.**

Attendance

Prompt, regular attendance is essential to academic success. The parent/guardian is expected to foster these good habits in the student, both for the benefit of the student's current academic achievement and to encourage mature adult behavior in the future. Regular appointments with doctors or dentists should be scheduled after school hours, Saturdays or school holidays. Early dismissals are granted only in case of illness, emergencies or upon written request from the parent or guardian. Families are encouraged to plan any trips or vacations when school is not in session. The school discourages trips/vacations that coincide with the regular school schedule. **The written request should include the student's name, date, time, and reason for the early dismissal. Students granted permission to leave, must be picked up at the school office and signed out by the parent/guardian.**

Student Absence

A parent/guardian must call the school by 9:00 a.m. to report a child's absence. If no absence is reported, the school office will make a reasonable effort to reach a parent/guardian by phone to verify the absence. These procedures represent a mutual effort to account for the presence of the student during school hours. **An absence of three consecutive days or after a communicable disease requires a doctor's note.**

Absence from School and Participation in School Activities

- Doctor appointments should be made after 3:00 p.m. or on the days when there is no school. Please check the calendar and plan appointments accordingly.

- Parents who take their children on vacation during school time are responsible for their children to make up the schoolwork missed during the absence.
- If a student is absent from school because of illness or disciplinary action, he/she will not be permitted to take part in extra-curricular or athletic activities that day or evening.
- If a student is absent from school for a reason other than illness or disciplinary action, the school reserves the right to make an individual judgment regarding same day extra-curricular and athletic participation.
- New Jersey state law requires that all absences for any reason be recorded on the permanent record.
- If a student/s is picked up early from school for any reason, except being sent home from the nurse, the student/s may not be returned after 1:50 pm and is not permitted to Aftercare.

School Hours and Supervision

For students in grades Kindergarten - 8, school begins at 8:05 a.m. and ends at 2:50 p.m. Half-day supervision ends at 12:15 p.m.

- The administration and faculty bear no responsibility for students who arrive on school premises before 8:05 a.m. and are not registered in Before Care.
- Students who are not picked up on time at dismissal will be placed in After Care, and parents will be responsible for the fee incurred.
- Students who remain after dismissal for extracurricular activities will be supervised by the moderator of the activity.

Lateness

Students are expected to report on time for school. After four times late per trimester, a warning letter will be sent home. The fifth lateness will result in detention and an "I" (Improvement Needed) on the report card under "Obeys School Rules." This "I" would prevent a student from achieving the Honor Roll for that trimester.

8:05 a.m. Bell rings

8:20 a.m. Final Bell Rings—Doors close

Any student who does not enter the building while the door is open will be considered late and must report to the office for a late slip.

Before Care and Aftercare Programs

Saint Thomas the Apostle offers Before Care and Aftercare Programs for children in Preschool through Grade 8 to meet the needs of those parents whose children require supervision beyond the regular school hours. Before Care is from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. Aftercare is from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Aftercare is also available on half-days. A fee schedule is available in the School Office or on the school web site. All Before/After Care charges are billed to your Smart Tuition account. Billing is posted up until the 19th of the month and applied to your next month's Smart Tuition Invoice.

Emergency Closings

All parents/guardians will be notified of school closings via our alert system. Information may also be obtained by logging on to our website www.staschoolnj.org.

Books

Students are responsible for books issued each year. Books must be covered and kept in good order. If a book is damaged or lost, the expense of a new purchase will be the responsibility of the student.

Personal Property

The school cannot assume responsibility for damage to or loss of personal property.

Lunch

Lunch from home must be brought to school in the morning with the child. Parents are not permitted to drop lunch off during lunchtime. **No outside food vendor deliveries are allowed. (Examples: Grub Hub, Uber Eats, Door Dash, etc.) NO Soda, Caffeinated/High Sugar, or Energy Drinks are permitted.** The school offers a daily lunch program through *The Pit, Bloomfield*. The lunch program is on a monthly basis and must be paid through the STA Buy Now button 15 days prior to the start of the month. The monthly fee provides lunch for every full day of school in that month.

PLEASE BE ADVISED THAT NO FOOD WILL BE PROVIDED TO STUDENTS IF THEY DO NOT BRING LUNCH.

Flag Display

The United States flag is displayed on school grounds and in each assembly room or classroom during school hours. All are expected to stand, salute, and repeat the Pledge of Allegiance every school day.

Appointments with School Personnel

Parents who wish to meet with the Principal, a teacher or any member of the school staff must contact the teacher or school office to arrange a mutually convenient meeting time. For the sake of good order in the school, parents may

not approach staff members during the school day without arranging an appointment beforehand.

