



2026-2027

Student/Parent Handbook

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*All dates and directives in this document are subject to change as mandated by local/state/federal government agencies, the Diocese and/or Parish and School leadership

****New or updated policies for the 2026/2027 school year are noted in green**

Spartans Live the Catholic Mission

Parish Mission

To be the household of the heart of God for the north side of Elkhart.

Parish Vision

To follow the Way, to be formed in the Truth, to be fed by the Life.

School Mission

To instill Christ, compassion, and character, by educating the mind, body, and spirit.

School Vision

To form students in the Truth through the collaboration of school staff, religious leaders, students, parents and community stakeholders.



Our Mascot:

Spartan

Our Colors:

Maroon and Gold

St. Thomas the Apostle

Stewardship and Catholic Education

Many parishioners of St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church have embraced the message of stewardship as a way of life. Centered on the Sunday Eucharist, they spend time in prayer thanking God for the blessings bestowed on them. Committed to parish life, they give a portion of their time and talent in service to the community. Trusting that God will provide for their needs, they share a generous portion of their treasure, providing financial means for the parish to carry out its mission. Because of stewardship, St. Thomas the Apostle can offer a wide variety of services, including a Catholic elementary education.

Good stewards of St. Thomas are committed to:

- Participating in Sunday Mass every weekend and in a daily regimen of prayer. With the Eucharistic Celebration as the Source and Summit of the prayer life of the parish, faithful stewards spend time in prayer, acknowledging God as the source of all that we are and have.

In faith, good stewards of St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church are entitled to the parish rate of tuition, when they choose to invest in Catholic education. Good parish stewards are also entitled to a reduced tuition rate at the local Catholic high schools – a benefit offered only to active members of local Catholic parishes.

In justice, those requesting the parish rate of tuition or the discount at Marian or Saint Joseph High Schools are expected to be good stewards. Of necessity, the parish must examine evidence of faithful stewardship to determine eligibility for the parish rate of tuition and discount at our Catholic high schools.

Presuming weekly participation at a weekend Mass, such evidence comes in many forms, both formal and informal. At a minimum, for your part, please be mindful to engage in two simple acts of stewardship that serve to record your own faithful stewardship more broadly.

The active stewardship of all is welcome. Indeed, it is only through such stewardship that the educational benefits that the parish offers to faithful stewards are possible. We will continue to invite parishioners to take steps in faith in stewardship each year. At the beginning of each calendar year, all those who request the parish rate of tuition or the discount at Marian or Saint Joseph High Schools will be evaluated. Those who have not met their stewardship commitments will not be eligible for the parish benefits of those who have demonstrated these principles of stewardship in their lives.

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Message from the Principal

Dear St. Thomas Families,

Welcome to the 2026–2027 school year at St. Thomas School! On behalf of our entire faculty and staff, I extend a heartfelt welcome to both our returning families and those joining our school community for the first time.

The beginning of a new school year is a wonderful opportunity to grow together in faith, knowledge, and service. Our faculty and staff remain committed to our mission of forming students as Disciples of Christ, grounded in faith, compassion, integrity, and academic excellence. This mission is reflected in our curriculum, service opportunities, extracurricular activities, and the care we show one another each day. It is a privilege to partner with you, the primary educators of your children, as we reinforce the values and faith nurtured at home.

As we begin this new chapter, I invite you to stay actively engaged in your child's educational journey. Your partnership is essential to our students' success, and together we continue to build a strong, faith-filled community where every child is encouraged to learn, lead, and grow as a disciple of Christ.

Please take a few moments to review the updated School Handbook, as it contains important information, policies, and expectations for the 2026–2027 school year.

I look forward to another wonderful year of learning, faith, collaboration, and growth. May God bless each of our families with a joyful and successful school year.

All the best in Christ,

Chris

Part 1: Administration and Responsibilities

Accreditation

St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School is fully accredited by the State of Indiana. St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School adheres to the State of Indiana and diocesan guidelines for standardized testing.

Pastor Responsibilities (Diocesan Policy [1030](#))

The pastor is the parish leader and is responsible for the administration of St. Thomas the Apostle Parish, which includes ultimate responsibility for all ministries of the parish, including St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School. He reports to the Bishop of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend in Indiana. With respect to the school, the pastor's responsibilities include:

- Exercising oversight and approval over school policies, considering the full educational ministry of the Parish.
- Interviewing, hiring, and evaluating the principal.
- Collaborating with and supporting the principal.
- Pastorally ministering to, and cooperatively working with, parents, teachers, and administrators.

While the pastor welcomes all spiritual concerns, parents with concerns involving the school should follow the procedures set forth within this handbook.

Principal Responsibilities (Diocesan Policy [1110](#))

The principal is responsible for administering St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School, a ministry of St. Thomas the Apostle Church. The principal reports to the pastor. While the principal welcomes input and suggestions from parents, parents with concerns involving the school should follow the procedures set forth within this handbook.. The principal's primary responsibilities include:

- Employing, supervising, evaluating, and terminating all personnel exclusively involved in the school, in consultation with the pastor and in accordance with diocesan policies.
- Overseeing all day-to-day school operations.
- Facilitating the formulation of school policy, in consultation with the School Board with final approval by the pastor.
- Implementing policies approved by the pastor and diocesan office.
- Monitoring the development of an annual budget and exercising financial accountability in the implementation of such budget

The principal is responsible for ensuring that staff personnel of St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School properly fulfill their responsibilities, including those to:

- Strive to model the actions of Jesus.
- If Catholic, model the teachings of the Catholic Church, which includes attending and participating in Mass each Sunday and on Holy Days of Obligation.
- Strive to help each child reach his or her academic, spiritual, and behavioral potential.
- Create a stimulating learning environment that encourages excellence through diverse teaching methods.
- Respect and encourage students as unique individuals.
- Develop self-esteem by stressing the positive qualities of all children.
- Seek parent conferences to resolve behavioral or academic concerns in a timely manner.
- Effectively and regularly communicate classroom business and student performance.
- Continually seek opportunities for professional growth.
- Be responsible stewards of our resources and mindful of the financial impact on families.
- Maintain confidentiality of students, parents, and each other.

