



# St. Thomas More School Student and Parent Handbook

## 2025-2026

Principal: Mr. Michael Collins

Pastor: Fr. Tim Ralston

St. Thomas More School

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Dear Parents,

Welcome to St. Thomas More School! This handbook is provided to students and families as a resource for developing and ensuring an understanding of the mission, goals, and procedures of St. Thomas More School. This understanding and common purpose is the foundation of the learning and faith community for which we strive.

Of course, no handbook can contain the entirety of the rules, procedures, and customs of a school community. While this handbook is a beginning, ongoing communication is essential to the orderly operation and growth of our school. In a quickly evolving world, where new technologies and practices often pose challenges to old paradigms, we - students and adults alike - are “works in process.” As a school community, we are dedicated to providing the best for our students and families. That requires that we constantly reflect upon our experiences and improve upon our practices. Amendments may be made to this handbook throughout the school year.

This handbook is the beginning of our dialogue for this school year, a dialogue that will continue through our weekly Cardinal Corner newsletters, Education Commission meetings and minutes, and various reports, surveys and other communications. I invite you to engage in the dialogue by carefully reading communication from the office and teachers, by cooperating with the policies and procedures defined in this handbook, and by initiating questions when needed.

St. Thomas More School is committed to giving your children, first and foremost, a strong Catholic faith foundation so that they, too, will become disciples of Jesus and spread His Good News. This can only be accomplished by partnering with parents, who form the “domestic church” and are the “primary educators” in the faith (*CCC, paragraph 2223-2226*). Furthermore, we are not a truly Catholic school without also providing an excellent educational experience for each and every student. Our focus will be on student learning and we are committed to doing whatever it takes to ensure optimal learning and success for each and every student. Every teacher on our staff brings an enthusiastic, positive attitude to the classroom, a vast store of knowledge about the curriculum, and a deep dedication to the Christian faith and to the well-being of each child. We appreciate your confidence in our school, and look forward to sharing an exciting year of growth with you and your child. It’s going to be a great year!

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

Michael Collins  
Principal

### St. Thomas More School Mission Statement

St. Thomas More School grounds students in their Catholic faith, inspires them to wonder, and challenges them to give their best to the world.

### St. Thomas More Accreditation:

St. Thomas More School is accredited by the Ohio Catholic School Accrediting Association (OCSAA) May 2021-2027, and is a member of the National Catholic Education Association (NCEA).

Accreditation Goals:

1. Catholic Identity Goal: Students will investigate and increase their knowledge of the social justice teaching of solidarity and call to family to enhance the school culture.
2. Academic Performance Goal: Students will increase synthesis of Comprehension across the curriculum.

### Accreditation Statement of Beliefs

1. We believe that every individual is a witness to the teaching of Jesus Christ and has the mission to spread the Gospel to others through prayer, example, and service.
2. We believe that our school should be a warm, inviting, safe environment where every child can develop his/her unique talents and gifts.
3. We believe that our school guides our students to reach their full potential through academic excellence as life-long learners.
4. We believe that the school, an integral part of the parish, should foster the community spirit by encouraging students to work cooperatively with their peers and other members of the parish.
5. We believe that parents are the primary educators of their children, working closely with the school staff, while being exemplary faith-filled role models.
6. We believe that children should develop an appreciation for the arts, for the diversity of cultures in the world, and for the gifts and talents of their peers.
7. We believe that we should prepare every student to be successful, responsible, Christian members of society.
8. We believe that technology is an important part of 21<sup>st</sup> Century teaching and learning.
9. We believe a variety of teaching and learning methods promotes student learning.
10. We believe high expectations and goal setting foster quality performance, while instilling student ownership of learning.

### Catholic Identity and Religious Formation

Catholic School education has been a powerful anchor for Catholic families in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati since the first school opened in 1824. Schools have provided faith-filled communities rooted in Gospel values and traditions, along with strong academic programs designed to meet the academic and developmental needs of students. The religious mission of Catholic schools, their Catholic identity, and faith formation, is the soul of the school's programs and activities. The Foundational Statements clearly hold out the religious mission as the factor that distinguishes Catholic schools from other educational options. We believe that Catholic Schools have demonstrated that they have been and continue to be successful in this mission. In order to maintain this success in these changing times, there must be a strong cooperative effort among pastors, principals, teachers, parents, and the Catholic Schools Office to promote faith formation at all levels of the Catholic School community and parish.

### Catholic Identity and Faith Formation Goals:

1. Cultivate an atmosphere within each school that incarnates Gospel values (i.e., those exemplified in the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy), and celebrates the vitality of the Catholic faith.
2. Provide opportunities for adult faith formation whenever parents/guardians (adults) gather so they will be empowered to fulfill their responsibility as the primary religious educators of their families (children).
3. Promote the integration of our students into being active members of our parish.

### History of St. Thomas More School

In the fall of 1944, the old church building reopened as St. Thomas More Elementary School. During the summer of 1945, the Glaser residence, near the new church, added 4 additional classrooms. The Glaser property also included three acres of land, which connected the two parish properties. The Glaser residence is still in use, being converted to the parish rectory shortly after Fr. Heider's twenty-fifth anniversary of ordination, on June 14, 1949.

The present elementary school building known as Father Heider Hall was built in June of 1948, with 4 classrooms and a large auditorium. Bishop Rehring, Auxiliary Bishop of Cincinnati, dedicated the school in 1949. Four additional classrooms were added in 1952.

By 1996, the parish had grown to 1,200 families, and the planning of what is known as "Phase I" began. Included in this ambitious project were the remodeling of the front entrance, a multi-purpose building (gym), library, parish dining room and kitchen, meeting rooms, and kindergarten. Phase I also brought the renovation of the church undercroft that is now used for primary level classrooms. The concept of a Marian Grotto at St. Thomas More Parish began during the planning stage of Phase I.

In the fall of 2002, two new modular buildings were installed to house our fourth and fifth grade classrooms and a state auxiliary classroom facility.

## ADMISSION POLICIES

St. Thomas More School is operated and maintained primarily through the financial support of the members of St. Thomas More Parish in order to provide a Catholic elementary education to the children of the parish. Admission is nondiscriminatory in terms of race, creed, and national origin, with the exception that first priority in admission is given to children of duly registered active parishioners. Acceptance of students requiring special education services will be on a case-by-case basis with annual review. Admission of all new students is subject to the approval of the school principal after review of academic, disciplinary, and attendance records. St. Thomas More School complies with the requirements of Title IX, which states, "No person in the U.S. shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in or denied the benefits of or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving federal aid."

Students must be 5 years old by August 1 to begin Kindergarten. The principal shall evaluate on a case-by-case-basis whether or not St. Thomas More School can meet the needs of the student with a disability. If the school can make reasonable accommodations to meet the student's needs, the student will be admitted on a trial basis pending further evaluation.

### New Student Admission

The following procedure will be followed for all students who are seeking admission to St. Thomas More School:

- Review of records from the previous school
- Reading and Math screening may be administered
- Interview with the principal or the designee for junior high students (at principal's discretion)
- Probationary period of 45 days, which may continue at principal's discretion
- Parent/teacher/principal conference may take place before the end of the probationary period at the discretion of the parent, teacher, and/or principal

New students' academic and behavioral progress will be reviewed every 15 days during the first 45 days of probation. If the reviews are unsatisfactory, parents will be notified along with suggestions for improvement. If the reviews continue to be unsatisfactory, another plan may be considered or the student may be asked to withdraw from St. Thomas More School

### Registration

The family registration fee is due upon registration, and acts as a non-refundable deposit for all students. Renewal of registration for current St. Thomas More families will be announced in January via the school newsletter and church bulletin. The re-enrollment period for current students and any new siblings will continue until Open House, scheduled for the last Sunday of January. Beginning with Open House, registration will be open to non-parishioners, with priority given to families of students currently enrolled in St. Thomas More School. Others will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis with admission priorities applied. Before admission will be approved, the following documents must be presented to the school office:

- A copy of the student's baptismal certificate
- A certified birth certificate
- A school transfer information form (to be completed by previous school if admitting for Grades 1-8)
- If the parents are divorced, the school must receive a copy of the court order designating custody and parental rights. Noncustodial parents or parents who share custody have full access to educational records as stated in the Buckley Amendment. A separate FACTS account is provided for each household.
- Proof of immunization as required by state law

Families who are delinquent in tuition or other school financial matters will not be permitted to register until all financial obligations have been resolved. ***Requests for a specific teacher are not accepted, as our intent is to provide competent, caring staff in all positions.***

#### Tuition Deposit

A non-refundable tuition deposit will be charged per family to secure admission for accepted students. The entire deposit is due at the time of registration for all new and returning students. Students will not be placed on class lists unless the tuition deposit has been paid.

#### Admission Priorities

Students will be admitted to St. Thomas More School based on the following priorities:

1. Has an older sibling attending St. Thomas More
2. Has an older sibling who graduated from St. Thomas More
3. Is the first child of a family registered at St. Thomas More
4. Is a member of a newly baptized Catholic family.
5. Is a member of an active\* Catholic family which has recently registered at St. Thomas More Parish and students previously attended a Catholic school.
6. Is a member of an active\* Catholic family which has recently registered at St. Thomas More Parish.
7. Is an active\* member of a parish that does not have a Catholic school.
8. Is a non-Catholic student whose parents understand and accept that the student will be required to participate in the total school program with the exception of reception of the sacraments.

\* Family has a history of weekly active participation in the faith life and financial support of the parish. Active participation is defined as weekly attendance at Sunday Mass, active participation in the parish and/or school, and financial support of the parish. Financial support of the parish is documented by use of the weekly parish offering envelope.



## FINANCIAL POLICIES

### Payment Policy

In order to make tuition and all incidental fees, all families are required to set up a FACTS tuition account. Credit or debit cards may be used to make payments for cafeteria charges in your FACTS account.

### Tuition

The per-student cost for a year of education at St. Thomas More School is presently more than \$6,000.00. Tuition is charged to assist in the support of school operations. St. Thomas More School is subsidized by the parish as an evangelical ministry and to assist parents in the religious formation of their children. Members of the parish who meet the guidelines set forth by the pastor (see ADMISSION POLICIES, Page 7) will be awarded “in-parish” tuition status. Families who do not meet the guidelines for “in-parish” tuition may register at St. Thomas More School if space is available, but will be required to pay the full cost of their child’s education.

Tuition may be paid “up-front” (Plan A) before July 15 in order to eliminate finance costs. Families who wish to finance the cost of tuition may contract with FACTS Tuition Management Company in order to pay over a ten-month period (Plan B) via automatic debit to a checking, savings, or credit card account. Monthly payments will continue to be due either on the 2nd or the 16th of the month beginning in July through April. Registration is NOT considered final, and children will NOT be placed on class lists until all financial arrangements have been submitted and approved by the Business Manager, and the tuition deposit has been paid.

### Tuition Aid

STM has three financial aid programs available as outlined below. We recommend that you apply for all programs for which you believe you may qualify to increase your odds of receiving financial aid. All programs have qualification requirements, are first come, first served, and have limited funding.

**Archdiocese of Cincinnati (AOC) student grant money** through the Catholic Education Foundation (CEF) is available to K-8 students, both Catholic and non-Catholic. The grant is need-based and cannot exceed \$1,200 per student. The deadline to apply for AOC assistance is January 31 of each year. Please see the school website for more details.

**Parish tuition assistance** is also based on need. You may apply for parish tuition assistance using the same FACTS application used for the AOC grant. When applying for the AOC grant, please select St. Thomas More from the drop down menu on the AOC application, and your application will be submitted to both the AOC and St. Thomas More Church. To qualify for parish assistance, in addition to need, you must be Catholic, a registered parishioner, and attend Mass regularly. In order to be evaluated for Parish tuition assistance, you will also need to submit the previous year’s tax returns and W2s. If the forms are not ready by January 31, the AOC deadline, please fill out the FACTS application so you can meet the AOC deadline and be considered for those grants. You can then return to the FACTS application later and submit the previous tax returns and W2s before April 30.

**OHIO’s EdChoice Scholarship.** St. Thomas More School is a provider for the EdChoice scholarship. The Traditional EdChoice scholarship is based on public school performance, and the EdChoice Expansion scholarship is income-based and currently available for students in K-12. To qualify for EdChoice, students must first be accepted by St. Thomas More School; and then the application, as well as financial verification for the Expansion program, must be sent to the state for approval. Please visit the school’s website for more details.