General Communications

Saint Thomas the Apostle School communicates with all parents/guardians via:

- The school website, www.staschoolnj.org
- Alert system
- Friday Folders (online & email)
- Parent-Teacher conferences
- Progress Reports (online via PowerSchool)

COMMUNICATION HOME TO SCHOOL

Any communication from home (e.g. notices signed by parents or payments such as Shop Rite Gift Certificates) sent to school should be placed in a sealed envelope labeled with the child's name, grade, and purpose of the correspondence.

EMAIL

When emailing a teacher/staff member, the response time is 48 hours from receipt of the email. If an email is sent on a non-school day, the response time will be 48 hours from the next school day.

Custodial and Non-Custodial Parental Regulations

Parents should inform the school of any special situation or change in living situation or such, which affects the student's well-being, safety, and/or health.

School Records

Saint Thomas the Apostle School abides by the provisions of applicable law with respect to the rights of non-custodial parents. In the absence of a court order to the contrary and upon request, the School will provide the non-custodial parent with access to the student's essential academic records. Requests should be made in writing.

Court Order

If there is a court order specifying the rights and responsibilities of individual parents, **it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the school with an official copy of the court order.** The custodial parent may wish to supply the Principal with the "custody section" of the divorce decree if it contains information, which may be useful to the School in fulfilling its obligations.

Restraining Order

The school cannot release a child to anyone named in a restraining order, even if the custodial parent requests so. The school is legally bound to observe the legal requirements of the restraining order.

Pick-Up from School

The school will permit only the custodial parent, or his/her designee, to pick up the child(ren) during or at the end of the school day. The non-custodial parent will not be permitted to remove the child from school during or at the end of the school day unless there is written authorization from the custodial parent. In an emergency, a clearly defined, one-time telephone authorization may be acceptable.

Home & School Association

The Home & School Association membership is comprised of parent/guardians and staff of Saint Thomas the Apostle School. The functions of the H & S Association shall be:

- To assist in the financial operation of the school by sponsoring major fundraising events.
- To provide parents the opportunity to become fully informed of the content and style of the school's educational program.
- To foster frequent and positive parent-teacher-child interactions as they affect the religious and general education of the children.
- To act as a communication group in making the work and achievements of the school well-known to the parish and community.

General H & S meetings are held several times throughout the year.

ACADEMIC INFORMATION

Curriculum

- The following is a list of major subjects which must be successfully completed by every student for promotion to the next grade: **Religion, Reading, Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science.**
- The basic curriculum is complemented with: **Art, Music, Computer, Foreign Language, Library Media, and Physical Education.**
- Instrument lessons are available for an additional fee.

Religious Education and Religious Services

The non-Catholic student is welcome at Saint Thomas the Apostle School, but he/she is expected to understand and agree that the School exists to educate in the framework of Catholic values. Non-Catholic students must participate in the Religion classes and liturgical services scheduled for the students during the year.

Grading

Grading at Saint Thomas the Apostle School is as follows:

Marking Code for Grades K-3

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Academics</u>
E=Exceeds	High Understanding
S=Secure	Understanding Demonstrated
D=Developing	Growth Demonstrated
B=Beginning	Beginning Stages
N=Not Yet Performing	Assistance Required

Marking Code for Grades 4-8

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Academics</u>
A+	97-100
A	92-96
B+	88-91
B	83-87
C+	78-82
C	73-77
D	70-72
U	Below 70

Personal Development Codes for Grades K-8

O=Outstanding

S=Satisfactory
I=Improvement Needed
U=Unsatisfactory

Report Cards

Report cards are available online three times per year.

Progress Reports

Progress reports will be available online via PowerSchool midway through a marking period and/or at any time determined to be beneficial by the teacher to provide an opportunity for improvement or signal a concern in specified areas. Student progress can be viewed at any time on PowerSchool.

It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to check the PowerSchool Portal for your child's grades. (Username and login information given by the school office.)

Honor Roll – Grades 4 - 8

Marks taken from the following subjects are used to determine honor status for students in grades 4 – 8: **Religion, Mathematics, Reading, Social Studies, Language Arts, Science, and Foreign Language.**

Honor Roll requirements are as follows:

- **High Honors:** A+'s and A's only
- **Honors:** A+'s, A's, B+'s and B's only
- **Special Recognition Award:** A student is recognized for satisfactory effort and/or improvement since the last marking period.

Additional Requirements:

The personal development effort in the above subjects and in **obey school rules** must be an "S" ("Satisfactory") or better. "U" and/or "I" ("Unsatisfactory" and/or "Improvement Needed") on the report card will render a student ineligible for the honor roll.