Assistant Principal Responsibilities (Diocesan Policy [1130](#))

The Assistant Principal fulfills the mission of the Catholic school by working with the principal in the management of the school, faculty, staff, and students with major emphasis on curriculum and instruction, as well as student discipline. This position reports to and is evaluated by the principal. The assistant principal's primary responsibilities include:

- Support and adhere to the Code of Conduct and policies and procedures of the school and Diocese
- Assist in the general administration of the school.
- Carry out the disciplinary policies of the school.
- Interpret and enforce school policies.
- Effectively manage student conflict.
- Assist in planning for staff development, curriculum, educational textbooks and materials, and student testing
- Facilitate annual revision of handbooks: student/parent, and faculty.
- Assist with observation and evaluation of teachers.
- Assist in the maintenance of a safe and secure environment for students, faculty, and staff.
- Design the master schedule.
- Monitor students regarding tardiness, absences, and those on academic probation.

Teacher Responsibilities (Diocesan Policy [3130](#))

The teacher performs various duties including, but not limited to, fulfilling the mission of the Catholic Church as directed by the bishop or his designee, instructing and supervising students, and serving as moral exemplar as described in "The Mission of our Catholic Schools and the Importance of Authentic Witness of Catholic School Educators," as well as:

- Works cooperatively with administrators, faculty, students, and parents to form a faith community in the school and parish.
- Prepares lesson plans and teaches in assigned subject area and grade level in accordance with state and diocesan guidelines.
- Recognizes the variety of student learning styles and facilitates learning by adapting instructional methods and teaching materials to student needs.
- Uses various assessments to measure student growth.
- Assigns and monitors student activities to promote student learning.
- Supervises students within the school. Supervises students both at and away from the school when participating in school-sponsored activities in an official capacity.
- Consistently enforces the school's discipline policies.
- Communicates regularly and effectively with parents regarding student progress.
- Maintains school records as required by school policy.
- Commits to ongoing faith formation and professional growth.
- Participates in diocesan and school improvement goals including professional development.

Advisory School Board Responsibilities (Diocesan Policy [1310](#))

The St. Thomas the Apostle advisory school board is consultative to the pastor and the principal and does not have decision-making authority. The school board, as directed by the diocese, will have three tasks:

1. Leadership and guidance of the Strategic Plan
2. Principal Evaluation per the culture and climate survey discussion
3. Policy Review (not development)

The school board has established 5 committees dedicated to envisioning the future of St. Thomas:

- Catholic Identity Committee
- Curriculum Committee
- Facilities Committee
- Marketing and Enrollment Committee
- Financial Committee

Committee chairs can be found at <https://www.stselkhart.com/page/school-board>.

The School Board has no jurisdiction to hear and resolve complaints of students, parents, faculty, or staff. It also does not participate in the administration of the school. The following policies govern public participation in School Board meetings:

- Meetings of the St. Thomas School Board are open for the public to observe. There is not, however, public participation in School Board meetings, except as authorized in accordance with the procedures specified below.
- The School Board does not act as a grievance committee to settle an individual's concerns with the administration of the school.
- Accordingly, authorized public presentations in School Board meetings must relate only to direct responsibilities and policies of the School Board.

The following guidelines govern public presentations to the Board:

1. A person wishing to address the School Board shall submit a request in writing to the principal at least ten (10) days prior to the School Board meeting. This request shall include a statement describing the presentation the person wishes to make to the Board. The statement must relate the presentation to a direct responsibility or policy of the School Board.
2. For the presentation to proceed, the principal in consultation with the pastor, must agree that the request is appropriate based upon the following criteria:
 - a. The concern directly relates to policy, finances, marketing, development, Catholic character, or strategic planning.
 - b. The concern does not relate to an individual student issue or an individual teacher or staff personnel issue or evaluation.
3. If the principal approves the concern as an agenda item, the item will appear on a meeting agenda as soon as is practical. At the meeting, the presentation of the concern to the Board shall last no more than five minutes.
4. At the conclusion of the visitor's presentation, the chairperson shall refer the issue to a Board committee, the principal, or the pastor, as appropriate. No Board discussion shall follow the presentation.

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

Parents have the primary responsibility to educate their children. It is essential that a spirit of cooperation, trust, and support exists between the school and the parents. We ask that you are:

- Supporting and following through regarding all school regulations and policies.
- Reading and responding to all notices, including the weekly newsletter containing school news and important information.
- Attending all school meetings, functions, special activities, and parent- teacher conferences.
- Working with the teachers and administration in everything relating to their child's progress and performance.
- Ensuring your child is prepared for school- has lunch or lunch money, completes homework, wears uniform, etc.

Parents are welcome to contact the teacher whenever they have a question or concern about a child's education, preferably through email. A parent who wishes to visit or observe a classroom should make the request at least 24 hours in advance. Parents should not enter a classroom without first checking in at the office.

To maintain and promote the Catholic atmosphere of our school, we expect parents/guardians to:

- Strive to model the actions of Jesus.
- Attend and participate in Mass on Sundays and Holy Days.
- Talk to your children about God and your own faith.
- Pray together.
- Respectfully cooperate with school personnel when addressing concerns.
- Support the financial operation of the parish, in addition to making school tuition payments.
- Donate your time and talent to the ministries of the parish and school.
- Receive Safe Environment training prior to working with children routinely.

Parent/Guardian Concerns Procedure (Diocesan Policy [2310](#))

To facilitate and promote the orderly and efficient resolution of concerns, parents wishing to address and/or question an academic area or situation regarding a specific teacher or classroom procedure must follow the grievance procedure:

Step 1: Address the issues with the classroom teacher (or the person with whom he/she has the problem).

Step 2: Address the issue with the principal.

Step 3: Address the issue with the pastor.

Step 4: If the issue is not satisfactorily resolved, then the parent/guardian should place his/her concerns in writing to the person involved and his/her supervisors (e.g., pastor and principal).

Parents should follow the steps set forth in this policy, except where a situation is specifically covered under another school or Diocesan policy which provides for a different reporting procedure (e.g., harassment).

Family Commitment

Each family who has students enrolled at St. Thomas is expected to contribute four (4) family service hours to St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School per school year. Each family is responsible for reporting their service hours in a timely fashion using the *Family Service Hours Report Form*. In the spirit of support, we recognize that families often contribute far more than the required 4 hours. Families are encouraged to report all service hours. This information is collected and used when applying for grants and during our school accreditation process. Access to the *Family Service Hours Report Form* is available on the school's website and will be accessible at all events and in our school office.