### Withdrawal of Students

Records of students who are withdrawn or expelled from St. Thomas More School will be released upon written request from the school of next enrollment and after all financial obligations (including return of school-owned books, equipment, and materials) to St. Thomas More School have been met. It is important to note that teacher contracts are issued based on student registration numbers. The contracts commit the school to payment of payroll for an entire year. Families withdrawing prior to the first day of school forfeit any tuition paid through the FACTS

contract as well as tuition deposits. Students' families who physically relocate outside of the area served by the parish may request a refund according to the following schedule:

- Before July 1	100% Refund	-Before February 1	25% Refund
- Before December 1	50% Refund	-After February 1	NO REFUND

**Refund of tuition paid “up front” will be prorated with no refunds given after the end of the second trimester.**

Parents wishing to withdraw their student should complete a Student Withdrawal Form and submit to the school office.

**Parent Support**

The education of a student is a partnership between the parents and the school. Parents are expected to support the efforts of the school to guide their child's spiritual, academic, social, and emotional development. Parent interaction with school and parish staff, and other members of the community should, at all times (including both athletic and social events during or outside of school hours), reflect our Catholic values and common courtesy. A parent who engages in conduct detrimental to the reputation of St. Thomas More School, or who fails to support the efforts of the school as noted above, may be requested to withdraw his/her child from the school. Just as a parent has a right to withdraw a child if desired, the school administration reserves the right to require the withdrawal of a student if the administration determines that the partnership has been irretrievably broken. Parish families are expected to support the efforts of the school in the spiritual formation of their children by regular participation in the Saturday/Sunday Eucharist each week and on Holy Days of Obligation.

**Participation & Service**

Time, Talent and Treasure: Participation in our school and parish provides an opportunity for our school families to help build and strengthen our parish and school community. Adult participation (parents, grandparents, relatives, etc.) is essential to the success of our school. Each STM school family is encouraged to contribute as much time and talent as possible to STM. Presently, JulyFest (the parish festival) and PTO's "Walk M.O.R.E." are our major fundraisers, and other fundraisers are held throughout the year. These include, but are not limited to: PTO, Boosters, Scouts, coaching, parent education seminars, parish education seminars, participation in RCIA as a sponsor or candidate, attending catechetical training classes, classroom help (in the classroom or work done at home for a teacher), field trips, library, and school cafeteria.

**Gender Dysphoria Policy**

As a Catholic school, St. Thomas More follows the Archdiocese of Cincinnati policy regarding gender identity. All curricular and extra-curricular activity is rooted in and consistent with the principles of Catholic doctrine. Catholic schools:

- Support students with gender dysphoria by treating them with sensitivity, respect, mercy, and compassion.
- Require that participation on school sports teams be according to biological sex.
- Require that names and pronouns be in accordance with the person's biological sex.
- Designate Catholic sex education, uniforms and gender appropriate dress, bathrooms, locker rooms, showers, and sleeping accommodations on trips according to biological sex.
- Maintain names in school records according to the student's biological sex.
- Provide reasonable accommodation to a private bathroom for use by any student who desires increased privacy.
- In case of specific requests, consider in a compassionate way, on a case-by-case basis, the physical and psychological needs of a student based on the following questions:
  - What is the specific request of the student and/or parents?
  - Is the request in keeping with the teaching of the Catholic Church?
  - Is the school reasonably able to accommodate the request?

## ACADEMIC POLICIES

St. Thomas More School operates under the policies and supervision of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. The instructional program is based on the state-approved Graded Course of Study provided by the Catholic Schools Office of the Archdiocese. The academic program is briefly described below.

### Preschool

The preschool program takes a hands-on approach to learning. The curriculum follows the Early Learning Content Standards and Development from the Ohio Department of Education and engages the child in activities that nurture compassion, honesty, and independence.

### Kindergarten

Academic skills are presented in the kindergarten program, but the emphasis is on developing mental, physical, and social skills through varied and stimulating experiences in preparation for the primary program. The success of the kindergarten student is measured along developmental and readiness lines.

### Primary (Grades 1-3)

The focus of the primary grades is the acquisition of basic skills in reading, writing, and mathematics. Social studies, science, health, music, art, and physical education are not considered major subjects but are often included in cross-curricular activities during reading, writing, and math.

### Intermediate (Grades 4-5)

Students in grades 4 and 5 are essentially “reading to learn.” This constitutes a major shift in instruction and requirements from the primary grade experience. The language arts program supports the integration of reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. Some classes may be departmentalized, to allow specialization in subject areas such as math, science, and social studies. Spelling and the mechanics of writing are seen as tools for written expression, rather than goals of written expression. As such, spelling assessment is incorporated in the language arts grade and does not require a separate letter grade.

### Junior High (Grades 6-8)

Grades 6-8 continue development of skills and understanding in the core subjects: Religion, language arts, science, social studies, and mathematics. Classes are departmentalized in the areas of language arts, science, social studies, mathematics and religion in order to provide for the development of subject area specialists. This also ensures continuity of instruction from grade to grade. Ability grouping may be used in junior high for reading, language arts, and mathematics to help meet the educational needs of the students. Junior high students, as well as 5<sup>th</sup> graders and full-day preschoolers, are provided instruction in Spanish.

Junior High students will be assigned a Chromebook for their use at school and at home. The Chromebooks, however, remain the property of the local school district, and students are responsible for any damage to the devices.

### St. Thomas More School Chromebook and Network Acceptable Use Policy

DISCLAIMER: St. Thomas More School reserves the right to revise these rules at any time. St. Thomas More School is providing students with a Chromebook and access to the school’s electronic network. This network includes Internet access, computer services, computer equipment, and related equipment for educational purposes. The purpose of the Chromebook and network is for instructional purposes only. This document contains the rules and procedures for students’ acceptable use of St. Thomas More School’s Chromebooks and electronic network.

### Chromebook Ownership

- The Chromebook is the property of St. Thomas More School and/or the West Clermont School District.
- Students are responsible for appropriate use and care of the Chromebook assigned to them.
- Students may not duplicate, alter, or destroy any hardware or software.
- STM reserves the right to reimage the Chromebook to its original state whenever it is deemed appropriate.
- Students may not make hardware modifications to the Chromebook.
- Students are responsible for bringing their Chromebooks to school every day with a fully charged battery.
- STM is not responsible for technical assistance for home network use.
- Students will be expected to return the device on demand in good condition and working order.
- Any issue of performance of the device must be reported to the school immediately.

### Acceptable Use

- Files, data, programs, hardware, and/or software may not be shared unless authorization has been obtained from your teacher.
  - File sharing software and gaming software is prohibited.
  - Use of instant messaging is prohibited.
  - Instant messaging programs may not be installed on the Chromebook.
  - Students may not access inappropriate websites and/or content through the Internet at STM or at home.
- However, it is noted that the student's parents/guardians take full responsibility for monitoring Chromebook use and device outside school hours.

### General Unacceptable Behavior

While utilizing any portion of the St. Thomas More School electronic network, unacceptable behaviors include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Students will not knowingly or recklessly post false or defamatory information about a person or organization.
- Students will not use speech that is inappropriate in an educational setting or violates school rules.
- Students will not abuse network resources such as sending chain letters or "spamming".
- Students will not display, access, or send offensive messages or pictures.
- Students will not use St. Thomas More School electronic network for commercial purposes.
- Students will not post information that, if acted upon, could cause damage or danger of disruption.
- Students will not engage in personal attacks, including prejudicial or discriminatory attacks.
- Students will not harass another person. Harassment is persistently acting in a manner that distresses or annoys another person. If a student is told by a person to stop sending messages, they must stop.
- Students will not offer, provide, or purchase products or services through this network.
- Students will not attempt to access non-instructional school systems, such as student information systems.
- Students will not use school equipment, network, or credentials to threaten employees, or cause a disruption to the educational program.
- Students will not use the school equipment, network, or credentials to send or post electronic messages that are abusive, obscene, sexually-oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another's reputation, or illegal.
- St. Thomas More students will act in a manner consistent with their Catholic Identity and Catholic Social Teachings at all times.

### Religious Education and Instruction

Religious education is the primary purpose of St. Thomas More School. In this way, the parish aims to assist parents in their task of guiding the moral and religious development of their children. It is important that parents and teachers keep this as their primary goal. Non-Catholic students are expected to participate in all school functions, both religious and non-religious, with the exception of the sacraments. Non-Catholic students may not engage in any behavior that is in conflict with Catholic values and beliefs.

All students regularly receive religious instruction and attend Eucharistic liturgies and prayer services. Reception of the sacraments (Eucharist, Reconciliation and Confirmation) is restricted to Catholic students. The catechesis and the reception of the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist takes place annually in grade two. The catechesis and reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation is scheduled annually for students in grade eight.

Weekly attendance at Mass is a privilege for students in kindergarten through grade eight. Special liturgies are also prepared for important observances in the Church liturgical year. Parents are welcome to join the school liturgical celebrations; however, students are required to be seated with their class during Masses.

Catholic students in grades 4-8 are eligible to participate in the ministry of altar server. All students in grades 4-5 are provided training for altar servers within the religion curriculum. After training, students who apply for the ministry of server may, with parent permission, be added to the weekday, weekend, and other Mass schedules.

### Specials

St. Thomas More students have opportunities for enrichment through Art, Music, Physical Education, and Spanish. Grades in these subjects are included when calculating eligibility for Honor Roll. Students participate in two musical performances each year (sometimes divided by grades). The dates are scheduled well in advance and included in the yearly calendar which is sent to families and posted on the school website in March. The St. Thomas More athletic Boosters are notified by the school and they work to ensure that no practices and games are scheduled on the nights of our performances. Please mark this information on your family calendar and notify athletic coaches and directors of other extra-curricular activities well in advance. Participation in the performances are mandatory and part of the grade for Music class. Any student who misses the performance for any reason, will be required to complete a make-up assignment (just as a student would make up a test in another subject).

Service Hour Requirements for Junior High Students: Service to the St. Thomas More community is required annually for students in junior high. Students are encouraged to turn the hours in as they are completed rather than waiting until the third trimester.

Note: Service is defined as the things you do to help the St. Thomas More community; babysitting for family members and chores at home cannot be counted. Required hours: 15 hours for 6<sup>th</sup> graders; 20 hours for 7<sup>th</sup> graders; 25 hours for 8<sup>th</sup> graders (includes service hours for Confirmation for 8<sup>th</sup> grade). There is no set requirement for service hours for students in grades K-5.

### Assessment

Students in grades 5 and 8 take the Assessment of Catechesis of Religious Education (ACRE) test annually. This assessment is designed to assist in the evaluation of catechetical/religious education programs in Catholic schools and parishes. The ACRE provides faith knowledge questions (cognitive domain) and questions related to religious beliefs, attitudes, practices, and perceptions (affective domain). This assessment is based on the Catholic Church's expectations for an organic, systematic, and comprehensive education in Christian discipleship. Currently, it is the only tool that provides national scores for comparison and processes for tracking religious education program data over time.

Students in grades 2 through 8 take the I-Ready Assessment three times per year for progress monitoring. Additionally, students in grades 2, 5, and 7 take the "Cognitive Skills Assessment" (COGAT). This combination of tests allows performance to be compared to predicted scores. Individual results are reported to parents and instructional staff; class and school results are provided to the Archdiocesan School Office.

The requirement of state testing for all EdChoice Scholarship students is met by the i-Ready assessment and meets the standards for the Third Grade Reading Guarantee.

Dibels (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) is used three times during the school year to assess basic reading skills for students in K-3. This allows early identification and remediation for students who are experiencing difficulty learning to read.

“Accelerated Reader” is a software program used to monitor independent reading habits and encourage students to read quality literature. Students earn points for reading a book and passing a quiz taken on a computer. Results are tracked by student over his/her academic career, beginning in first grade. Teachers monitor student reading progress and habits and set term goals which may be used as a part of the reading grade, or recognized in other ways. Accelerated Reader quizzes can be accessed from any computer at school with internet access. Parents can access their child’s records and find recommendations for reading at Home Connect, a component of Accelerated Reader. During the summer, AR testing is available by accessing the AR site through our school Wi-Fi from the parking lot of our campus when school is not in session.