Homework

Homework assignments supplement and reinforce classroom learning. Parents are expected to assist students with homework and to sign it when requested. Each teacher will offer guidelines for homework assignments at the beginning of each year.

Homework Policy Due to Absence

- Requests for homework should be made when the child's absence is reported to the school office. **Homework can be picked up at dismissal time. (2:50 p.m.)**
- For short absences, students should make arrangements with classmates regarding assignments.
- Students may also, receive missed assignments from their teacher when they return to school.
- Students will be allowed one day for each day of absence due to illness. For example, a student who was absent three days should be given three school days to complete the missed work.

Academic Probation

A student whose academic performance indicates serious deficiencies may be placed on academic probation. Academic probation hinders a student's ability to participate in extra-curricular activities.

Extracurricular Policy

A student participating in any extracurricular activity must adhere to the policy outlined below. Extracurricular activities include sports and any club or organization sponsored by Saint Thomas the Apostle School.

- A student in Grades 4-8 must be passing each subject, including specials, with a "C" average. A "I" or "U" in effort or behavior will prohibit a student from participating in an extracurricular activity.

Student Athletics/ Extracurricular Activities:

- This is a privilege for all students to partake in school-wide sports and extracurricular activities.
- A privilege, not a right. All students, parents, club organizers, coaches, etc. are expected to act in a Christ-Like manner representing our school and community in a positive light.
- Any member of our school community who puts themselves in a negative situation at an event has an opportunity to be banned from said event.
- **Not obeying school rules, below average grades, negative behavior, and bullying will all lead to suspension from said activities and athletics.**
- **Should a student receive a grade of D and or I/U on a Progress Report/Report Card the student shall be suspended from their sport or club for a time period of two weeks or four matches/games whichever happens first.**
- **The school will notify the coach, athletic director, club organizer notifying them of any student who has gone against school policy and received a grade of D, I or U in any area of their Progress Report/ Report Card.**
- **Should a student who is suspended attempt to violate their suspension, the suspension will then be doubled for said student.**
- A student in Grades 1-3 must have teacher approval.
- A student must exhibit satisfactory behavior in school and at school events.

- Bi-weekly, teacher and staff will evaluate the performance of the student involved in an activity.
- If the student is not meeting the above-mentioned criteria, a school administrator or designee will issue a written warning. This probationary warning will put the student on probation, which allows the student to practice/participate with a team or group, but not participate in any games/meetings until the next evaluation.
- If the student's performance is not acceptable for a second time within a season or length of an activity, the student will be dismissed from the activity. At this time the student will no longer be eligible to participate in the activity for the remainder of the school year.
- As in all situations, this policy is at the discretion of the administration.

Promotion and Retention

Promotion and retention are determined by the teacher with the approval of the Principal. Both are based on the academic achievement and maturity level of the child. A student will be retained in a grade only when there is reason to believe he/she will benefit from the retention. Every effort should be made by both the school and parents to meet the student's needs, utilizing special services where they are required. If the school realizes that it can no longer service the particular needs of the student, after consultation with the parent, a transfer will be implemented.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

A formal parent-teacher conference will be held in the fall. Additional parent-teacher conferences will occur on an individual basis as needed through the school year. Notices will be sent home informing parents of the day and time of the scheduled conference. Additional conferences may be scheduled when needed.

Records and Transcripts

Viewing Records

A parent/guardian has the right to view a student's academic and health records, the emergency contacts sheet, and academic standardized test results. Records are available upon request.

Government Records

Records attached to publicly funded services provided through the local Board of Education, such as Child Study Team Reviews, Compensatory Education, Speech, English as a Second Language, etc., are the property of the Board of

Education. A parent/guardian who wishes to examine these records or to procure copies must request them from the school in writing.

Parents/guardian must personally pick up the records from school and deliver them to the receiving school in the event of a transfer.

Transcripts

Transcripts of academic and health records will not be given directly to the parent/guardian in the event of a transfer. A request for transfer must be submitted in writing by a parent/guardian. Transcripts will be sent directly to the receiving school. If the parent/guardian does not submit a request for transfer that includes an authorization to send a transcript, the receiving school must secure this permission and forward it to Saint Thomas.

Privacy of Records

The personnel of Saint Thomas the Apostle School maintains all students' records in confidence.

MAP Testing

MAP Growth Testing is administered three times per year. (Fall, winter, and spring for grades K-8.

Field Trips



On occasion, Saint Thomas the Apostle School will sponsor and conduct field trips for the educational enrichment of the students. Field trips are arranged and planned by the teachers with the approval of the Principal. Participation in the field trip is a privilege. Students with a history of poor conduct may be refused the right to participate. No student may participate in a field trip unless a signed parent/guardian permission slip for the specific event is submitted to the school. The permission slip form is provided to the parent/guardian by the school. Students denied participation will remain in the school under the supervision of a staff member. Parental moderators for the trip will be chosen at the discretion of the teacher and the principal and must be current and fully vetted through the PCG program.