Agreement of Parents and Students

The registration of students at St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School is deemed to be an agreement on their part, and on the part of their parents or guardians, to comply fully with all policies, rules, and regulations of the school and the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend. St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School reserves the right to make revisions in these policies, rules, and regulations when deemed necessary by the school administration. Students and their parents/guardians are expected to observe any change in policies, rules, and regulations that the school makes known to them in writing. Upon completion of your review of these policies and procedures, **we**

require your signature acknowledging that you have reviewed, understand, and agree to comply with all said information. If, in the opinion of the administration, the partnership is irretrievably broken, the school reserves the right to require the parent to withdraw the child. This is a very serious decision that will be made in consultation with the administration and the pastor.

Surveys, Analyses, Examinations (Diocesan Policy [4610](#))

Parents/guardians of Diocesan students have the right, upon request, to inspect a survey created by a third party before the survey is administered or distributed to students. Requests to inspect a third party survey should be made in writing to the school principal.

Facility Use (Diocesan Policy [2120](#))

Any group requesting to utilize the facilities at St. Thomas must complete a facility use application (available in the main office) and submit to the principal for approval 30 days prior to usage. The applicant assumes responsibility for the preservation of order, prior inspection of the area, conduct of those in attendance, and safe use of the facilities. The applicant shall be personally responsible for the strict observance of school, fire, police and safety ordinances, assignment of adequate adult supervision (one adult present in each room being used, and in addition, one adult present for every 30 school-aged children.) Regular school activities shall have first preference in requests for the use of any of the school's facilities. In situations where numerous requests are made, preference will be given to those organizations concerned with St. Thomas students.

Part 2: Admissions (Diocesan Policy [4010](#))

School Admission Policy

Diocesan schools shall comply with state laws and regulations regarding school enrollment and attendance to the extent possible, as consistent with the teachings of the Catholic Church and Diocesan policy.

Nondiscrimination Policy

Diocesan schools shall follow and promote an open enrollment policy accepting students without regard to color, race, gender, or national origin, and shall reasonably accommodate those with disabilities in their educational programs.

Enrollment

Enrollment is an important process; it enables us to determine space requirements and available openings for the upcoming school year. Enrollment is completed online annually. Annual enrollment **is required** for all students at St. Thomas in order to reserve their spot. Enrollment at St. Thomas is contingent upon tuition being paid in full by the end of each month. Accounts that are delinquent on June 15th for the previous school year will require payment in full. If payment is not made, child(ren) can be unenrolled.

Priority Enrollment

To ensure an orderly and equitable admission of students to St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School, the school admits students in the following phases:

Phase 1: Families whose children are presently enrolled at St. Thomas.

Phase 2: Catholic families registered and active in the Parish of St. Thomas the Apostle Church. In accordance with our Stewardship and Catholic Education policy (see p. iii), an “active” family demonstrates a commitment to Stewardship in the following ways:

- a. Parents and child(ren) regularly attend Mass and participate in Faith Formation Programs.
- b. Parents are actively involved in parish life. Areas of involvement include, but are not limited to, liturgy, music, adult formation, family and parish life, children’s ministries, outreach ministries, and social ministries.
- c. Parents support the parish through the Sunday offertory on a regular basis. Parents also appropriately support the parish through the Capital Campaign, the Bishop’s Appeal, and other special collections.
- d. In cases in which there are limited spaces and family involvement is similar, the length of time registered in the parish will be considered, as well as the date and time the school Admission Request Form is received.

Phase 3: All other families

New Student Enrollment

All new students seeking admission to St. Thomas are evaluated based on current standardized test scores and report cards. All prospective students are required to complete a battery of academic assessment tests prior to admission to any diocesan school. Students applying for admission are required to be tested on Language Arts, English proficiency, and Math. The principal is responsible for the administration of all placement tests and reporting test result data to teachers and parents. The principal must select placement tests for English proficiency, Language Arts, and Mathematics from an approved list provided by the Catholic Schools Office. Requests for waivers or exemptions to placement testing must be submitted to the superintendent of schools in writing prior to admission of students. Upon review of test data and other relevant information, the principal will make a determination regarding the schools' ability to meet the needs of the student tested. Only a person having legal custody of the child can enroll a child. Proof of legal custody may also be required in cases where a child does not reside with both natural parents. If these required documents are not provided to the school within thirty (30) days of the student's enrollment or appear to be inaccurate or fraudulent, the school shall notify the Indiana Clearinghouse for Information on Missing Children and will cooperate with local authorities if the child has been reported missing. St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School supports the disciplinary decisions of other schools. Therefore, a student expelled from another school will not be considered for enrollment. We will enroll new students according to the criteria listed above under "Priority Enrollment". If space cannot accommodate a student, they will be placed on a waitlist. Parents are notified immediately if there is a wait list at the time of enrollment. Each year, parents with waitlisted children who ultimately were not admitted must reapply for admission.

Preschool/Pre-K Enrollment

A child enrolling in the preschool program must be three years of age by August 1 of the enrollment year and be able to use the bathroom independently. A child enrolling in our pre-k program must be four by December 31st of the year prior to the enrollment year and be able to use the bathroom independently.

Kindergarten Enrollment

Children must be 5 years old by August 1st of the enrolling year. Children will be scheduled to complete our kindergarten readiness assessment when the office receives enrollment paperwork. Determination of entrance into kindergarten will be based on the results of a child's kindergarten readiness assessment. Schools shall follow state law guidelines in enrolling Kindergarten students. A school should administer a developmental assessment for determining proper placement in kindergarten.

1st Grade Enrollment

Indiana compulsory education begins when a child is officially enrolled in school or the school year of the child's 7th birthday, whichever is earlier. Students enrolling in a diocesan school after successfully completing kindergarten in another accredited school that has different age requirements shall be allowed to continue in school without interruption because of chronological age.