#### Report Cards

Report cards are issued each trimester for students in Grades K-8. The report card provides a record of student attendance, as well as an evaluation of the child's progress in the various subjects and in personal development.

Student grade and classroom information is also available via FACTS. Access to this secure website is provided to all school families upon registration. Teachers in grades 3-8 post grades on a regular basis to allow parents to keep advised of their children’s progress.

#### Grade K Grading Scale

M	90 - 100	Strong; Mastered
S	80 - 89	Satisfactory Progress
D	70 - 79	Developing
NP	0 - 69	Needs More Practice

#### Grades 1-3 Primary Grading Scale

The primary report cards (grades K-3) use a non-traditional grading code to define progress, strengths, and areas for improvement. In accordance with the requirements of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, the grades used on the primary grade report cards are as follows:

O	93 - 100	Outstanding
S	70 - 92	Satisfactory Progress
N	0 - 69	Needs Improvement

These grades do not correlate to the more traditional “A-B-C” model. When determining grades, many factors are considered in addition to the written evaluations which are seen on a child’s daily work. Some considerations are participation, listening skills, neatness, thoroughness, and organization. A key factor in the grade assigned on a report card is the amount of assistance a student requires to complete tasks. This may not be obvious from reviewing the final product.

On the primary scale, a grade of “S” indicates that a child is working at grade level. An “O” is NOT the norm for students doing grade level work. An “N” indicates difficulty mastering grade level objectives.

#### Grades 4-8 Grading Scale

Traditional letter grades are used in grades 4-8 according to the following scale:

93-100	A
85-92	B
77-84	C
70-76	D
69 and below	F

Effort grades are assigned for all academic classes K-8. The grading scale for effort is as follows:

1 – Satisfactory                      2 – Needs Improvement

Subject area skills are marked to indicate strengths (+) or weaknesses (-). A blank in a subject area skill indicates that the student's progress is appropriate for his or her age.

#### Promotion, Retention, and Graduation

**Promotion:** Promotion in the primary grades (Kindergarten through grade 3) is determined by the child's progress in language arts (reading and English) and mathematics. Promotion in grades 4-8 is determined by the child's progress in the core curriculum (religion, language arts, math, science and social studies).

**Retention:** Recommendation to retain a student will be made when the teacher believes it is not in the child's best interest to move to the next grade level. Parents will be notified as soon as the teacher is aware of the possibility of retention. In grades 1, 2, & 3, retention will be based primarily on poor performance in reading and/or math. In grades 4 through 8, retention will be based on the major academic subjects: Religion, Math, Reading, Expression, Social Studies, and Science. A child will be considered for retention if she/he fails two or more major academic subjects.

**Placement:** Placement in the next grade can result when the school and the parents agree that the student has not successfully completed the previous grade's course work but would not benefit from retention. Placement is not the same as promotion and therefore students being placed are not eligible for awards and ceremonies associated with promotion, including graduations. **Summer school or tutoring is necessary in the academic subject/s the student failed for the year. Tutoring must take place for a minimum of 12 hours per subject by a certified teacher. Documentation of completed work, hours of instruction, and tutor credentials must be submitted to the school office at least one week before school resumes in August.**

**Graduation:** In order for a student to graduate with their class from the eighth grade, he/she must successfully complete all of the academic requirements for that grade level during the regular school term. All fines, fees and tuition must be paid, or arrangements made with the Business Manager for a student to participate in the graduation ceremony. Participation in the graduation ceremony is a privilege extended to all students who have completed the course of studies prescribed by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati and whose behavior reflects Catholic values.

#### Homework

Homework is an extension of class instruction intended to supplement and reinforce the understanding of the material taught in class. Students are expected to complete assignments accurately, promptly, and neatly. Parents need to actively show an interest in assisting with students' homework. Students are expected to come to school each day prepared with paper, pencils, pens, textbooks, and completed homework. The amount of homework is determined according to the student's age and ability. Guidelines are as follows:

Primary (Grade 1-3)	20-45 minutes
Intermediate (Grades 4 & 5)	45-60 minutes
Junior High (Grades 6-8)	60-90 minutes

Approximately half of the time spent on homework should involve written work. The remaining time should be spent reviewing material and studying. If a child is consistently spending more time on homework than suggested above, it is the responsibility of the parent to contact the teacher to learn the reason. Parents may provide guidance and encouragement, but homework must be the work of the student. Long term projects begin in grade 4 and help students learn to set goals and meet deadlines.

Many texts used at St. Thomas More include an online component. Information regarding online resources will be provided by teachers at orientation. Typically, online services will include access to the student text, allowing students to leave heavy books at school. Additional resources may include note taking tools, interactive learning activities, tutorials, and worksheets. Parents are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the online tools provided, and encourage their students to utilize these resources.

A student plan book (grades 1-5) is provided by the school. Replacements are available at the office throughout the year for a fee. The assignment book contains a plastic sleeve for use as a carrier to take parent or teacher notes to/from school. The plan book serves as an important avenue of communication between home and school and should be checked daily by parents. Class information is also available via FACTS.

### Intervention-Academic Support

Parents of students experiencing difficulty with academics or behavior should contact the child's teacher to discuss their child's difficulties. The homeroom teacher may consult with specialists on staff or the principal to determine steps necessary to assist the student. The referral process begins with the formation of an intervention assistance team, which includes the teacher, principal, parent and any specialists already working with the child. The intervention team will review the student's progress, determine data to be collected to identify deficiencies, and develop instructional strategies or modifications to help the child experience success at school. Remedial instruction or tutorial assistance may be recommended by the intervention team. Services available on-site include the following:

- Academic Support. A certificated teacher acts as a tutor to provide academic support to students in grades K-8 and also manages our intervention assistance program. New referrals must come from homeroom teachers. Please contact your child's teacher if you have concerns about his or her academic progress.
- Special Education. A speech pathologist (SLP) and an intervention specialist (IS) provide services to students on service plans, as well as consultation to staff and parents.
- School Psychologist. Most student needs can be addressed through the intervention process. In the event that the school intervention team decides that a student's progress is delayed by a learning disability or other special education criterion, the local school district will be requested to provide the necessary assessment and consultation. A Child Focus counselor is available one day per week for student mental health concerns.
- School Accommodation Plans. Students who do not qualify for an ISP (Individual Service Plan) but have a diagnosed disability, may have a School Accommodation Plan. This plan, which defines specific accommodations needed to help the student be successful, is written by the team, which includes the student's teacher, parents, principal, intervention specialist, and speech/language pathologist. These plans are reviewed yearly.
- For more information about the partnership with the West Clermont School District, St. Thomas More School, and parents, please click [here](#) for the School Parent Compact.

### Accelerated Policies

Students may be recommended to attend an Honors Algebra 1 class at McNicholas High School during their 8<sup>th</sup> grade year instead of the traditional 8<sup>th</sup> grade Algebra 1 class at St. Thomas More. Student must be recommended by their Junior High math teacher. The recommendation is based on math scores in 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grades, scores on the Iowa Assessment, and work ethic. All students attending McMath must receive the approval of the principal. After successfully completing the Honors Algebra 1 class and obtaining a passing score on the required end of course assessment, the student will receive high school credit for the course.

In addition, all teachers may assign accelerated material to students based on their performance and specific needs.



## STUDENT SERVICES

### Cafeteria

St. Thomas More offers a school lunch program daily, administered under the federal/state Child Nutrition Program. Lunch menus are posted on the website in advance. Teachers record lunch orders daily; students can choose to bring a packed lunch or purchase lunch from the school cafeteria. In place of the daily entrée, students can always choose from the following options: Peanut butter and jelly or cheese sandwich, turkey and cheese flatbread, or chef salad. Milk and snacks are also available for purchase a la carte. Please note that parents can limit their students' snack purchases by contacting the Cafeteria Manager. Due to time constraints and SafeParish restrictions, students are not permitted to have visitors during lunch.

St. Thomas More has a computerized point-of-sale (POS) program that makes paying for lunch easy. Families don't need to worry about sending money every day and being concerned about it getting lost. The FACTS lunch program allows for all lunches, snacks, and milk to be paid in advance. Lunch payment in the form of a check should be sent to school in an envelope marked "Cafeteria" with the family/student's name clearly indicated. (No cash, please.) Payments for lunches may also be made online by logging in to your FACTS account. Log in information is provided at the time of enrollment; if you have misplaced that information, please call the school office

Applications for free or reduced lunch are distributed in August. Families who qualify are encouraged to participate. Students on our free and reduced lunch program use the exact method and go through the lunch line the same way as peers. All adjustments to the family account are made automatically via the lunchroom software.

There is a \$35 limit for unpaid lunch accounts. Accounts that are in arrears will be reported each week to our Business Manager. Students whose accounts have excessive balances (\$50+) will be able to order a peanut butter and jelly sandwich with other listed menu items, rather than the regular main entrée. Overdue balances will be invoiced through FACTS accounts.

For more information or if you have questions about your student's lunch account, please contact Cafeteria Manager Amber Ruehlman at 753-2558 or [aruehlman@sttmschool.org](mailto:aruehlman@sttmschool.org). The monthly Lunch Menu may be found on the home page of the school website.

### Cardinal Care

The STM Morning Cardinal Care program opens at 6:30 A.M. to provide supervision at a nominal charge for students who arrive early to school. These children may also opt to eat breakfast at Morning Cardinal Care. This concludes at 7:30 A.M. After-school Cardinal Care begins at 3:00 P.M. to provide supervision until 6:00 P.M. Cardinal Care is also available on early dismissal days from 1-6 P.M. A snack, outside play time, and study/homework time are provided during the after-school program. Registration forms are available at the school office and via our website. For more information, contact director Samantha Edmundson at [sedmundson@sttmschool.org](mailto:sedmundson@sttmschool.org).

There is a \$150 outstanding balance limit per student for Cardinal Care services. Overdue balances will be referred to our Business Manager, who will invoice through FACTS accounts. There will be a one-week notice of loss of Cardinal Care services until the outstanding balance is paid in full.

### Library

More than eight thousand titles are available for students to borrow for recreational reading or research. The STM library is staffed by volunteers who check books in and out, read aloud to students, and help students find books to meet their interests and reading levels. Mrs. Amy Dugan is our School Librarian. Mrs. Dugan organizes our library, keeps our shelves stocked and in good order, and catalogs and repairs books. Library questions can be sent to her at [adugan@sttmschool.org](mailto:adugan@sttmschool.org).

STM uses Destiny, an online library program, to manage our library. Destiny allows students to browse the catalog online from school or home. The site is accessed from the STM web page. Under student resources, click on

"Library" and then on "St. Thomas More School". No password is needed. Library books may be searched by keyword, author, title, and reading level.

Students in grades K-5 are permitted to borrow two books at a time. Junior high students may borrow three books, including those designated "Young Adult." These books are more age-appropriate and may not be checked out to younger students. Notices of late or lost books are emailed to parents weekly. Late or lost books will result in library fees, cost of replacement, and restriction of borrowing privileges.

#### Transportation-Bus

STM serves students residing in seven different school districts. The majority of our students reside in the West Clermont district, but transportation is provided by most of the districts we serve. Daily transportation arrangements are reported to the school office at the time of initial registration and updated annually.

West Clermont will provide transportation for those K-8 students who reside in their district. Transportation is provided to and from the student's **home address only**. Buses may transport our students to a daycare daily at the discretion of West Clermont Transportation.

## THE SCHOOL DAY

### Arrival

In the morning, our students will report directly to the gym. As we navigate the parking lot, your patience and cooperation will help to keep everyone safe!

### Drop-Off in the Morning

**IMPORTANT:** Please note there is **NO PARKING PERMITTED** for morning drop off, with the exception of **Preschool students after 7:45 a.m.** **ALL CARS** must be in the single file drop off line.

Students may begin arriving at 7:30 am. Staff members will be on site to help your children exit vehicles and move to the Gym.