GENERAL DISCIPLINE POLICY

A spirit of Christ-like charity, respect for authority and mutual cooperation are essential elements of the learning environment at Saint Thomas the Apostle School. Students are expected to act with courtesy and respect toward one another and toward all members of the staff. They must take seriously their obligation to develop lifetime habits of self-control and concern for the well-being of others. The families and school work together to help students learn and live the qualities of responsible behavior and elements of good citizenship. A student who chooses to disrupt the good order of the school or to violate a policy or regulation will have to accept the consequences of those irresponsible choices. Appropriate discipline is within the discretion of the Principal. Accountability for uncooperative, disruptive or unsafe behavior may take any of the following forms: written assignments, denial of privileges, detention, in-school suspension, suspension, or expulsion. Actions, which violate the law, threaten or cause harm to other students or staff members, disrupt or impede the welfare and progress of the school community, or bring discredit to the school will not be tolerated. Such actions or other violations of school rules may result in immediate expulsion. If a student persists in violating basic obligations of courtesy, consideration, respect, cooperation or safety, a Principal/Parent/Student /Teacher conference will be scheduled. All subsequent discipline, counseling, consultation and corrective action plans will be viewed as positive home and school efforts to help the student improve behavior. If these cooperative efforts of parents and school staff prove ineffective, the student will be subject to expulsion.

Student Behavior Expectations

1. Students enter the building at 8:05 a.m. and prepare for the day's work.
2. Respect for all is expected at all times.
3. Quiet is to be maintained in hallways and stairways at all times.
4. The students are expected to be prepared for all classes, including art, music, and gym.
5. Homework must be completed and handed into the teacher on time. Missed assignments will impact students' grades. Detention will be issued at the teacher's discretion. Missed assignments must be made up.
6. All children are responsible for the school property and the property of others. If an individual causes damages, the student assumes the responsibility of full payment for damages.
7. All books must be covered.
8. Lost/damaged books must be paid for by the parents/guardians.
9. All students must be in uniform every day.

10. Lipstick, make-up or nail polish is not to be worn during school hours.
11. Girls may wear one pair of earrings not larger than a dime and without hoops.
12. Boys are not allowed to wear earrings.
13. Jewelry is limited to one watch, one ring, and simple crosses or holy medals on a narrow silver or gold chain.
14. Boys' hair must be above the shirt collar as well as not in the face. Ponytails are not acceptable.
15. No student's hair should be bleached, highlighted, frosted, or dyed.
16. No one is allowed to be in the school building before and/or after school without the expressed permission of a designated authority.
17. No one is ever allowed to leave school grounds during school hours.
18. Proper conduct in the cafeteria is expected at all times. Students must clean their table and surrounding area.
19. Once a student is dismissed at lunchtime recess, he/she is not permitted to return to the school building without permission.
20. No one is permitted on the equipment in Vassar Field without either school or parental supervision.
21. Students must remain in the assigned play areas.
22. Gum chewing is forbidden on school property.
23. Scooters, bicycles, skateboards and recreational electronic devices are not permitted to be brought to school.
24. Cell phones are to be shut off and handed into the homeroom teacher upon arriving to school.
25. Throwing snowballs or playing in the snow is not allowed for safety reasons.
26. Students are not allowed to bring a weapon or any item that may be used as a weapon.
27. Tardiness (more than 4 times) in a trimester will result in an "I" (Improvement needed) on the report card under "Obeys School Rules."

Detention

Detention may be scheduled for students who fail to keep any of the regulations in the handbook including but not limited to any of the above infractions.

Further disciplinary actions will be taken if these minor infractions are not improved with detention time in school. The discipline process includes steps to address the increasing seriousness or frequency of the infractions. It will require written documentation and conference with the administrator, parents, teacher, and student.

Detention will be held at 7:15 a.m. on scheduled mornings, at recess period, or after school.

Suspension/Expulsion

Serious violations of the rules of St. Thomas the Apostle School may result in the following:

- **In-school suspension:** Student reports to school but is not permitted to participate in class-related activities; assignments are given and will be completed under the supervision of a staff member.
- **Suspension:** Temporary separation from school without assignments.
- **Expulsion:** Permanent separation from school.

These measures are always used in the best interest of the child and the school and not just as punishment for unsatisfactory behavior. These actions will usually be taken only after conference and consultation with concerned parties and are noted as part of the student's permanent record.