Children with Exceptional Needs

Children with exceptional educational needs requiring special class placement are accepted if their needs can be reasonably accommodated. Initial enrollment should be on a tentative basis with the understanding that in the event the exceptional needs of the child cannot be reasonably accommodated, the custodial parents or guardians will agree to enroll their child in another school system which can accommodate the needs of the child. Ordinarily, when a diocesan school cannot reasonably accommodate the exceptional needs of a child, a recommendation for special class placement should be made to the custodial parent or guardian by the principal, after consultation with the child's teacher(s). This recommendation will be either for special class placement within the Catholic school or referral to a public school for evaluation or placement. If the custodial parent or guardian does not accept the school's recommendation, it is expected that he/she will place the decision in writing. In some instances, the custodial parent or guardian will be required to withdraw the child if the child's continued presence, in the opinion of the school personnel, would pose an undue hardship on the operation of the school, or poses a threat of harm to the student, other students, or school personnel.

Diocesan Student Transfers (Diocesan Policy [4020](#))

St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School may admit transfer students from the Diocese who meet registration conditions. Once registration is complete, a meeting will be scheduled with the principal, parents, and transfer student. We may choose to administer formal or informal assessments to determine proper placement for diocesan transfer students. Any student transferring from another school in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend **must** have fulfilled all financial duties owed to that school and/or parish before the transfer can be completed. Families owing tuition at another Catholic school will be refused admission until those obligations are met.

Part 3: Tuition

Tuition Rates (Diocesan Policy [5120](#))

The Parish Finance Council, in cooperation with the School Board and subject to approval of the pastor and principal, determines the financial policies of St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School. All policies must conform to Diocesan guidelines. St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School maintains a system of tuition and fees that fund the operation and maintenance of the school. **The tuition rate for the 2026/2027 school year is \$8900 per student.**

Tuition Payment

All families must register with FACTS management. Visit <https://online.factsmgt.com/signin/3XWY9> to register. All families shall be expected to make tuition payments according to one of two payment plans:

1. Full Payment – to be paid directly to the school.
2. Ten, Eleven, or Twelve Month Payment Plan – using FACTS as an automatic payment plan made through your checking account or credit/debit card.

Families using payment plans must provide authorization and pertinent credit/debit card or checking account information. If a monthly payment is not received by the 30th day of the month due, that month's tuition and a late fee will be applied to the credit/ debit card or checking account provided in the payment agreement.

Scholarship

St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School aspires to enable all admitted students to attend, regardless of financial means. Any family wishing to apply for a scholarship must fill out the FACTS Grant and Aid Application. The Parish has hired FACTS Grant and Aid Assessment, an experienced third party with a long presence in the diocese, to assist in this process. FACTS processes financial aid applications and prepares an objective report regarding relative need. The Parish, however, makes all final determinations on financial aid awards. All financial information is kept in the strictest confidence. Families that have children enrolled in more than one Catholic school (including high schools) only need to fill out one FACTS application for each school year.

Parishioner Aid

After completing scholarship forms, St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church can provide tuition support based on relative need for active parishioners. This aid directs tuition support to those for whom it is the greatest burden to educate their children in a Catholic school. By allocating tuition support in this way, the parish seeks to enable more parishioners to enroll their children in Catholic school, regardless of relative means. Families who are active parishioners and want more information about this aid should contact our parish pastor.

Part 4: General Policies and Procedures

Main Office Hours

The main office is open from 7:30 AM- 4:00 PM during the school year. The office will remain open from 8:00 AM–12:00 PM, seven working days after the last day of the school year and seven working days prior to the start of the school year.

School Day

A full school day at St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School is 8:05 AM. to 3:15 PM. The following is a general outline of the school day:

7:30 AM	Students Arrive
7:55 AM	Morning Prayer
8:05 AM	Classes Begin
3:15 PM	General dismissal
3:30 PM-5:30 PM	Aftercare program

Visitors

We welcome visitors to St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School. All visitors must enter through the main doors and report to the school office upon arriving. Our office staff will show visitors how to sign in and pick up a visitor sticker. Visitors **must be** escorted to their destination within the building and back to the office upon completion of their visit. When leaving, visitors are asked to sign out in the school office. **Any visitor wishing to speak with a teacher or staff member must call the office to arrange such a meeting ahead of time.**

Volunteers (Diocesan Policy [2430](#))

We appreciate all our volunteers! You are an integral part of our school family and help make our school successful. Anyone interested in volunteering should contact the front office.

Under Indiana law, Diocesan schools have the right to obtain limited criminal history information about any volunteer who will have contact with, care of, or supervision over enrolled students. Before a person is placed in a volunteer position that would involve regular contact with children, the following items must be completed successfully every 3 years:

- Volunteer Application
- Acknowledgement of the Volunteer Manual
- Certificate of Completion for Safe Environment training
- Criminal and Sex Offender Background Check

The principal has the right to discontinue the use of a volunteer's service at the school at his or her discretion. Please contact shicks@stselkhart.com with any questions.

Emergency Forms (Diocesan Policy 4140)

Each year parents/guardians must complete a current Emergency Form. This form will include the names of three individuals who are authorized to pick up students at dismissal or due to an emergency. In addition to the custodial parents, students will only be released to the individuals named on this form. Parents are to update this form with current contact information should phone numbers, names, etc. change during the year.

Communication

St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School values communication as a key to success in maintaining the partnership in education with school families. Information is communicated by various media including a weekly school newsletter, text messages, email, school Facebook page, school website (www.stselkhart.com), and weekly classroom newsletters. Parents should consistently encourage responsibility from their children by having them review their backpacks, folders, planners, and weekly newsletters for information from the School Office and/or their teachers.

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

The following are the drop-off/pick-up routes for St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School. Every attempt has been made to make these routines as safe and efficient as possible. **If transportation changes are necessary during the school day, we ask that you notify the office by 12:00pm.**

Preschool and Pre-K Arrival

Parents who have children enrolled in preschool or pre-k will drop them off in our tot lot on the back side of the building, next to the playground. The playground gate off Main Street will be open from 7:30 AM-8:05 AM. Parents will drop preschool or pre-k students **ONLY** at door E to the supervising staff member outside. The children will be walked into the gym. All students in grades K-8 should be dropped off in our front lot (see below). Students are never allowed to be dropped off after 8:05 AM. After 8:05 AM, adults must go to the front lot, park, and escort the child(ren) inside the building and follow sign in protocols.