1. Cars may enter from Glen Este-Withamsville Road OR Ohio Pike (SR 125). (See attached photo.)
2. Students who exit on the driver's side of your vehicle must always walk **IN FRONT OF YOUR CAR**.
3. It is imperative for your student to be ready to exit the car **IMMEDIATELY** once in the unloading zone indicated by the **WHITE** painted curb. Do not let students exit your vehicle until you are in the unloading zone.
4. **DO NOT PASS CARS IN FRONT OF YOU.** For the safety of our children, please be patient and exit the school grounds in order.
5. Students arriving after 8:00 a.m. will be considered tardy. If your child is late due to an appointment, please give a note from that appointment TO YOUR CHILD to bring in to school. If you arrive late and no staff member is there to greet you, please **BRING YOUR CHILD TO THE SCHOOL OFFICE**.



### Dismissal

In the afternoon, students will be dismissed in two different areas for car riders.

### **Pick Up in the Afternoon**

**IMPORTANT:** Please note there is **NO PARKING PERMITTED** when picking up students after school, with the exception of Preschool. **ALL CARS** must be in the single file pickup lines.

1. **Families whose last name begins with A-K** will enter from Glen Este-Withamsville Road and form a “horseshoe” shaped line behind Heider Hall. Students will enter cars as the cars stop immediately behind Heider Hall. After picking up students, cars will exit via Glen Este-Withamsville Road.
2. **Families whose last name begins with L-Z** will enter from the traffic light on Ohio Pike and form a line along the sidewalk. (see attached photo)
3. Buses will be lined up against the curb on the football field side.
4. **DO NOT PASS CARS IN FRONT OF YOU**, but wait patiently and exit at the traffic light at Ohio Pike. (See photo below.) **DO NOT ENTER THE PICK UP AREAS BEFORE 2:45!**



All students are to have an established procedure for transportation. It is critical that the school staff is aware of changes in routines for any student. While the majority of St. Thomas More students ride West Clermont Transportation buses to and from school, several ride buses from other districts, and others use day care vans or private cars. If you designate someone to pick up your child from school who is not listed as a contact on your Emergency Medical Form, that person must present a photo ID and pick up your student from the school office.

Any deviation from the student’s normal transportation routine must be reported to the school office as follows:

1. A written note, signed, and dated by a parent should be given to the homeroom teacher prior to the start of class each day. It is mandatory that all alternative plans for transport be finalized and conveyed to the homeroom teacher by 8:15 a.m. on the day of the change. Transportation changes after 11:00 A.M. **MUST BE MADE BY BOTH TELEPHONE AND EMAIL.**
2. The homeroom teacher will send the note to the school office.
3. Transportation for West Clermont students is available only to or from their home address, unless otherwise permitted by West Clermont Transportation. Students are not permitted to ride buses from outside their home district, or to ride to another student’s home. Parents are responsible for notifying the school office and the public school transportation office of any permanent or long-term changes, in writing.
4. At the time of afternoon announcements, the school office will announce names of students who are affected by transportation changes.

Students involved in after-school activities, including sports, tutoring, or enrichment programs, must have parent permission - in writing - on file in the school office. This note or permission form is to be directed to the homeroom teacher, who will send it to the office to record. The note must contain the following information:

- Reason for remaining at school after hours
- Location of after-school activity (e.g., gym, football field, Heider Hall, etc.)
- All days/dates that student will remain after school
- Supervising teacher/adult
- Method and time of transportation home

The person responsible for the after-school activity must submit a copy of the permission form stating the dates/days of the activity and a listing of students who are participating to the office at least one week in advance of the event.

Students are to leave the school grounds promptly at the conclusion of the after-school activity with their designated ride or other parent-approved method of transportation.

Please do not ask staff to open a building or classroom to allow a child to retrieve forgotten items. In the interest of building the student's sense of personal responsibility, parents are asked to respect this policy.

While last-minute changes in the event of an emergency may occur, please **LIMIT UNNECESSARY CHANGES**. Any change in transportation requires notification to the teacher and student, which causes disruption of class time and often confusion for the student. Please determine arrangements in advance, notify your child about changes, and send a note to school with your student in the morning. Also, please remind your child to submit the note **to his or her teacher** during homeroom period at the beginning of the school day; this will ensure that the teacher is also aware of changes.



## ATTENDANCE POLICIES

Regular attendance is important for learning as well as for future success in the work world. Good habits begin early. Continuity in the learning process is seriously disrupted by excessive absences and/or tardiness and may adversely affect student success. While the paper and pencil tasks can be made up, it is impossible to adequately make up a day of school. The class discussions, cooperative learning, and hands-on activities cannot be duplicated and, therefore, students who are not present miss much learning. Work and tests missed due to absences must be made up according to the teacher's policy.

Absences are considered excused for reasons of verifiable student illness, medical appointments, substantiated by a doctor's note, that cannot be scheduled outside of school hours, for 8<sup>th</sup> graders' high school shadow days, for the funeral of members of the family (3-day limit), or for family emergency. Absences without parent contact or for unapproved reasons are considered unexcused. Students exhibiting symptoms of a contagious illness will be sent home. If a student is absent for more than 3 days in succession, a doctor's note is required to excuse the absence; however, excessive 1- to 3-day absences without a written doctor's excuse may be unexcused at the principal's discretion. We follow the CDC policy for COVID-19 cases. If your child tests positive for COVID-19, he/she should stay home for five days. If your child is fever-free and symptoms are improving after five days, he/she may return to school and wear a mask for five days. There are other variables regarding symptoms. Details can be found [here](#).

Students who are absent for vacation are responsible for all assigned work and tests missed or scheduled as determined by the teacher. In accordance with state laws, family vacation days are considered unexcused. Students may complete work and tests after they return. The number of days allowed to make up missed work will correspond to the number of days the student is absent. **Teachers are not required to provide work in advance.** If parents/guardians are going to be gone during school time and the student(s) left in the care of others, please send a note to school specifying who will be caring for the student(s), the duration of this care, and contact number for the caregivers.

Guided by Ohio law, which specifies habitual truancy as 42 or more hours in one school month, or 72 or more hours in a school year without legitimate excuse, St. Thomas More School defines excessive absence as more than 6 unexcused absences in one calendar month, or more than 10 unexcused absences in one school year. The state of Ohio's Every Student Succeeds Act Plan defines chronic absenteeism as "missing 10 percent or more of the school year for any reason. It includes excused and unexcused absences."

If a student exceeds 10 days of absences during the school year, the principal will evaluate the situation and appropriate measures will be taken, which may include tutoring, counseling, retention, expulsion, and/or involvement of juvenile court authorities.

### *Tardiness or Early Departure*

Any student arriving after 8:00 a.m. for school must report to the office to receive a tardy slip to get into class, and present it to the homeroom teacher. Any student not **IN** the gym for Morning Assembly by 8:00 a.m. is considered tardy. In accordance with state law, students who arrive after 8:00 A.M. will be considered tardy, unless they are bus riders. Also in accordance with state law, truancy (excessive unexcused absence or tardiness) is not permitted. **Tardiness is generally excused only for delays in bus transportation and medical appointments.** Students who are tardy due to a medical appointment must bring a dated, time-stamped note from the doctor in order for the tardiness to be excused. Unexcused tardiness includes but is not limited to: Running late, alarm clock didn't work, caught in traffic, etc. The principal will make the final determination as to whether tardiness or early departures are excused or unexcused.

Tardiness or early departures for students who arrive late or leave early will be marked in school attendance records. A note signed by the student's parent/legal guardian is required for a student to be dismissed during the school day. Students must be signed in or out at the school office by a parent, or designee authorized in writing or listed on the students' emergency medical form. The parent or authorized person must sign an Early Departure Sign

Out Form provided by the school office, indicating the reason for early dismissal. Upon return to school, the student must report to the school office. If a student leaves during the school day for a medical or other appointment, a note from the health care provider must be returned with the student or FAXed to the school office at (513) 753-2554.

Please avoid doctor/dentist/orthodontist appointments during school hours if at all possible as this causes students to miss valuable instructional time.

Unexcused early departure times will be calculated along with unexcused tardiness. Please note the following policy regarding unexcused tardiness or unexcused early departures:

**Number of Unexcused Tardies or Early Departures in a Trimester Disciplinary Action**

3 Tardies: Warning letter to parent

4 Tardies: 30-minute detention after school

5 Tardies: 60-minute detention after school, and a meeting with student/parent/teacher/principal

6 Tardies: 2-hour Friday after-school detention

The number of tardies will reset to 0 at the start of each Trimester.

**Number of Unexcused Tardies or Early Departures in a School Year Disciplinary Action**

12 Tardies: Meeting with student/parent/teacher/principal, plus student put on Probationary Contract

**Reporting an absence or tardy**

If a child is absent from or tardy to class for any reason, parents must notify the school office **no later than 8:30 A.M.** by calling the attendance line at **753-2570** or the school office at **753-2540**; or by completing the online form found on our website. Please provide **specific symptoms** (rather than “not feeling well”) when reporting an illness; this will help us to control the spread of illness in the school. Teachers (K-5 only) will provide homework for students who are absent if the absence is called in to the office and homework requested **by 8:30 A.M.** Books and assignments may be picked up at the school office by 4:00 p.m. Students in grades 6-8 may access their assignments through FACTS and view their textbooks online.

## COMMUNICATION

### General Communication

St. Thomas More School utilizes the Internet to communicate and inform parents, hosting both a public ([www.sttmschool.org](http://www.sttmschool.org)) and a secure website (Factsmgt.com). The public site features general school information. The secure site provides more specific information, providing teachers with a website for each class on which they can post information, grades, and assignments. All parents are provided with a FACTS activation code in order to set up their account to view information specific to their children who are enrolled at St. Thomas More School. Parents (grades 3-8) receive daily notification of their children's grades each evening. The FACTS account also allows the school to send information to parents, such as the weekly Cardinal Corner newsletter, at their designated email addresses. It is important that parents set up their FACTS "parent" account and provide an email address in order to receive communication and updates from school.

During the school year, the Cardinal Corner newsletter is emailed weekly and posted under "News & Announcements" on the school website. The newsletter gives specific information about upcoming events and issues. The newsletter is emailed to the primary family email address on record; additional email addresses can be added by contacting the school office. Items for the Cardinal Corner should be submitted via email to [kpetri@sttmschool.org](mailto:kpetri@sttmschool.org) no later than 9:00 A.M. on Wednesday.

Copies of communication items and documents (such as flyers and registration forms) will be available from the school office. All items to be distributed or copied for distribution to students or staff must be submitted to the school secretary for review/approval by the principal. Distribution of all correspondence will be done by school office staff. **Personal items, such as party invitations, may NOT be distributed at school unless all boys, all girls, or all students in the class receive an invitation.**

Back to school forms (Emergency Medical Authorization, Transportation, and Student Photo Release) will be distributed in early August, and will be due back two weeks before school begins. Students may not begin attending school until these forms are received; this information is needed in order to keep your child safe. Forms for Free/Reduced Lunch and Responsible Use of Technology for K-8 students will be sent home with them on the first day of school. Please complete and return these forms the following day.

Recognizing that parents are the primary educators of their children, the principal and staff of St. Thomas More encourage open communication between the school and home. Parent-Teacher conferences are scheduled twice a year to provide teacher and parent with opportunities to discuss the student's progress. Daytime and evening appointments are available upon request. Understanding that concerns are often not so conveniently scheduled, the following procedures are intended to ensure effective communication between parent and teacher:

- Written communications regarding absence, homework, vacations, transportation, early dismissal, appointments, etc., should be given to the homeroom teacher by the student during the morning homeroom period.
- Parents should contact their student's individual teacher regarding any concern they may have about their child. Each teacher has an email address and a direct phone line to the classroom. Note that the classroom phones do not ring during the school day except for inside calls, so teachers cannot accept phone calls while teaching. Any outside calls go directly to voicemail so as not to disrupt class. Teachers are available for private conferences by appointment only. During arrival and dismissal times, it is important that the teachers stay focused on students in their charge. **Please do not try to conference with teachers at arrival or dismissal times or during the school day!** Parents are welcome to leave a message with the school secretary. Teachers are not available for conferences after school on days when faculty meetings are scheduled.



### Grievance Procedure

Ethics, school policy, and common courtesy require that, in the event of a question regarding teaching or disciplinary practices involving a specific teacher or teachers, parents first should contact the appropriate teacher to attempt resolution. If not resolved satisfactorily, parents should next approach the principal, who will arrange and attend a joint conference with the parents and teacher. Final consultation with the pastor may be arranged at the request of the parents, teacher, or principal.