The following infractions may result in the above-mentioned disciplinary measures being taken. These include but are not limited to:

- Refusal to return signed report cards and/or behavioral reports
- Cheating
- Unacceptable verbal or written language
- Destruction of property
- Truancy
- Leaving school without permission from the school office
- Verbal assault, bullying including cyber-bullying, physical assault, or constant disruption in the classroom or in school.
- Deliberate destruction of property.
- Theft
- Continued suspensions with no improvement
- Possession, use of, or trafficking of controlled substances of any type including alcohol and tobacco **
- Immoral sexual behavior
- Misuse of internet or technology
- Possession and/or use of a weapon or threat of weapon use **
- Assault or verbal abuse to a teacher or any adult

** The school reserves the right to 'search' if there is probable or reasonable cause. The school reserves the right to 'seize' any of the above substances. The student's illegal activity shall be reported to the police, as required by law.

HEALTH & SAFETY



•Health Services

Saint Thomas the Apostle School, through with the coordination from Catapult Nursing Services provide a registered Nurse throughout the school year. Along with the state required health screening, the school nurse provides limited treatment and support for emergencies, illness, or injuries that occur during normal school hours. In the absence of the school nurse, the student will be treated by the main office staff. The school nurse is unable to cover before or after school care or accompany students on class trips. In order to provide the students, faculty, and staff of Saint Thomas the Apostle School with a healthy environment, it is important and necessary that the student's parent/guardian comply with all health office policies. **A copy of these policies is distributed to each family in the registration handbook and can be found on the school web site.**

•Peanut/Nut Awareness School Policy

This means that **no peanuts or tree nuts** (walnuts, almonds, cashews, pistachios, pecans, etc.) **may be brought into school.** Foods sent in for snack, lunch, class events, or school-sponsored functions (parties, celebrations, field trips, extra-curricular activities/clubs/sports, etc.) must not contain peanuts or tree nuts. Parents/Guardians are required to sign and return the annual *Policy Agreement Form* in the beginning of each school year.

Families can help ensure that our school stays peanut/tree nut free by reading packaging labels and reminding children not to share food with other children at school. If your child has eaten peanuts or nuts prior to coming into school, please be sure their hands are washed thoroughly before they enter the school

building. For a child who has one or both of these allergies, touching or inhaling even the slightest trace of residue may cause a reaction.

We must all work together to make sure that there is little opportunity for a child to be exposed to foods that could harm him/her. The administration appreciates the efforts on everyone's part to keep our school a safe environment for all of our children.

“The 24-Hour Rule”

Any student sent home by the school nurse or kept home by the parent/guardian for a temperature of higher than 100°, vomiting, diarrhea, or contagious infections such as strep throat, or “pink eye”, cannot return to school until they are symptom free, **without the assistance of medication, or are on an antibiotic for infection for a minimum of 24 hours.**

•Students Sent Home for Illness/Injury

Students who are sent home by the school nurse or office staff for illness or injury must be picked up by the parent/guardian or an alternate emergency contact within one hour of being notified. The parent/guardian or alternate contact must come into the building and sign the child out of school. Unless otherwise notified by the parent/guardian, the student will not be released to someone not listed as an alternate contact. No student will be sent home with a non-adult or alone. In the event of a medical emergency, the Bloomfield Emergency Squad will be contacted, and the parent/guardian notified.

•Medication Administration

A written and signed request from the parent/guardian **and** the student’s health care provider is legally required in order for medication to be given by the school nurse. The parent/guardian and the school nurse are the only individuals who can administer medication, including over the counter medication, to a student during school hours. No student is allowed to carry medication(s) or self-administer medication at school. Self-administration of asthma medication or emergency epinephrine is permitted **only** with written authorization from the parent/guardian and the student’s health care provider.

•Health Care Provider Requests

Written requests (signed and stamped by the student’s health care provider) are required for:

- All medication administration
- Use of the elevator (for injury only)
- Excuse from gym class
- Absence from school for **three or more consecutive school days.**
- Please refer to the Health Services Policies (found on the school web site or in the registration handbook) for additional information.

•Emergency Contact Information

Emergency contact information is kept on file in both the main and health offices. It is very important that the parent/guardian keep all emergency contact information up to date. Any changes, especially in phone numbers (home/mobile/work) of the parent/guardian, as well as alternate emergency contacts, are to be made as soon as possible. All alternate emergency contacts must be available to pick up the student when notified.

Fire Drills and Lock Downs

Fire drills and Lock Downs are held on a monthly basis. Teachers review and practice the procedures with their classes regularly.

Visitors

For the safety of our children, all visitors (including parents) must report to the School Office. If a parent/guardian needs to bring something to school for their child during the school day, it must be brought to the vestibule entrance and the school representative will retrieve it.