K-8 Arrival

Students are not permitted to be dropped off prior to 7:30 AM. Cars will enter the parking lot off Romain Ave. turning either right or left into the lot forming a single file line along the sidewalk at the front of the school. Cars should **pull as far forward** as possible before allowing their child to exit. Children should **only** exit from the passenger side of the vehicle. Drivers should remain in their cars and allow staff members to help children. Cars will exit out of the parking lot onto Main Street. If a parent needs to go to the main office, we ask that you please park your car in the lot. Students report to the gym upon arrival. Parents should allow their child(ren) to enter the school building on their own each morning. All school morning prayer begins at 7:55 AM in the cafeteria. Parents are not permitted to walk students to their classrooms. Students are never allowed to be dropped off in front of the school after 8:05 AM. After 8:05 AM, adults must park and escort the child(ren) inside the building and follow sign-in protocols.

Preschool, Pre-k, and Kindergarten Dismissal (Tot Lot)

Parents who have children enrolled in **preschool, pre-k, or kindergarten** will pick up **all** children from our tot lot on the back side of the building, next to the playground. The playground gate off Main Street will be open at **3:00 PM daily**. **If you arrive before then park in the far lot at Northside. Do not wait on Main Street for the gate to open.** Once the gate is open, cars will enter from Main Street and form single file lines. **Each family will be issued a car tag that is connected to the student(s) you are picking up. Place your assigned car tag clearly on your dashboard or visor. You must have your car tag to pick up a student.** Parents may exit their cars and stand next to them. **The gate closes at 3:15, NO EXCEPTIONS. If you arrive after 3:15, you will pick your child(ren) up at 3:30 from the aftercare door.** Students will be dismissed with their teachers beginning at 3:15 PM. **Students who do not have a person checked in will remain with their teacher.** Once your student(s) are in your vehicle, await instructions to depart from the parking lot. Cars will exit out of the parking lot making a left turn onto Romain.

1st through 8th Dismissal (Big Lot)

Parents with students who **do not** have any children enrolled in preschool, pre-k, or kindergarten will pick up students from our big lot on the front side of the building. Cars will enter off Romain Ave. into the big parking lot, West of the church. Cars will form single file lines. **Each family will be issued a car tag that is connected to the student(s) you are picking up. Place your assigned car tag clearly on your dashboard or visor. You must have your car tag to pick up a student.** Parents/Guardians or authorized adults will stay in their vehicles and wait for their child(ren). We ask that you do not walk across Romain Avenue or attempt to pick up students in our main lot. **Entry to the big lot closes at 3:15PM.** Students will be dismissed with their teachers beginning at 3:15 PM. **Students who do not have a person checked in will remain with their teacher.** Once your child(ren) is in your vehicle, await instructions to depart from the parking lot. Once the tot lot has been cleared, cars will exit out of the parking lot making a right turn onto Romain. Anyone arriving after 3:15 PM will wait on Romain Avenue until all cars are released. Entry into the main lot will not be permitted from 3:05 till 3:25PM, unless a front row pass is presented. Students who have not been picked up after all the cars have left the parking lot will be taken to the aftercare program. **Students will not be released from aftercare until 3:30 PM. Parents are not permitted to park at Northside to pick up students.**

Aftercare Program

The program is open to all students of St. Thomas the Apostle School for a fee of \$8 per hour, per child. Time under 1 hour will be prorated. Aftercare fees will be billed and should be paid upon receipt. **If an aftercare balance exceeds \$200, child(ren) will be unable to attend until the balance is paid in full.** The aftercare program begins at 3:30 PM and concludes at 5:30 PM. All students will proceed to or be escorted to the designated aftercare program facilities at the end of the school day. Students may not be picked up from aftercare prior to 3:30PM. Adults must ring the doorbell at door H, enter, and sign child(ren) out of aftercare. Each enrolling family must complete a registration form prior to the first time their children attend the aftercare program. The program will use the emergency contact information provided by the parent or guardian on the aftercare registration form in the event of an emergency. Every family must provide a list of authorized persons who will be allowed to retrieve the student(s). No exceptions will be made to this list, except by express direction of the parent or legal guardian. **Any questions or communication regarding aftercare should be directed to Grace Fletcher, gletcher@stselkhart.com.**

Returning to School After Dismissal

Students are not permitted to return to the school building after the 3:15 PM dismissal unless accompanied by a teacher or principal. This policy is designed for the protection of your child in addition to helping your child to become more organized and personally responsible.

Parent Teacher Organization (Diocesan Policy [2110](#))

The Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) is a service ministry of the school that performs and promotes stewardship in the school. PTO encourages communication and involvement by sponsoring programs and activities during the year. Membership in PTO includes all school parents and faculty. Each spring we ask parents to inform us if they are interested in serving on the PTO Board. The role of the PTO Board is to coordinate all the programs sponsored by PTO. All events and communication done on behalf of the PTO must be approved by the principal.

Parent Conduct

To foster an environment that promotes the optimum educational and spiritual development of the student, every parent/guardian of each student is expected to act as a cooperative and respectful partner with the diocese and school and to comply with all policies and rules that are established by the diocese and/or school. Evidence of mutual respect between parents, teachers, and administration will model good mature behavior and relationships. Speaking negatively about a child's teacher or administrator at home will only create an attitude of distrust toward the teacher, the school, and the parent. The school retains the right to rescind approval for the enrollment of any student if it determines that there is a lack of cooperation and/or respect on the part of the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) and, as a result, the withdrawal of the student would be in the best interest of the student, the school, other students attending the school, or the fulfillment of the school's mission.

Events and Celebrations

Students in Grades K through Grade 8 may come to school dressed out-of-uniform on their birthday or half-birthday (if their birthday falls during the summer months). If birthday falls on a weekend, they may dress out-of-uniform the Friday before. Please ensure casual attire is appropriate if it is a mass day. All events and celebrations will follow the liturgical calendar and respect liturgical requirements. To respect student dietary restrictions, allergies, and general wellness, treats, including birthday treats, will be given out in the classroom under the teacher's direction. Decorations, flowers, and/or balloons are not permitted. Students should not exchange individual gifts at school. Invitations for slumber parties or birthday parties should be mailed to the homes of students via the U.S. Mail. Party bags, treat bags, and/or related items should not be sent to the school for a child to distribute to classmates.

Lost and Found

Parents should instill a sense of responsibility in their children for their personal belongings. Unclaimed items will be placed in our lost and found located in the commons. To return items to their owner, **please label all gym wear, clothing, water bottles, lunch boxes, and backpacks**. During winter break and at the end of the school year, unclaimed items will be donated.