General concerns or recommendations regarding school policies should be directed to the principal.

### Lost And Found

All books, school bags, clothing, and miscellaneous items should be marked with your child's name, not just initials. Lost articles are sent to the office to be stored in the Lost and Found collection outside the school office, where children or parents can claim them. Unclaimed items will be donated to a charity at the start of Christmas break and at the end of the school year.

## STUDENT HEALTH & SAFETY

### *Water Fountains*

- While water fountains are available, students may bring their own water bottles.

### *Distance Learning Plan*

- If we need to revert to distance learning anytime during the school year, classroom instruction will take place via Google Classroom and Google Meets.

### Immunizations

St. Thomas More School complies with the minimum immunization requirements set forth by R.C. 3313.67 and 3313.671. Although St. Thomas More School complies with those minimum immunization requirements, it also retains discretion to enforce stricter requirements at any time, for instance, by requiring vaccination even over a guardian's conscience or religious conviction objection or by revoking a previous exception.

### Health Records

A medical authorization form and medical history form for each student is to be completed annually so that health records can be kept up-to-date. This is essential in cases where a serious illness or accident has occurred that might impact the activities in which a student can safely participate. Surgeries, broken bones, and other health-related problems should be reported on the annual health form.

Emergency forms with current information must be turned in to the school office **two weeks before the school year begins**. Students who do not have an Emergency Form on file at the school office may not attend St. Thomas More School. This creates a liability issue, as we are required to have this information in case of an emergency.

### Accidents

All accidents should immediately be reported to the school office. In case of injury requiring treatment by a doctor or paramedic, a parent will be notified. If a parent cannot be reached, those listed on the child's emergency form will be contacted. Students who are ill will be cared for in the office or the Health Room until a parent or designated caretaker is able to assume care of the child. In case of an accident, an accident report which includes a description of the injury, time, place, and persons involved, will be completed by the person supervising at the time of the accident, and a copy kept on file in the school office.

Accident insurance is provided by the school. Parents who wish to file an insurance claim for an accident which occurred during school hours should request an insurance claim form from the office.

### Illness

Students who become ill during the school day should notify their teacher or the supervising staff member. Students sent to the office for suspected illness must report to the school Health aide or secretary. No student is permitted to go home due to illness until a parent has been contacted. A Health Referral form must be completed by the supervising adult each time a student reports to the school office for illness. The "parent copy" of this form will be sent home with the student or given to the parent if the student must be picked up.

Parents are often not sure when to keep a student home or when to send them to school. **Please keep your child home with the following conditions:**

- A rash or open sore that has not been evaluated by the doctor
- Fever, vomiting, or diarrhea within 24 hours of the school day
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Upper respiratory infection or persistent cough serious enough to disturb your child or others
- Conjunctivitis (pinkeye) with matter coming from one or both eyes, itching, crusts on eyelids
- Signs of infestation with lice (nits in the hair, itchy scalp); the student should be evaluated for treatment with pediculicide. All incidents must be reported to the school office

- Communicable diseases such as pertussis, flu, chicken pox, measles, impetigo, and strep throat
- Children with contagious illness requiring antibiotic treatment may not return to school for a 24-hour period.

**Parents of the child assume responsibility for informing the school of any change in the child's health.**

### Administration of Medication

The school is prohibited by state law from dispensing any form of medication, including inhalers, over-the-counter drugs, and/or prescription drugs without the written permission of **both** a parent and physician. **NO PRESCRIPTION OR NON-PRESCRIPTION MEDICINE IS TO BE KEPT BY STUDENTS** except in special cases, such as an inhaler which must be carried on the child's person. (Note: Contact the school office for an inhaler medical release to allow your child to carry an inhaler.) **PLEASE DO NOT SEND ANY MEDICATIONS IN YOUR CHILD'S LUNCH OR BOOKBAG.** This poses a risk to your child and others who may come in contact with the medication. This also prevents the school from recording the administration of medications, which can be critical in the event of a medical emergency. If at all possible, it is preferred that all medication is administered to children at home. Any pupil who is required to take medication during the regular school day must comply with the appropriate administrative regulations. The school does not provide Tylenol, Advil, or any other medications for students. If a child is required to take PRESCRIPTION OR NON-PRESCRIPTION drugs during the regular school day, and the parent cannot come to school to administer the medication, only the school Health aide, the principal, or designee will administer the medication in compliance with the following regulations:

Medication must be brought to school in the original container; prescription medication must be appropriately labeled by the pharmacy or physician with the student's name, doctor's name, and dosage. Written authorization from the physician on the form provided by the school, or standard school medical form (available from the doctor) for both prescription and non-prescription drugs, including aspirin, cough medicine, etcetera, and written permission from the parent or guardian will be required. The medication form must include:

- child's name
- name of medication
- condition for which medication is prescribed
- time to be administered
- dosage
- possible side effects which physician believes may occur
- duration of time for administering the medication

NOTE: Permission forms for the administration of medication must be filed annually. The school principal or designee will:

- inform appropriate school personnel of the medication
- keep a record of the administration of medication
- keep medication in a secure place
- return unused medication to the parent

Parents of the child are responsible for informing the school of any change in the child's medication. The school retains the discretion to deny a request for administration of medication.

### Emergency Procedures

St. Thomas More School complies with state and local regulations requiring a school-wide crisis response plan. The Union Township Police Department will respond and manage any crisis that requires police or medical support.

Fire, tornado, rapid dismissal, and safety drills will be held at required intervals as directed by law. These are important safety precautions. It is essential that when the first signal is given, everyone, including visitors, follow directions promptly and silently. Directions for evacuation are posted in each room.

### Hand Washing

It is the policy of St. Thomas More that students and staff will wash their hands with soap and water:

1. After using the rest room
2. Before eating
3. If their hands are visibly soiled
4. If the student or staff member has encountered chemicals or other items, such as soil, in a science lab, art room, or other educational venue that soils hands
5. If the student or staff member encountered chemicals during cleaning the school environment
6. After cleaning animal habitats or handling animals
7. Before and after each task when preparing food in any class

When soap and water are not available and hands are not visibly soiled, alcohol-based, waterless disposable hand wipes or gel sanitizers (60 percent minimum alcohol concentration) may be used in accordance with CDC guidelines.

### School Closings/Delays

St. Thomas More School follows the West Clermont School District in regard to weather-related closings and/or delays. If West Clermont is CLOSED or DELAYED, St. Thomas More will not be in session or will implement a delayed start. When weather conditions are threatening, or if ice and/or snow is forecast, West Clermont Transportation personnel will check the condition of roads in the school district. Existing conditions will be reported to the superintendent, who will make a decision based on all available information whether or not to close schools. Note that St. Thomas More is NOT announced independently. Listen or watch for West Clermont. If your child resides in the New Richmond, Batavia or Forest Hills School District, and that district is NOT in session due to weather, NO TRANSPORTATION is provided.

St. Thomas More School utilizes FACTS Management System to notify parents by **TEXT** of closures or delays and as a reminder of school functions as necessary. It is essential that the school office be advised of correct daytime phone numbers and alternate transportation plans whenever changes occur.

When STM is on a delay, our Cardinal Care program follows the same delay. For example, if school is on a one-hour delay, Cardinal Care would begin at 7:30 A.M. instead of 6:30 A.M. The Cardinal Care program operates only on school days.

### Wellness Policy

St. Thomas More follows the Wellness Policy established by the STM Education Committee, which includes goals for nutrition education, physical exercise, and other school-based activities that promote wellness. **Please note that NO FAST FOOD items may be brought in to school for student lunches. Soft drinks and energy drinks are not allowed at school. Please note that food items which may take the place of lunch, such as pizza, may not be brought in for birthdays.**

Healthy snacks are allowed for K-3 students during afternoon recess. Healthy snacks include fresh fruit, squeezable yogurt packs, unfrosted granola bars, and unsalted snacks such as pretzels. Snacks must not require refrigeration and must be able to be eaten without utensils. Small birthday treats or small party favors are permitted, but only with **advance permission from the teacher**. **In some cases, due to severe allergies, snacks are required to be pre-packaged; you will be notified by the teacher in these instances.**

### Smoking

In compliance with the Ohio Revised Code, smoking or vaping is not permitted in school buildings or on school property.

### Visitors

For safety reasons, all school doors, including those of our modular classrooms (Grades 4-5) are locked during school hours. Each building is equipped with a doorbell and remote buzzer. Only school personnel may admit visitors. All

visitors (including parents) must report to the school office, **regardless of the reason for the visit**, whenever entering the school. When entering the school, visitors must do the following:

- Sign the register showing the time and reason for the visit.
- Obtain and wear a visitor's badge.

To avoid disruption of the learning process, unscheduled visits to your child's classroom during the school day are not permitted. Teachers may be seen by appointment outside of school hours; please contact your child's teacher or call the school office to schedule. Teachers cannot typically respond to phone calls or emails during the school day, but will return messages/emails as soon as they are able.

Siblings and alum may visit with advance permission of the principal. Children under 18 may not visit school without a parent present. They may not leave the office area unless accompanied by their parent.

### Volunteers

A volunteer, as defined in the Archdiocesan Decree, is any person who functions under the auspices of the Archdiocese, its parishes, schools, or other institutions. Volunteers must be vigilant to guard against situations that can inflict harm, or that give rise to suspicions of potential child abuse. All school or parish volunteers who work or volunteer with children must be pre-approved through the Archdiocesan SafeParish child protection program. Details can be found on the school website.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

The goal of the conduct code of St. Thomas More is to teach students to exercise self-control; students should conduct themselves in a manner of respect for self, others and property. In order to achieve this goal, self-discipline must be taught and monitored. Good student conduct is important in order to have a positive classroom and safe school environment in which each child can achieve spiritual, academic and personal growth. The support of parents is an integral element of our school discipline.

### **Expectations for Parents**

Parents are the primary teachers of their children and therefore are expected to support the mission of St. Thomas More by demonstrating the following behaviors:

- Maintain a Christ-like attitude with staff, faculty and other parents
- The process of resolving disagreement will start confidentially, charitably, and directly with the teacher involved (includes all written, verbal and electronic communication)
- Check student's assignments, grades, and discipline record weekly to monitor child's performance and conduct
- If active communication with the teacher needs further action, parents should meet with the principal.
- All public communication (including social media) concerning St. Thomas More School Parish, school, faculty and staff, other students and families should be positive, encouraging, and constructive.
- Students arrive to school on time
- Read, understand, and sign the Code of Conduct (by signing the Handbook acknowledgment)
- Parents support St. Thomas More School's discipline efforts at home

### **Expectations for Students**

Each teacher posts classroom rules and consequences and reviews them regularly with the students. Students are expected to conduct themselves in a Christ-like manner at all times by demonstrating the following behaviors:

- Respect everyone in words and actions
- Respect the property of school and fellow students
- Use appropriate language
- Arrive prepared with necessary supplies and completed homework
- Put forth their best effort in everything
- Obey all school, classroom, cafeteria, playground, and bus rules
- Be in the places they are scheduled to be
- Behave in a manner that supports the good reputation of St. Thomas More School, at all times, even off school property.

Following are age-appropriate expectations for the classroom:

#### Kindergarten

Shares	Follows directions	Takes turns
Interacts well with peers	Completes work	Works independently
Demonstrates self-control	Cares for personal belongings	Cares for classroom property
Is attentive when others speak	Exhibits adequate attention span	Shows reverence during prayer

#### Grades 1-3

Shows reverence during prayer	Works without disturbing others	Is courteous and cooperative
Speaks at appropriate times	Listens while others are speaking	Makes good use of time and materials
Completes assigned work	Follows directions	Respects authority
Works well in groups	Comes to class prepared	Observes school regulations

#### Grades 4-8

Shows reverence during prayer	Listens while others speak	Respects the property of others
Demonstrates honesty and integrity	Works without disturbing others	Makes good use of time and materials
Completes assigned work	Follows directions	Respects authority
Works well in groups	Comes to class prepared	Observes school regulations
Respects the rights of others	Speaks at appropriate times	Is courteous and cooperative

#### Expectations for Lunch

- 1) Students are expected to behave as they would at any restaurant or eating establishment. Talking volume should be at a normal level, manners are expected, and **remaining seated while eating is required.**
- 2) Students should raise their hands if assistance is needed or if they need to leave their seat.
- 3) Students must eat and need to finish lunch before leaving cafeteria. No food is to be taken outside.
- 4) Students must take part in the responsibility of keeping our cafeteria a clean eating area for all. This includes, but is not limited to:
  - a) Cleaning up their personal eating area
  - b) Removing food or trash that may have fallen to the floor
  - c) Disposing of trash properly
  - d) Cleaning and clearing tables when assigned
- 5) **Students must remain seated until an adult dismisses them for recess.**
- 6) Students must show respect for cafeteria personnel as well as for all students.