Student Accident Insurance

Saint Thomas the Apostle has purchased School Time Accident Coverage to protect all students against accidental injury or death occurring while the policy is in effect. This insurance covers the hours and days when school is in session and while attending school-sponsored and supervised activities. This includes all Interscholastic Sports. Additional coverage may be purchased with optional 24-hour coverage. Forms pertaining to this are sent home at the beginning of the school year.

Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect

New Jersey State Law requires that any school personnel, who have reasonable cause to believe that a child may have been subjected to abuse or neglect, must make a report to the New Jersey Division of Child Protection and Permanency. (DCPP)

Asbestos Management Plan

Saint Thomas the Apostle's Asbestos Management Plan is on file in the school

office, as required by the Federal Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA). This document is available for examination upon request.

CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES

Drug and Alcohol Policy

Saint Thomas the Apostle School recognizes and reaffirms that alcohol and drugs remain illegal substances for underage persons. By law, the school prohibits distribution, possession, and or utilization of any illegal substance, such substance being defined as a drug, substance or immediate precursor as defined at N.J.S.A. 2C:35-2, including controlled substance analogs. Any student utilizing, distributing, or possessing such substances shall be subject to immediate expulsion.

Firearms and Weapons Policy

No one, adult or child, is permitted to bring a firearm or weapon into the building, excluding police and/or other proper government authorities.

HARASSMENT

Saint Thomas maintains an atmosphere free of violence, personal abuse or any other form of harassment. Harassment may be student-to-student, student-to-teacher, teacher-to-student, employee-to-student or employee-to-employee. Threats of violence and other abusive expressions, physical harassment, corporal punishment, use of inappropriate sexual words, actions or innuendoes, comments directed at a person's gender are all inappropriate and will not be tolerated. Violations of this no-harassment policy will be treated as a significant Disciplinary matter.

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Bullying constitutes inappropriate conduct that is detrimental to the learning process and the establishment of a safe and fear-free school environment. Saint Thomas the Apostle School opposes bullying and adopts this policy to encourage all members of the school community (employees, students, parents) to take appropriate steps to prevent and respond to bullying behaviors.

Bullying is a form of aggression that occurs when one or more individuals intentionally subject another person (the "target" of the bullying) to unwanted and hurtful action that results in the target feeling oppressed and interferes with a safe and fear-free school environment for that person. While bullying may involve just

a single incident, it is frequently characterized by repeated aggressive actions. Bullying may include, but is not limited to, the following types of conduct:

- Verbal: name-calling, teasing, threatening, taunting, and gossiping.
- Emotional: shunning, isolating, rejecting, terrorizing, defaming, humiliating, blackmailing, manipulating friendships, initiating rumors, and exerting coercive peer pressure.
- Physical: any sort of aggressive physical contact, including punching, poking, shoving, kicking, choking, pulling hair, beating, biting, and tickling.

Note: bullying of a sexual nature will be addressed through the school's policy and procedures for sexual harassment.

Prevention

1. Saint Thomas hereby provides this information to school employees, students, and parents about the identification, prevention, and correction of bullying.
2. Saint Thomas provides ongoing training about the nature and seriousness of bullying, as well as prevention and intervention strategies to all school employees.
3. Saint Thomas provides students with learning activities regarding the nature and seriousness of bullying; standards of acceptable behaviors; and ways in which students can be actively involved in creating a safe school environment.
4. Saint Thomas encourages communication between teachers, administrators, and parents to promote the strong partnerships necessary to most effectively prevent and intervene with bully/target problems.
5. Saint Thomas shall conduct periodic assessments regarding the types and prevalence of bullying in order to gauge program effectiveness and needs.
6. Recognizing the importance of positive role modeling, Saint Thomas staff shall model appropriate anti-bullying strategies and behaviors.

Intervention

1. Individualized interventions to equip students with pro-social and coping skills shall be provided to students who exhibit bullying behaviors and those who are targets of such behaviors.
2. Any person who reports an incident of bullying shall not be subject to

retaliation. Appropriate measures shall be taken to discourage and promptly address any retaliation or attempts to “get even” with the target and/or the person who reports the bullying conduct.

3. Allegations of bullying shall be promptly investigated. Consideration shall be given to the due process rights of the accused as well as the need for confidentiality and safety of the target and reporting person.
4. Bullying can lead to disciplinary consequences, including but not limited to reprimand, suspension, change of schedule or placement, expulsion, denial of participation or privileges, or detention.

Sexuality

The learning environment and religious nature of Catholic schools are guided by the Catechism of the Catholic Church. The Catechism of the Catholic Church can be found at the website for the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops.