School Closings and Delays (Diocesan Policy [1520](#))

If St. Thomas the Apostle School must be closed for the day, announcements will be made through personal contact by text message as well as publicly announced via local television and/or radio stations. In the event of severe weather conditions, the decision to close/delay opening of our school will be made by 6:00 AM. If school is closed due to a public health concern, parents/guardians will still be responsible for payment of tuition. The education of each student will continue with virtual/remote/e-learning. Teachers will continue to plan standards-based lessons and evaluate student work. Report cards will be distributed at the end of each grading period. If a parent/guardian cannot make the regular tuition payment, the principal should be notified as soon as possible to create a payment plan.

Lunch

St. Thomas the Apostle School utilizes the Standard National School Lunch Program. A Hot lunch will be provided and must be purchased online through www.boonli.com. Free and reduced lunch are available for those who qualify. Families must submit an application for free/reduced benefits. If hot lunch is not ordered through www.boonli.com, an alternate cold entree will be given and family will be billed. All hot lunches come with milk. Meals are prepared on site. Menus are provided by the month. Ala' carte milk is available for 75 cents and bottled water is available for 50 cents. Families who neglect to order/pay for school lunch may risk enrollment privileges. All negative balances must be paid prior to school year enrollment. Students are also welcome to bring lunch from home. **Food delivery is strongly discouraged.** Microwaves are available for students grades 4-8. Students are not allowed to have candy, pop, or energy drinks for their lunch. Sharing food is not permitted. If a student does not have lunch, the child may be given the opportunity to contact a parent to have his/her lunch delivered if there is enough time before the lunch period to do so.

Recess

Recess is offered each day to all students. No child may be excused from recess without a valid daily written excuse from a physician. While at recess, children are expected to always demonstrate a Christian attitude—treat others as you wish to be treated and strive to model the actions of Jesus. During winter, when recess is outside, students must wear coats, boots, mittens or gloves, and hats in cold and snowy weather. Please label all clothing. When there is snow on the playground area, snow pants must be worn over their uniforms. Students without proper footwear, when there is snow on the ground, will be restricted to shoveled areas. In determining whether outdoor recess will occur, the principal will consider: (1) temperature (children generally will go outdoors if the temperature, including the wind chill, is above twenty degrees) (2) conditions of the playground.

Emotional Support Animals

No emotional support animals will be permitted in school unless authorized by the principal. The school may have a therapy dog available, managed by the principal, for those in need.

Part 5: Attendance (Diocesan Policy [4040](#))

The Diocesan schools consider the development of good attendance habits a vital and desirable undertaking for two essential reasons. First, it is difficult for young people to learn if they are not in class; the teaching-learning process builds upon itself. Secondly, research shows that educational achievement is directly related to attendance. A student who misses a day of school misses a day of education that cannot be retrieved in its entirety.

Parent/Guardian Legal Responsibility

Parent/legal guardians are responsible for having their children in school. Indiana law prescribes that parents must have their children in public or private school from the age of seven (7) until the date on which the child:

- A. Graduates (or)
- B. Reaches at least sixteen (16) years of age or less than eighteen years of age and:
 - 1. the student and the student's parent or guardian and the principal agree to the withdrawal;
 - 2. at the exit interview the student provides written acknowledgment of the withdrawal and the student's parent or guardian and the school principal each provide written consent of the student to withdraw from school; and
 - 3. reaches the age of eighteen (18) years.

Attendance Policy

Attendance is taken every instructional day. The school day begins at 8:05 AM and concludes at 3:15 PM. We define "AM" as 8:05 AM-11:30 AM and "PM" as 11:30 AM-3:15 PM. A student is marked absent if he/she is not in school for the full school day. If a student is not in the classroom for any part of the half day, he/she is marked absent for that half day. A student will **only** be marked tardy if the student arrives by 9:00 AM (see tardy policy below). A student must arrive no later than 11:30 AM to participate in after-school extra-curricular activities. The school makes the final determination regarding all absences. Absences from school shall fall into one of the three following categories:

A. Absences that are counted as present:

- a. Serving as a page in the Indiana General Assembly
- b. For students in grades 7-12, serving on a precinct election board or as a helper to a political candidate or political party on election day with prior approval of the principal.
- c. Court appearances pursuant to a subpoena.
- d. Placement in a short-term inpatient treatment program which provides an instructional program.
- e. Homebound instruction
- f. Religious observances
- g. Participation or exhibition in the Indiana state fair by the student or a member of the student's household if the student is in good academic standing but not to exceed five (5) instructional days in a school year.
- h. Approved, educationally related non-classroom activity (per I.C. 20-33-2-17.5) that meets the following guidelines:
 - i. Is consistent with and promotes the educational philosophy and goals of the school corporation and the state board.
 - ii. Facilitates the attainment of specific educational objectives.
 - iii. Is a part of the goals and objectives of an approved course or curriculum.
 - iv. Represents a unique educational opportunity.
 - v. Cannot reasonably occur without interrupting the school day.
 - vi. Is approved in writing by the school principal and classroom teacher 4 weeks in advance

B. Excused absences

- a. Illness of the student (with written statement by parent/guardian or doctor)
- b. Funerals for death in the immediate family. For persons outside of the immediate family with parental permission.
- c. Out-of-school suspension
- d. Medical and legal appointments—such appointments should be scheduled after school hours when possible.
- e. 8th Grade student High School visits (1 day)—parents/guardians need to receive approval from the principal no less than 10 days prior to visit.

C. Unexcused absences

- a. No parent/guardian contact (within 48 hours) to the school explaining the absence.
- b. No physician's note to excuse an absence once more than 5 days of absence have occurred (see Frequent or Prolonged Illness below)
- c. Family vacations
- d. No transportation
- e. Oversleeping
- f. Absences other than those defined as excused, or absences counted as present.

Absence During the School Day

Students needing medical appointments during school hours require a written note or phone call by the parent. The office must be notified by 9am. Parents are required to sign out their child. If the child returns to school during the same school day, he/she must be signed back into school in the office. Students who are away from school for an appointment for 2½ hours or more will be counted as absent for ½ a day. Two (2) early withdrawals (before 3pm) are considered a one-half day absence. Due to compulsory attendance requirements, excessive tardiness may result in a student needing to be retained and to repeat the school year. Please note any absences during the school day, including leaving early, will make students ineligible for perfect attendance.