## **Expectations on the Playground and for Recess**

- 1) Play only in the designated playground areas.
- 2) Ask permission to retrieve a ball outside the playground.
- 3) Do not participate in overly rough play or contact sports such as tackle football.
- 4) Be respectful and obedient to every teacher or adult at all times.
- 5) Be respectful of each other. There is to be no name calling, teasing, or making fun of other people or excluding other students from participating in playground activities.
- 6) Report to the playground after lunch unless you have permission to enter the classroom building.
- 7) In case of inclement weather (e.g., active precipitation, ice/snow, or “feels like” temperature of 20 degrees or below), students will report to their homerooms for indoor recess.

***All Students should try to live up to the following  
STM Cardinal Pledge:***

**I am MINDFUL, and ready to learn  
Staying focused and engaged.**

**In my classroom and in our school  
I am RESPECTFUL to myself and others, too.**

**I am RESPONSIBLE, in every possible way,  
Including in my actions and the things I say.**

**I am LIKE CHRIST, always responding with LOVE,  
Drawing my strength from our God above.**

**We are ST. THOMAS MORE and this is our way,  
Soaring with pride every day.**

## **Care of School Property**

St. Thomas More students should be proud of their school and help to take care of it to the best of their ability. School property includes hallways, doors, classrooms, desks, technology, furniture, restrooms, cafeteria, and lockers. Students are expected to keep their lockers and/or desks neat and orderly. Defacing or damaging school property is strictly prohibited.

**Textbooks and Chromebooks/Tablets** are loaned to students annually. It is the student’s responsibility to keep books and devices in good condition. Writing in hardback books is not permitted and all textbooks are to be covered, marked with the student’s name and grade, at the discretion of the teacher. Chromebooks/Tablets issued to students may not have extraneous software added. Students are expected to comply with the expectations for Chromebook/Tablet use set forth in Chromebook/Tablet training and in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati Responsible Use of Technology Policy. In order to keep textbooks and tablets safe and in good repair during transport, each student must have a book bag, and students with Chromebooks/Tablets must use protective cases.

**Please note:** Lockers, desks, computers and Chromebooks/Tablets are the property of St. Thomas More School and are subject to search at any time. Backpacks or other student personal items on school property are also subject to search.



## **INFRACTIONS**

In general, infractions are behaviors that demonstrate a lack in meeting an expectation or following a policy, and require corrective action. While we cannot include every possible behavior, the following includes a few of the more serious infractions:

### **Academic Dishonesty**

Plagiarism/cheating is a form of dishonesty that occurs when a person passes off someone else's work as his or her own. Plagiarism is not just about stealing someone else's words, but also about stealing ideas. It includes:

- Using a published author's work without providing the author's name and a bibliography
- Copying directly from a book, magazine newspaper, song, or Internet without using quotation marks and/or without providing the author's name and a bibliography
- Paraphrasing: putting the text in your own words, and not providing the author's name and a bibliographic citation
- Using statistical data or copying maps, charts, graphs, and photos from a book, magazine, newspaper, song or Internet without providing the author's name and bibliographic citation
- Using a friend's work by
  - having him/her tell you the answer or part of the answer
  - copying homework
- Allowing a friend to copy from your work in whole or in part
- Cheating on a test by
  - using notes when not allowed
  - using a textbook or other resource when not allowed
  - looking at someone else's test
  - telling someone else what is on the test

Academic and disciplinary penalties will be determined at the discretion of the principal and teacher and could lead to zero credit being given for the assignment as well as detention.

### **Cell Phones/Electronic Devices**

Cell phones and other personal electronic devices, including smart watches, may not be used during school hours. They are not to be visible, heard, used, or ON during school hours. Only St. Thomas More devices can be monitored in order to protect students from harmful internet materials and online interactions; therefore, all electronic devices will be turned in at the beginning of each school day. St. Thomas More is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

Exceptions to this policy, such as the use of an E-reader, may occur under the supervision of a teacher. During these times, the terms of the Archdiocese Responsible Use of Technology will apply.

Electronic devices with the capacity to take photographs raise concerns about individual privacy. No pictures are to be taken on school property or on the bus without administrative or teacher authorization. This includes images captured with school-owned devices. St. Thomas More complies with the Archdiocesan directive to refer any images that would be considered "sexting" directly to the police.

Disciplinary action may be taken against those who use electronic means to cause mental or physical distress to other members of the school community, whether these incidents take place on or off the school property.

**Photos taken and published without permission of school authorities may result in disciplinary action, including suspension or expulsion.**

**Computers and Internet**

In keeping with the mission of Catholic schools to promote Christian values for a lifetime, St. Thomas More School will monitor, instruct about, and guard against inappropriate, unethical, and illegal use of technology by the student or adult user. Use of school computer and technology resources is permitted only after the student and parent have signed the Responsible Use of Technology Agreement provided to all Archdiocese of Cincinnati students. This agreement is provided each year and must be on file before students can use any school technology resources.

**Telephone**

Students are not permitted to use the phone in the classroom or office without the permission of the teacher or other adult.

**Toys**

Toys from home are not permitted to be brought to school. Students who attend Cardinal Care may bring small toys as allowed by the Cardinal Care staff; however, they must remain in the student's backpack during the school day.

**Weapons**

Real weapons, including pocket knives, are not permitted at school. Students who are found possessing, handling, transmitting or concealing a firearm, knife, other dangerous objects or a weapon replica, will be subject to suspension or expulsion at the discretion of the principal, and the proper legal authorities will be contacted. The object in question will be confiscated. If a student wants to bring a toy or model weapon to school for a legitimate purpose (e.g. history or social studies project) the parent must consult with the teacher for permission. The toy weapon should be brought to school by the parent and picked up directly from the teacher at the end of the day.

**Proper Bus Conduct**

Safe school bus transportation depends on proper pupil conduct. Violation of bus rules will result in a student being temporarily or permanently forbidden to ride a school bus. All rules of behavior and conduct that apply to the school also apply when riding the school bus. Eating is not permitted on buses.

**Substance Abuse Policy**

In compliance with the Archdiocesan Commission Education Policy, "Students shall not knowingly possess, use, transmit or be under the influence of an intoxicant of any kind, or of any drugs not prescribed for them by a physician." The possession or use of any actual or look-alike drugs, alcohol, tobacco, vapes, or dangerous sprays on school property or at any school related event off school property, will be cause for immediate suspension and/or counseling or expulsion. The administration reserves the right to make judgments in these matters.

## DISCIPLINE PROCEDURE FOR ST. THOMAS MORE SCHOOL

Violations of St. Thomas More Code of Conduct will result in disciplinary action as described below. The consequences do not cover every possible situation and, therefore, the principal and staff reserve the right to employ other measures if they are deemed more appropriate. The issuance of “conduct points” (see below) is weighed by the adult’s assessment of the offense in question, the student’s intent and past performance, and circumstances surrounding the offense under consideration. These lists are not all-inclusive.

### Conduct Point System

Unacceptable behavior is assigned to one of four categories, Class I, II, III, and IV, each with its own sanctions. The following lists serve as guides and are not all-inclusive.

**Class I** – (Expunged at end of each trimester) Will result in the issuance of one (1) conduct point.

- Minor misbehavior
- Copying a parent’s signature (grades K-3)
- Failure to follow directions
- Failure to produce assignments when due
- Failure to bring required materials to class
- Failure to follow dress code

**Class II** – (Expunged after 2 trimesters) Will result in the issuance of three (3) conduct points.

- Hurtful and/or inappropriate language, acts, or gestures
- Violation of safety rules
- Lying, cheating, plagiarism
- Violation of internet acceptable use policy
- Misbehavior at school related activities
- Display Christian behavior at all times
- Show respect for others and their property
- Follow directions the first time they are given
- Bring required materials to class
- Obey all rules and procedures
- Forgery (4-8)
- Repeated violations of the Code of Conduct

**Class III** – Will result in the issuance of a five (5) conduct points.

- Defiance
- Abuse and/or destruction of property
- Leaving school grounds/field trip without permission
- Bullying
- Unruliness

**Class IV**- Will result in issuance of fifteen (15) conduct points.

- Fighting
- Theft
- Possession of and/or use of drugs, alcohol, vapes, tobacco or look-alikes
- Possession of weapons or their simulations
- Sexual harassment
- Actual or threatened physical or sexual assault
- Violation of safety rules with malicious intent
- Chronic misbehavior that disrupts the educational process

The following consequences will be imposed when conduct points are accrued:

**3 Conduct Points**

Student assigned a 30-minute detention (3:00-3:30pm)

**5 Conduct Points**

Student assigned a 60-minute detention (3:00-4:00pm)

**8 Conduct Points**

Student assigned a 60-minute detention (3:00-4:00pm)

**10 Conduct Points**

Student assigned a 2-hour Friday School detention (3:00-5:00pm). Parent and student will meet with principal at 4:00pm to discuss behavior and form an improvement plan. Student will be ineligible for extra-curricular activities for two days.

**13 Conducts Points**

Student assigned a 2-day in-school or out-of-school suspension and placed on behavioral contract. Student and parent required to meet with principal upon student's return to school. Student will be ineligible for extra-curricular activities for one week.

**15 Conduct Points**

Student assigned a 5-day in-school or out-of-school suspension or may be expelled. If suspended, student and parents required to meet with principal upon student's return to school. Student will be ineligible for extra-curricular activities for four weeks.

**18 Conduct Points**

Student expelled and may be referred to juvenile court, depending upon the cause of the expulsion.

The principal and/or pastor is/are the final recourse in all disciplinary situations and may waive or add to any disciplinary rule for just cause at his or her discretion. The pastor will not render a decision until consultation with the principal occurs. In addition, the principal may involve the police for any activity deemed to be of a criminal nature. **Please note that a parent's behavior can be grounds for their child's expulsion from school.**

**PROCEDURE FOR CONDUCT/DETENTION SLIPS**

When a conduct slip is sent home, the parent is asked to sign it and return it to school the next day. If the conduct slip indicates a missing assignment, the missing assignment is due with the conduct slip the next day unless teacher and parent agree upon a different arrangement.

Failure to return a signed conduct point slip or detention slip the next school day may result in an additional conduct point.

**PROCEDURE FOR DETENTION**

Detentions are issued by the principal as part of the conduct reporting system. Detentions are served after school in the principal's office and will be served on the scheduled date.

Students are not to leave school grounds prior to the beginning of the detention period.

Students are not permitted in the school building (hallways, classrooms, lockers, etc.) after a detention.

Students having more than one detention assigned for a given day will serve the additional detention the following day.

Students requesting a change of date for a scheduled detention must bring a written request from a parent or guardian stating the reason a change is needed. This request must be approved by the principal.

#### PROCESS FOR SUSPENSION

The principal will notify the parents. If contact cannot be made immediately, the suspension will be delayed until such communication to the parent can be made. At the discretion of the principal, the student may be removed from regular classes pending parental contact.

#### INELIGIBILITY FOR ATHLETICS AND OTHER PARISH-SPONSORED ACTIVITIES

Participation in school or parish-sponsored activities (e.g. athletics, field trips, enrichment activities, out-of-uniform days, and other extracurricular activities) is a privilege, not a right, and is limited to students who maintain good behavior and academic performance. Students who are failing one or more subjects may be ineligible for athletics and other extra-curricular activities. This will be reviewed on a case by case basis, with the final decision being made by the principal. Coaches/moderators who fail to cooperate may be suspended from service.

## Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying Policy

### 1. General

- a) It is the policy of St. Thomas More School ("School or "the School") that any form of harassment, intimidation, or bullying, regardless of where, how, or when it takes place, is expressly forbidden.
- b) The School's internet and computer system may not be used to engage in harassment, intimidation, or bullying. The "Student Responsible Use of Technology" form must be signed annually by each student and on file with the School.
- c) The School reserves the right to impose discipline for harassing, intimidating, bullying, and other inappropriate behavior that takes place off School grounds and outside School hours.

### 2. Definition of Terms

- "Electronic act" means an act committed through the use of a cellular telephone, computer, iPad, pager, personal communication device, or other electronic communication device.
- "Harassment, intimidation, or bullying" means either of the following:
  - Any intentional written, verbal, electronic, or physical act that a student has exhibited toward another particular student more than once and the behavior both:
    - Causes mental or physical harm to the other student, and
    - Is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for the other student.
  - Violence within a dating relationship.
- "Harassment, intimidation, or bullying" also means electronically transmitted acts, i.e. by Internet, social media/network, blog, cell phone, personal digital assistance (PDA), wireless hand-held device, or other electronic communication device, that a student has exhibited toward another particular student more than once and the behavior both:
  - Causes mental or physical harm to the other student, and
  - Is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for the other student.
- In evaluating whether conduct constitutes harassment, intimidation, or bullying, special attention should be paid to the words chosen and the actions taken, whether such conduct occurred in front of others or was communicated to others, how the offender interacted with the victim, and the motivation, either admitted or appropriately inferred. Accordingly, what may constitute harassment, intimidation, or bullying in one circumstance might not constitute such in another. As in all disciplinary matters, the School will make this determination utilizing its sole and absolute educational discretion and judgment.

### 3. Types of Conduct

- Harassment, intimidation, and bullying can include many different behaviors including, but not limited to, overt intent to ridicule, humiliate, or intimidate another student. Examples of conduct that could constitute prohibited behaviors include:
  - i. Engaging in unsolicited and offensive or insulting behavior;
  - ii. Physical violence and/or attacks;
  - iii. Threats, taunts, and intimidation through words and/or gestures;
  - iv. Extortion, damage, or stealing of money and/or possessions;
  - v. Exclusion from the peer group or spreading rumors; and
  - vi. Repetitive and hostile behavior with the intent to harm others through the use of information and communication technologies, computers, iPads, cell phones, other electronic devices, the Internet, online website, blogs, or social media/networks (also known as "cyber-bullying"). Examples of cyber-bullying include, but are not limited to the following:
    - 1. Posting slurs on the Internet, websites, blogs, or social media/networks;
    - 2. Sending abusive or threatening instant messages, text messages, emails, or other communications through the Internet, websites, blogs, or social media/networks;

3. Taking embarrassing photographs of students and posting them online or otherwise distributing them; and
4. Using the Internet, websites, blogs, social media/networks, or electronic communication devices to impersonate another individual or circulate gossip or rumors to other students.

#### 4. Complaints

##### a. Formal Complaints

Students and/or their parents/guardians may file reports regarding suspected harassment, intimidation, or bullying. Such written reports shall be reasonably specific including persons involved, number of times and places of the alleged conduct, the target of the suspected harassment, intimidation, or bullying, and the names of any potential witnesses. Such reports may be filed with any School staff member or administrator, and they shall be promptly forwarded to the principal or his/her designee.

##### b. Informal Complaints

Students and/or their parents/guardians may make informal complaints of conduct they consider to be harassment, intimidation, or bullying by verbal report to a teacher, School administrator, or other School personnel. Such informal complaints shall be reasonably specific as to the actions giving rise to the suspicion of harassment, intimidation, or bullying, alleged conduct, the target of the prohibited behavior, and the names of any potential witnesses. A School staff member or administrator who receives an informal complaint shall promptly document the complaint in writing, including the above information. This written report by the School staff member and/or administrator shall be promptly forwarded to the principal or his/her designee.

##### c. Anonymous Complaints

Students who make informal complaints as set forth above may request that their name be maintained in confidence by the School staff member or administrator who receives the complaint. The anonymous complaints shall be reviewed and reasonable action will be taken to address the situation, to the extent such action may be taken that (1) does not disclose the source of the complaint, and (2) is consistent with the concept of fairness to the student alleged to have committed acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying.

#### 5. School Personnel Responsibilities

##### a. Teachers and Other School Staff

- i. Teachers and other School staff who witness acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying, as defined above, shall promptly notify the principal or his/her designee of the event observed, and shall promptly document the events witnessed. Teachers and other School staff who receive student or parent reports of suspected harassment, intimidation, or bullying shall promptly notify the principal or his/her designee of such reports. If the report is a formal, written complaint, such complaint shall be forwarded promptly to the principal or his/her designee. If the report is an informal complaint by a student that is received by a teacher or other staff member, he or she shall document the informal complaint and promptly forward it to the principal or his/her designee.
- ii. In addition to addressing both informal and formal complaints, School personnel are encouraged to address the issue of harassment, intimidation, and bullying in other interactions with students. School personnel may find opportunities to educate students about harassment, intimidation, or bullying and help eliminate such prohibited behaviors through class discussions, counseling, and reinforcement of socially appropriate behavior. School personnel should intervene promptly whenever they observe student conduct that has the purpose or effect of ridiculing, humiliating, or intimidating another student or individual, even if such conduct does not meet the formal definition of harassment, intimidation, or bullying set forth above.

b. Administrator Responsibilities

i. Investigation

1. The principal or his/her designee shall be promptly notified of any formal or informal complaint of suspected harassment, intimidation, or bullying. Under the direction of the principal or his/her designee, all such complaints shall be investigated promptly. The principal or his/her designee shall document the investigation, including any conversations with the alleged offender, victim, students, or other witnesses. Written statements may also be obtained from these individuals.
2. Notwithstanding the foregoing, when a student making an informal complaint has requested anonymity, the investigation of such complaint shall be limited as is appropriate in view of the anonymity of the complaint. Such limitation of investigation may include restricting action to a simple review of the complaint (with or without discussing it with the alleged offender), subject to receipt of further information and/or the withdrawal by the accusing student of the condition that his/her report be anonymous.

ii. Response

1. Verified acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying shall result in an intervention by the principal or his/her designee. The intention of such intervention is to ensure that the prohibition against harassment, intimidation, and bullying is enforced, with the goal that any such prohibited behavior will end.
2. When acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying are verified and a disciplinary response is warranted, students are subject to the full range of disciplinary consequences, including suspension and expulsion. Anonymous complaints that are not otherwise verified, however, shall not be the basis for disciplinary action.
3. Harassment, intimidation, and bullying behavior can take many forms and can vary dramatically in seriousness and impact on the victim and other students. Accordingly, there is no one prescribed response or discipline to verified acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying. The forms of discipline listed in the Handbook are guidelines, and the School may use other disciplinary measures as the situation warrants. The decision whether to impose discipline and, if so, to what extent is left to the professional and educational discretion of the principal or his/her designee.
4. Once harassment, intimidation, or bullying has been verified, the principal or his/her designee should monitor the situation to determine whether there have been additional incidents of harassment, intimidation, or bullying, or retaliation from the offender or other parties. Additionally, the principal or his/her designee may inform School personnel of the incident and instruct them to monitor the victim and the offender for indications of harassing, intimidating, bullying, or retaliatory behavior. School personnel are to intervene when prohibited behaviors are witnessed.

iii. Reporting

1. Report to the Parent or Guardian of the Offender
  - a. If after investigation an act of harassment, intimidation, or bullying by a specific student is verified, the principal or his/her designee shall notify the offender's parent/guardian of that finding. The parent/guardian shall also be notified of any disciplinary consequences imposed against that student.
2. Report to the Parent of Guardian of the Victim
  - a. If after investigation an act of harassment, intimidation, or bullying against a specific student is verified, the principal or his/her designee shall notify the victim's parent/guardian of such finding.



### 3. Police and Child Protective Services

- a. Allegations of criminal misconduct will be reported to law enforcement and suspected child abuse will be reported to Child Protective Services, consistent with the Archdiocese Decree on Child Protection and Ohio law. All School personnel must cooperate with investigations by outside agencies.

### 6. Miscellaneous

No discipline issued pursuant to any Handbook shall bind the School to issue the same, or even comparable, discipline to other students in the future. Nor will any form or extent of discipline be construed as a precedent for how discipline will be imposed moving forward. Rather, the School reserves sole judgment and discretion in disciplining students based on the particular circumstances of each incident, including but not limited to the respective age(s) of the student(s) involved, the student's(s') perceived maturity level, the conduct at issue, the student's(s') attitude and degree of cooperation, the student's(s') disciplinary history, and any other aggravating or mitigating circumstances the School deems present. Nothing in this section or anywhere else in this Handbook limits or otherwise constrains the School's authority, discretion, judgment, or responsibility in any student disciplinary matters.

#### Suspension

In-school or out-of-school suspension may be assigned at the discretion of the principal for chronic misbehavior, or when the actions of a student are deemed a serious violation of the school discipline code. Students who are suspended for violations of the discipline code may not be permitted to return to school until a conference with the principal and parent(s) has taken place. Work will be provided for the student. Credit will be given for work that is completed during the suspension if the work meets the standards set by the teacher and is completed on time. The pastor and Archdiocese are notified of all suspensions. During the time of an in-school or out-of-school suspension, a student is ineligible to participate in any and all school activities such as sports, choir, or field trips. It is the responsibility of the parent(s) to notify coaches, choir directors, scoutmaster, etc., of suspensions. Failure to do so will result in further disciplinary action. Verbal or written threats, insubordination, vandalism, or theft are grounds for suspension. This includes internet emails and texts.

#### Expulsion

Three or more suspensions or a grievous offense against the discipline code may result in a recommendation to the pastor for expulsion. In cases of expulsion, St. Thomas More School adheres to Archdiocesan guidelines, including prior consultation with a psychologist, physician, or social worker. Any parent who feels that their child has been wrongly expelled is entitled to request a review by the Superintendent of Schools.

#### Extracurricular Activities

St. Thomas More students have the opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities. Written permission forms (and health forms, where applicable) are required.

**If a student is absent from school, the student MAY NOT participate in or attend any extracurricular activities, including sports, Scouts, etc., on the day(s) of the absence.**

#### Field Trip Policies

Field trips that have been planned by any teacher are an important part of a child's instruction in a particular area of knowledge or experience. Our PTO helps to supplement the cost of field trips, usually by covering the cost of transportation. A field trip permission form will be sent home in advance so that parents are advised and can make any necessary preparations. A signed permission slip is required in order for a child to participate in any field trip. Field trips are a privilege, not a right. Teachers may refuse or restrict this privilege for a student who has shown disregard for school rules. A parent/guardian chaperone may be requested in the event that a student requires special assistance or supervision. Any parent/guardian chaperone must have met the eligibility requirements. A medical authorization form for each student is to be completed annually and will be kept on file in the school office; a copy of this form, along with any medication required, will accompany teachers on field trips. **Per Ohio law, personal vehicles may not be used to transport students for school field trips.**

The administration reserves the right to impose disciplinary measures for any behaviors deemed inappropriate, disrespectful, or dangerous to the members of the school community. The principal is the final recourse in all disciplinary situations, and may waive or deviate from any disciplinary rules for just cause at his or her discretion.

# **ALL PARENTS AND STUDENTS MUST READ AND SIGN THE FOLLOWING RESPONSIBLE USE OF TECHNOLOGY AGREEMENT**

## **RESPONSIBLE USE OF TECHNOLOGY POLICY**

**Catholic School Office  
Archdiocese of Cincinnati**

### **INTRODUCTION**

- Vital to the evangelizing and educational mission of the Catholic Church, we are Christ-centered communities dedicated to the faith formation, academic excellence, and individual growth of our students, all rooted in the Gospel message of Jesus.

*Catholic School's Mission Statement*

- The Church views emerging technologies as gifts of the Spirit to this age and challenges "God's faithful people to make creative use of new discoveries and technologies for the benefit of humanity and the fulfillment of God's plan for the world."