Among other things, the Catechism of the Catholic Church states: “By creating the human being man and woman, God gives personal dignity equally to the one and the other. Each of them man and woman should acknowledge and accept his sexual identity.” (§2393, Catechism of the Catholic Church).

“except within a valid marriage between a man and woman (see, e.g. Sections 2360-2363, Catechism of the Catholic Church), Christ is the model of chastity, which all are called upon to emulate. See, e.g. Sections 2392-2397, Catechism of the Catholic Church.”

If a student’s expression of gender, sexual identity or sexuality should cause confusion or disruption at Catholic school, should mislead others, cause scandal or have the potential for causing scandal, then the matter will be discussed with the student and his/her parents. If not resolved to the satisfaction of the School, which is seeking to uphold Catholic principles, then the student will be expelled from the Catholic School after the parents are first given the option to immediately withdraw the student from the School.

As in the case of students, if serious concerns arise as to a parent’s or guardian’s (herein “parent’s”) position or action with respect to the tenets of the Catholic faith, then he/she will be counseled by the school. If the matter involving the parents/student(s) is not resolved to the satisfaction of the School, which is seeking to uphold Catholic principles, then the parent will be asked to withdraw child (ren) from School and they agree to do so immediately. If they fail to do so, parents understand that child(ren) will be expelled from the Catholic school.

COMPUTER AND INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

Saint Thomas the Apostle School offers computer use and Internet access for student use through the school's computer network. The *Acceptable Use Policy* for student's use of the Network is as follows:



Educational Purpose

1. The Network has been established for a limited educational purpose. The term "educational purpose" includes classroom activities, research, and class assignments.
2. The Network has not been established as a public access service or a public forum. Saint Thomas has the right to place reasonable restrictions on the material the student accesses or posts through the system. The student is also expected to follow the rules set forth and all local, state and federal laws in his/her use of the Network.
3. The School reserves the right to filter the content delivered on the Network.
4. The student may not use the Network for commercial purposes. This means the student may not offer, provide, or purchase products or services through the Network.
5. The student may not use the Network for political lobbying.

Student Internet Access

1. The student will have access to Internet information resources through computers in their classrooms, library, or computer lab.
2. The student may not obtain an individual e-mail account on the Network.
3. The student and his/her parent/guardian must sign an Account Agreement to be granted access to the Network. This Agreement must be renewed on an annual basis.

Unacceptable Uses

The following uses of the Network are considered unacceptable:

1. Personal Safety
 - a. The student may not post personal contact information about themselves or other people. Personal contact information includes address, telephone, school address, etc.
 - b. The student may promptly disclose to his/her teacher or the administration any message received that is inappropriate or makes the student feel uncomfortable.

- c. The student may not access chat areas, instant messaging or similar services.
 - d. The student may not access personal email accounts at school.
2. Illegal Activities
- a. The student may not attempt to gain unauthorized access to the Network or to any other computer system through the School's internet access or go beyond the student's authorized access. This includes attempting to log in through another person's account or accessing another person's files. These actions are illegal, even if only for the purposes of "browsing."
 - b. The student may not make deliberate attempts to disrupt the computer system or destroy data by spreading computer viruses or by any other means. These actions are illegal.
 - c. The student may not use the school's Internet system to engage in any other illegal act, such as arranging for a drug sale or the purchase of alcohol, engaging in criminal gang activity, threatening the safety of a person, etc.
3. System Security
- a. The student is responsible for his/her password. Under no conditions should the student provide his/her password to another person.
 - b. The student must immediately notify a teacher or the system administrator if he/she has identified a possible security problem. The student should not go looking for security problems, because this may be construed as an illegal attempt to gain access.
 - c. Students must avoid the inadvertent spread of computer viruses by following the School virus protection procedures for downloading software.
4. Inappropriate Language
- a. Restrictions against inappropriate language apply to public messages, private messages and material posted on Web pages.
5. The student may not use obscene, profane, lewd, vulgar, rude, inflammatory, threatening or disrespectful language
- Respect for Privacy
- a. The student may not repost a message that was sent privately without permission of the person who sent the message.
 - b. The student may not post private information about another person.
6. Respecting Resource Limits
- a. Students use the Network only for educational and career development activities.
 - b. The student may not download any file or install any software unless he/she receives permission from the teacher directly in charge of the computer the student is using.