Reporting Absences

A parent/guardian shall contact the school by telephone, e-mail, or note with parent signature to report a student's absence before 9:00 AM on the day of the absence. If you are aware of an excusable absence ahead of time, please send a note or email to your child's teacher and the school office prior to the absence. **Parents are allowed 48 hours to rectify an unexcused absence.** Students who have been absent may not attend after-school extra-curricular activities on the day of the absence.

Frequent or Prolonged Illness

If a student is absent for five consecutive days due to illness, or has contracted a contagious disease, a physician's statement will be required for the student to return to school.

Chronic Absenteeism

The Indiana Department of Education defines "chronic absenteeism" as missing 10% or more of a school year for any reason (18 days in a 180-day academic year). "Habitual truancy" is defined as accumulating 10 or more unexcused absences in a school year. In either case, the school may be obligated to report the child to an intake officer of the juvenile court or to the Department of Child Services. If an irregular attendance pattern begins to develop, the school may use the following procedure to encourage the student's return to a pattern of regular school attendance.

- Call daily from school to the parent/guardian to verify absence and to determine reason.
- Letter of chronic absenteeism sent to parents and kept on file for 1 year.
- If a student is absent over 15 days per school year, a conference shall be held with the parent/guardian, student, administration, and pastor. Additionally, a referral may be made to the intake officer of the local Juvenile Probation Department and/or the School Truancy Prevention Program.
- Due to compulsory attendance requirements, chronic absenteeism (18 days or the equivalent of days absent combined with total tardies) may cause a student to be retained in the current grade for another year unless waived by the principal.
- Chronic absenteeism and/or tardiness may affect enrollment.

Tardy Policy

We encourage all students to arrive by 7:55AM for morning prayer. St. Thomas the Apostle School defines a student tardy when they are not present in their homeroom when the final arrival bell rings at 8:05 AM. **A tardy will only be considered if a student arrives by 9:00 AM.** If a student arrives after 9:00 AM but before 11:30 AM, they will be marked absent half day morning unexcused. A student who is tardy must report to the school office to obtain a tardy slip before entering homeroom or class.

Once a student accumulates eight (8) tardies to school in a grading period, parents/guardians will be required to meet with administration. During this meeting, an attendance contract will be put in place regarding the school's expectations for the student's attendance moving forward. Chronic tardiness may affect enrollment. Students who are tardy more than 30 times may be issued an early withdrawal due to the excessive time.

Work Missed Because of Absence

Assignments and tests missed due to any absence are the responsibility of the student. When a student is absent, the following guidelines will be used to submit missing work:

- Each day a student is absent allows the student one day to make up the work. For example, a student who misses three days will have three school days to submit missing work or assessment(s).
- When a student is absent for five (5) days or more, arrangements must be made with the teacher(s) to determine a reasonable date for all missed work to be submitted.
- All assignments and tests not turned in within the designated time frame will result in the student receiving a zero for those assignments and/or tests.
- Arrangements may be made for parents to pick up homework at the end of the school day from the school office when the request is made by **9:00 AM**. It will be available for pick up at the school office after 2:30 PM or for pick up by a sibling in the school. **Homework is not required to be sent home if a student is absent for only one day.** The student may request the make-up work upon returning to school.

Vacation Policy

Our school calendar provides for extended weekends and breaks throughout the school year. Parents are strongly encouraged to schedule trips or family vacations during these times. All absences during regular school hours due to family trips are **considered unexcused absences**. When students are absent for direct instructional time, this time cannot be made up. Children often feel a great deal of stress when returning from a vacation, because of

the work that must be done while moving forward with new material. Gaps in learning often occur during the time a child is out of the classroom.

If a vacation becomes necessary:

- A. The parent/legal guardian must inform the school in writing at least two weeks in advance of the trip.
- B. The school will notify all teachers affected by vacation absence. The school will send home a Parent/Guardian Responsibility Form, outlining the Vacation Policy, and asking parents/guardians to sign this form, indicating they are aware of the policy, and take full responsibility for making sure their child receives, completes, and turns in all assignments and tests missed during the family vacation/trip, within the specified time.
- C. Teachers are not required to administer tests or prepare assignments for a student in advance of his/her planned absence.
- D. Upon completion of the planned absence, the student and his/her parent/guardian are required to obtain, complete, and turn in any missed assignments within the specified time, according to the "Work Missed Because of Absence" section above.
- E. The above requirements must be fulfilled for students to receive grades for their work. The absence will still be considered "unexcused" according to Diocesan Policy 4040.

Part 6: Academics

Academic Goals

Students, parents, and teachers at St. Thomas the Apostle School have very high expectations of each other. Students are expected to pass all classes at the conclusion of the academic year. Special considerations and modifications are made for students depending upon their individual needs and strengths. Every effort is made to provide the academic support needed for a successful classroom experience. We believe that all students can be successful in their academic pursuits if they avail themselves of all the opportunities presented to them.

Curriculum

St. Thomas the Apostle School provides for a well-rounded curriculum in accordance with the standards set forth by the State of Indiana and Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend. The curriculum is designed to provide instruction not only in human knowledge and skills but also in religious truths and values. It is the teacher's responsibility to provide this integration using materials and his/her own knowledge and ability. The principal is the instructional leader and the principal's decision in all curricular areas is final.

Teacher Assignments (Diocesan Policy [4180](#))

At the end of each school year, grade level teachers place students into classrooms for the next school year. The classroom teachers collaborate with other teachers, including special area teachers, in making class assignments. The criteria used in placement of students include gender, social interactions, learning styles, birth dates, and academic progress. Teachers create class lists to foster the educational growth of the whole student. **Requests for teacher assignments or classroom changes are not accepted.**

Promotion and Retention (Diocesan Policy [4130](#))

Advancement to the next grade at St. Thomas is based on a student's daily performance, test results, recommendations of teachers, compliance with the minimum days of attendance per Indiana law (162), and the student's ability to complete work successfully on a more advanced level. Promotion to the next grade depends on successful completion of all subject areas. The Administration may recommend the repetition of a grade or tutoring as a requirement for promotion when, after conferences with teachers and parents, it is believed that such action will better prepare the student academically or emotionally for the next grade. If a student has not completed satisfactory work but the Administration determines that *retention* is not in the best interests of the child, a student will be *transferred* to the next grade.