*Aetatis Novae, #2, #3; Rose, 1992*

### **GENERAL INFORMATION FOR USERS OF TECHNOLOGY**

In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Catholic schools are using new technologies, electronic resources, and Internet access to enhance student learning and to provide a quality educational experience for all students. The schools of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati as well as the other diocesan schools in Ohio have been provided with Internet connectivity through Instructional Technology Centers located throughout the state. This project is partially funded by the Legislature of the State of Ohio. Therefore, Internet access and activities utilizing all other technologies in the schools are strictly limited to educational purposes.

In keeping with the mission of the Catholic schools, schools will monitor, instruct, and guard against inappropriate, unethical, and illegal use of technology by the student or adult user.

### **AGREEMENT FORM**

In order to ensure the proper use of technological resources, it is necessary that each user and parent/guardian annually sign the attached Responsible Use of Technology Policy – User Agreement Form. The signed form must be on file at the school before Internet access is permitted. Signing the form indicates that the user will abide by the rules governing Internet and other technology access as stated in this policy.

All schools must have on file a signed Responsible Use of Technology Policy – User Agreement Form for any Student\* and/or adult (administrators, faculty and staff members, parents, volunteers, and other school-affiliated adults) using a school's technology resources, school's Internet account, school-sponsored account, or personal account to access the Internet. All Internet access and use of other electronic communication technology is strictly limited to educational purposes. Students (including those 18 and over) are not allowed to access personal accounts from school. School personnel (administrators, faculty and staff members) are allowed to access personal accounts at school but are subject to responsible use provisions herein. Catholic Schools of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati adhere to the Children's Internet Protection Act. Individual schools may be further governed by the policies of the Instructional Technology Centers or other Internet Service Providers. The school has the right to access to any electronic devices on school property. All information received or sent from school property remains the property of the school and is not considered confidential. The school reserves the right to investigate the download history of all school computers. There shall be no reasonable expectation of privacy.

\*The term student applies to any individual enrolled in the school regardless of age.

## **SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITY**

The school shall provide access to technological resources, including Internet, for educational purposes only. The school shall also provide training for students and teachers in the appropriate use of online behavior, interaction online on social networking sites, cyber-bullying awareness and reporting of misuse of technology. The school shall take measures to provide for the safety and security of minors, supervise and monitor student access to all technological resources provided by the school, and guard against the access of objectionable material, noncompliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act and the Archdiocesan Decree on Child Protection. Unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal information regarding minors are forbidden.

## **USER RESPONSIBILITY**

The user shall access the school's technological resources for educational purposes only. Each user is responsible for information that is sent and received under his/her personal and/or school Internet account. Passwords are to be guarded and not displayed nor shared with others. The user must strictly adhere to copyright laws. In addition, unethical and/or illegal uses of electronic devices will not be allowed. Unauthorized access, including hacking or use of another person's account, is strictly forbidden. The user agrees not to bypass the school firewall, nor to harm or alter school property. The user agrees not to pirate, nor to submit, publish, and/or display any defamatory, inaccurate, abusive, obscene, profane, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, racially offensive or otherwise illegal material, on or off school property; nor shall the user encourage the use, sale, or distribution of controlled substances. Any use in violation of any local, state, or federal law is prohibited and is a breach of the terms and conditions of responsible use. Also, any commercial use is strictly forbidden.

## **DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

The school may take disciplinary action against school personnel, including students, who violate the Responsible Use of Technology Policy or other school or archdiocesan policies by means of inappropriate use of technology. Disciplinary action may also be taken against those who use telecommunication devices to cause mental or physical distress to other members of the school community, whether these incidents take place on or off the school property. Disciplinary action taken by school authorities may include revocation of access to technological resources, suspension, expulsion, and/or possible legal action.

## **CONSENT FOR ONLINE/REMOTE LEARNING**

As part of the Responsible Use of Technology Policy, parents/guardians further agree as follows:

While the COVID-19 pandemic continues to exist and evolve, "remote" and/or "distance" learning (hereinafter referred to as "Remote Learning") may at some point be required, either for the entire school or for a specific student or group of students. In such cases, the school may livestream and/or record a class to allow any student who is absent due to COVID-19 to continue to observe, and participate in, the class as much as reasonably practicable. Although the school will attempt to focus the camera and/or recording device on the respective teacher, aide, and/or instructional materials being utilized during instruction, there will be times when a specific student or students appears on the video. Parent/Guardian hereby consents and agrees that: (1) such Remote Learning is permissible; and (2) his/her child may appear in videos being livestreamed and/or recorded as part of that Remote Learning.

Furthermore, Parent/Guardian promises and agrees not to record, disseminate, publish, or share any livestreamed or recorded video of such Remote Learning to anyone outside of student's immediate family. To the extent any Remote Learning videos are created and recorded, Parent/Guardian promises and agrees to permanently delete such recording following his/her child's observation of, and/or participation in, that particular class session.

## RESPONSIBLE USE OF TECHNOLOGY POLICY

Catholic Schools Office  
Archdiocese of Cincinnati

### **USER AGREEMENT / PARENT PERMISSION FORM**

**Both Signatures Required**

- I have read the terms and conditions of the **Responsible Use of Technology Policy**
- I understand that technological resources are provided for educational purposes only.
- I agree to abide by the terms and conditions stated in the **Responsible Use of Technology Policy**. Additionally, I will be responsible for the consequences of inappropriate use of technology, including the Internet, both on and off school property. I understand that consequences may include suspension or revocation of privileges to access the Internet and/or other technological resources, suspension, expulsion, and possible legal action.

User Name (print) \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_

User Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Homeroom \_\_\_\_\_

### **Parent / Guardian Permission Form**

I have read the terms and conditions of the **Responsible Use of Technology Policy**. I am requesting that the above named student be allowed to use the school's technological resources, including the Internet, and agree to support the school in the Responsible Use of Technology Policy.

Parent/Guardian Name (print) \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

☐ My student's name, grade, homeroom and signature appear above.

## UNIFORM /DRESS CODE

St. Thomas More School enforces a dress code for boys and girls in order that all of our students come appropriately and modestly attired for school. It is our desire that the dress code be focused on uniformity and also be cost-effective for parents. Uniform jumpers, skirts, polo shirts, and short/pants may be purchased from Schoolbelles, Land's End, U Sports, All Star Sportswear, or the PTO uniform exchange online on their social media site. Navy uniform shorts/pants and white or red polo shirts may be purchased from a department store; however, the school logo must be embroidered on polo shirts, unless they are worn under an embroidered item. (For example, a plain red or white polo is permitted to be worn under an embroidered sweatshirt; however, the uniform item with our school logo must be worn outwardly at all times.) All Star Sportswear on Ohio Pike is authorized to use our STM logo for school wear embroidery; they also carry some STM uniform items. All clothing must be clean, fit properly, and be in good condition at all times.

It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to see that their child arrives at school with the proper attire and is properly groomed. At school, it is the responsibility of the student to adhere to the standards of dress required by the dress code, such as having shirts tucked in and wearing skirts and pants as designed, rather than rolled, or below the waist. Students whose dress is in not in compliance with the dress code will receive a warning for the first violation. Subsequent or chronic violations will be considered disciplinary offenses. In the event that a family emergency (broken washing machine, etc.) results in deviation from the dress code, a note from the parent or guardian is required.

Hair: Hair must be clean and neat. Boys' hair should be cut short and not touch the collar, cover the eyes, or extend below the ear. Girls' hair should not cover the eyes. No artificial coloring is permitted. Hairstyles that are extreme in nature, such as unnatural coloring, shaving (including hair tattoos), visible gel, mohawks, or other fads are not permitted.

Uniform: Shirts must be tucked in, except when playing in the gym or on the playground. Skirts may not be rolled. Pants and skirts may not be worn below the waist.

Shirt/blouse: The uniform polo with the current St. Thomas More logo in solid white or red is required. The only alternative is a solid white dress shirt or turtleneck worn under the uniform jumper, fleece, or sweatshirt.

Slacks: Boys and girls may wear navy blue twill uniform pants year round. No cargo pants or pants with rivets are permitted. For spirit wear days and other special occasions, casual uniform bottoms (STM shorts/sweatpants) are available for purchase through our uniform suppliers.

Shorts/Skorts: Navy blue uniform shorts or "skorts" may be worn April 1 to November 15. Mid-thigh length or longer is required; they can be no shorter than 2" above the center of the knee when buttoned at the natural waist, or no shorter than fingertips when arms are placed at sides. **On out-of-uniform days and for special events** (such as Walk M.O.R.E. and Olympic/Field Day) when shorts are permitted to be worn, the shorts must be of appropriate length as stated previously. Casual uniform bottoms (STM shorts/sweatpants) are available for purchase through our uniform suppliers.

Jumpers/skirts:

- K-3 uniform jumper in STM plaid
- Gr. 4 uniform jumper or skirt in STM plaid
- Gr. 5-8 uniform skirt, pleated or A-line, in STM plaid
- Skirts and jumpers must reach no higher than two inches above the top of the knee when buttoned at the natural waist. It is ***strongly recommended*** that shorts be worn under skirts and jumpers.

Sweatshirts: Students have the option of wearing St. Thomas More crew neck sweatshirts. The sweatshirts are to

be red, navy, or heather gray with the approved current STM logo. The sweatshirt **MUST** be worn over a school shirt or white turtleneck.

Fleece pullovers: Red or navy fleece pullover (1/4 zipper or with full zip front) with current STM logo is permitted.

Sweaters: Navy blue V-neck vest, crew neck, or cardigan sweater worn over a school shirt or white turtleneck; plain or with STM logo.

Socks: Socks are required at school in predominantly white, black, or navy only. Socks must be matching, and visible above the shoe. Girls may wear tights or leggings in **solid navy blue or black, or solid white only** under skirts or jumpers.

Shoes: Gym shoes **with non-marking soles only** are required to be worn at school. No open-toed shoes, sandals, boots, “booties,” or “Crocs” are permitted. Students who wear boots or “booties” to school must bring shoes to wear once they arrive at school; **boots or “booties” may not be worn in the classroom.**

Jewelry: Please keep jewelry to a minimum. Girls may wear a single pair of small pierced earrings (post and small hoop only). No large hoops or dangling earrings.

#### Scout Uniforms

Scout uniforms are permitted to be worn on designated meeting days or as otherwise requested by the scout leader and approved by the principal. Students must wear the complete uniform required by the national scouting organization.

#### Spirit Wear

Students may wear STM spirit wear on school spirit days or for field trips that do not require uniform dress. Reasonably priced spirit wear may be purchased from Schoolbelles, All Star Sportswear on Ohio Pike, and U Sports for use on out-of-uniform days. Jeans (no rips or holes) or khaki pants **only** are permitted on out-of-uniform days; gym shorts or sweat pants are not allowed. Jean/khaki shorts must be no more than 2 inches above the top of the knee.

#### Nails

Clear nail polish only. No fake/acrylic nails or nail tattoos.

#### Out of Uniform Days

On certain rare occasions as approved by the principal, students may be completely out of uniform, but dressed appropriately for school. Please note that the following **are NOT permitted:** Clothing with inappropriate language or logos, athletic pants or shorts, strapless or “cold shoulder” tops or dresses, or those with spaghetti straps. Shorts, skirts, or dresses may not be shorter than two inches above the center of the knee. Students may wear jeans as long as they are free of **any** holes, rips, or tears.

#### Not Permitted

Makeup (including eye makeup of any kind), dangling earrings, tattoos (permanent or temporary), Spandex-wear (i.e., bike shorts), athletic apparel, or printed t-shirts with offensive slogans or images are not allowed. Jackets, coats, or hooded sweatshirts may not be worn in the classroom during school hours, with the exception of custom-made “hoodies” designed for our 8th grade class. Hoods may not be worn inside school buildings.

Body piercing, other than ears, is not permitted. Hairstyles that are extreme in nature, such as unnatural coloring, shaving (including hair tattoos), visible gel, mohawks, or other fads are not permitted. Other fads not allowed include clip-on hair pieces, feathers, or other distracting ornamentation. Other styles or items may be added to the above list at the discretion of the principal.

<b>Note: The Principal, or his/her appointee, with the support of the Pastor, retains the right to</b>
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**amend this parent/student handbook.**

The education of your child is a partnership between the school and parents, and your signature serves as an acknowledgement of that partnership. **All families are required to acknowledge receipt of the Student Handbook.**

***PLEASE CLICK [HERE](#) TO ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT OF THIS HANDBOOK AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE POLICIES HEREIN.***