- c. The student may not post chain letters or engage in “spamming.” Spamming is sending any annoying or unnecessary message to a large number of people.
7. Plagiarisms and Copyright Infringement
- a. The student may not plagiarize works that he/she finds on the Internet. Plagiarism is taking the ideas or writings of others and presenting them as if they were original.
 - b. Students will respect the rights of copyright owners. Copyright infringement occurs when you inappropriately reproduce a work that is protected by copyright is inappropriately reproduced. If a work contains language that specifies appropriate use of that work, the student should follow the expressed requirements. If the student is unsure whether or not he/she can use a work, the student should request permission from the copyright owner.
8. Inappropriate Access to Material
- a. The student may not use the Network to access material that is profane or obscene (pornography), that advocates illegal acts, or that advocates violence or discrimination towards other people (hate literature). A special exception may be made for hate literature if the purpose of the access is to conduct research and both the student’s teacher and parent/guardian have approved.
 - b. If the student mistakenly accesses inappropriate information, he/she should immediately tell his/her teacher. This will protect the student against a claim that he/she has intentionally violated this Policy.
 - c. The student’s parents/guardians should instruct the student if there is additional material that they think it would be inappropriate for the student to access. The School fully expects that the student will follow his/her parents’/guardians’ instructions in this matter.

AI Policy

The integration of artificial intelligence, AI, must be guided by the mission of STA, which seeks the holistic development of students – spiritually, academically, morally, and socially. AI should serve as a tool that enhances the educational experience, always aligning with the values of the Catholic Church and the dignity of the human person.

Student’s Rights

- 1. Search and Seizure
 - a) The student should expect only limited privacy in the contents of his/her personal files on the Network. The situation is similar to the rights the student has in the privacy of his/her locker and/or backpack.

- b) Routine maintenance and monitoring of the Network may lead to the discovery that the student has violated this Policy.
- c) An individual search will be conducted if there is reasonable suspicion that the student has violated this Policy or the law. The investigation will be reasonable and related to the suspected violation.

2. Due Process

- a) The School will cooperate fully with the local state or federal officials in any investigation related to any illegal activities conducted through the Network.
- b) In the event there is a claim that the student has violated the Policy in his/her use of the Network, he/she will be provided with a written notice of the suspected violation and an opportunity to present an explanation before the Principal.
- c) If the violation also involves a violation of other provisions of the Handbook, it will be handled in a manner described in the Handbook. Additional restrictions may be placed on the student's use of his/her Internet account.

3. Limitation of Liability

The School makes no guarantee that the functions or the services provided by or through the Network will be error-free or without defect. The School will not be responsible for any damage the student may suffer, including but not limited to, loss of data or interruptions of service. The School is not responsible for the accuracy or quality of the information obtained through or stored on the Network. The School will not be responsible for financial obligations arising through the un- authorized use of the Network.

Cell phone/ Smart Technologies Policy

The STA cell phone/smart technologies policy below aims to maintain a learning-focused environment where students can thrive academically and socially, without unnecessary distractions or privacy violations. We appreciate your cooperation and understanding in supporting a safe, respectful, and educationally productive school community. If you need to get in touch with your child/children for any reason during school hours, please call the office at 973-338-8505.

General Policy on Cell Phones:

Students are permitted to bring cell phones to school, but they must adhere to the following rules for the benefit of all students, staff, and the school community. Cell phones are not allowed to be used during the school day.

1. Upon arrival at school, cell phones must be secured in the schoolbag before entering the school building. Students are required to turn in their cell phones to the homeroom teacher where they will be securely stored during the school day. This ensures that cell phones do not become distractions during instructional time.
2. Cell phones will be returned to students at the end of the school day and immediately secured in the schoolbag until the students leave the building at dismissal.
3. Cell phones cannot be used at morning or aftercare and must remain secured in a backpack.
4. Students are prohibited from using their cell phones or other devices to record video, audio, or take pictures during the school day. This includes, but is not limited to recording other students, staff, classroom activities, or events.
5. Students are not permitted to use pictures, screenshots, or videos of any school-related events, staff, or students for the purpose of posting, altering, or sharing on social media.
6. Students must respect the privacy of others and avoid any actions that could cause discomfort, bullying, or privacy violations.
7. Any pictures or content that appear on the school's official social media pages (e.g., Facebook, website) may not be copied, altered, or redistributed by students.

If any student is caught with a cellphone during school hours, morning, or aftercare, their cellphone will be confiscated, and a parent will have to come to the office to retrieve it. Furthermore, students will receive detention for not following the policy.

All other smart/communication devices, including smartwatches, air pods, and smart glasses are not permitted in school. If your child/children are caught with any of these devices, their devices will be confiscated, and a parent will have to come to the office and retrieve them. Furthermore, students will receive detention for not following the policy.

If the same student is caught three times with a cell phone or any smart/communicating devices, this will result in an in-school suspension. If the same student is caught more than three times, this will result in suspension or expulsion.

Saint Thomas the Apostle School Administration reserves the right to amend this Handbook. Amendments will be sent to parents as necessary.