PowerSchool

St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School utilizes PowerSchool, a web-based record-keeping program as a grade database. Parents and students in grades 4-8 will receive an ID and password to access a student's grades at any time. If at any time you need login information, please contact the main office. Teachers are expected to update PowerSchool once per week. Parents and students are expected to regularly access PowerSchool to be aware of their child's grades. Parents having questions about anything that appears in PowerSchool should contact the appropriate teacher.

Standardized Testing

Students are assessed regularly throughout the year in multiple ways. We use standardized assessments, traditional assessments, and authentic assessments to show student progress. St. Thomas administers the following standardized tests:

- **Kindergarten readiness screener:** Administered in Spring to incoming/potential kindergarten students to assess students' foundational learning skills and kindergarten readiness.
- **ILEARN Checkpoints:** The system includes three Checkpoints (interim assessments) administered to grades 3-8 throughout the school year and one summative assessment administered at the end of the school year. The Checkpoints are designed to provide educators and families with instructionally-relevant data that informs learning pathways for students and monitors their achievement of required knowledge and skills throughout the school year. Checkpoints do not contribute to accountability calculations. ILEARN Checkpoints were designed to inform intervention and impact instruction. Each student will participate in an initial opportunity for each Checkpoint. If a student has not achieved the required knowledge and skills for that Checkpoint, that student may receive intervention and support and then participate in a second opportunity for the Checkpoint.
- **IREAD-3:** Second and Third Grade students will complete this reading assessment designed to measure foundational reading skills based on Indiana Academic Standards. (March) Students who do not pass will retake in May. Any student in third grade who does not pass after the third attempt will be retained. Students in 2nd and 3rd who do not pass will receive reading intervention support.
- **i-Ready:** i-Ready Assessments are computer-adaptive tests in Math and Reading (for grades K–2) designed to pinpoint a student's exact academic skill level.
- **ARK:** Comprehensive assessment tool designed to measure and enhance the religious knowledge and beliefs of students in grades 2-8. (March)
- **ACCESS for ELLs** (Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State): A yearly test to measure students' progress in English across four domains: Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing. (Administered to students whose primary home language is not English; K-8)

Homework

With the vast amount of material that students are expected to master, homework is an integral factor in the learning process. Homework reinforces what is learned at school and helps students learn to manage time and organize materials. Completion of homework is the responsibility of students. Late, incomplete, or missing assignments will affect a student's learning and will be reflected on the report card through the earned grades and comments. Homework includes written homework, review of material, reading, studying and projects. Please remember that some days may involve more time and some days may involve less time. If your child frequently takes longer than the suggested time, or if you have a question concerning your child's homework, **please check with the teacher.**

Homework Time Guidelines:

- ✓ *Kindergarten:* At the discretion of the teachers.
- ✓ *Grades 1 – 2:* 10-20 Minute
- ✓ *Grade 3:* 30 Minutes
- ✓ *Grades 4 – 5:* 40-60 Minutes
- ✓ *Grades 6 – 8:* 20-30 Minutes per class

Homework: Student Responsibilities

- I. Know the school's homework, make-up, and late assignment policies.
- II. Ensure they have the appropriate books and materials to complete each assignment.
- III. Ensure homework is completed to the best of his/her ability.
- IV. Complete homework in the given time frame.
- V. Manage time on projects and studying to maintain the guideline of the total minutes of homework.
- VI. Ask for assistance from teachers and parents/guardians as needed.

Homework: Teacher Responsibilities

- I. Assign relevant, challenging, and meaningful homework, with clear instructions of expectations and how homework will be assessed.
- II. Help when needed.
- III. Provide verbal or written feedback promptly to students.
- IV. Maintain a record of grades on PowerSchool (grades 4-8) and communicate with parents/guardians of issues.

Homework: Parent Responsibilities

- I. Understand that the suggested grade level times are only a guideline.
- II. Take an active interest in homework.
- III. Set a regular, uninterrupted study/homework time each day in a dedicated place and eliminate distractions such as electronics.
- IV. Communicate regularly with teachers to monitor and encourage student progress.
- V. Update phone numbers and email addresses with the school office as needed.
- VI. Stay well informed via PowerSchool (grades 4-8).

Late Homework Policy:

Homework must be complete and with the student when due to qualify as "on time." Incomplete or late homework will not be given full credit. Repeated late or missing homework could result in disciplinary action/loss of privileges.

K-5:

Late homework policy and procedures for kindergarten through grade 5 students are determined by each teacher.

Middle School:

- One day late- 25% deducted.
- Two days late- 50% deducted.
- Three days late- 75% deducted.
- Four or more days late- 80% deducted and lunch/recess detention until assignment is submitted.

Progress Reports and Reports Cards

Progress Reports are issued midway through each grading period. Progress Reports serve as a direct communication tool to provide a temporary snapshot as to student academic trends and grades. Please remember that progress reports are NOT final grades. Families will receive information regarding grading, honors, and report cards at the start of the school year. They should carefully review this information. Extra credit is not an option at the end of a grading period to increase grades. Report Cards are issued following the completion of each quarterly grading period. Final quarter grades reflect the work a student has or has not accomplished in a

particular subject area during a specific timeframe. Parents are requested to examine the report card carefully. If students and/or parents have concerns about grades, please request a conference with the appropriate teacher or teachers. The following grading scales are used:

Grades 1 and 2	Grades 3-8
O Outstanding	A+ 97-100%
	A 93-96
	A- 90-92
S+ Satisfactory	B+ 87-89
S	B 83-86
S-	B- 80-82
	C+ 77-79
	C 73-76
N Needs improvement	C- 70-72
U Unsatisfactory	D+ 67-69
	D 63-66
	D- 60-62
	F <59

Honor Roll

Students in grades 5 – 8 are recognized for the students' demonstration of academic and moral character excellence throughout the school curriculum and school experience. The following restrictions apply and could eliminate a student from honor roll:

- Any F's on report cards
- Poor conduct
- Two or more detentions
- Office behavior referral
- Suspension

There are three honor rolls for St. Thomas the Apostle School students in which school-wide recognition is given:

Distinguished Honor Roll: 3.80 GPA or higher **High Honor Roll:** 3.50-3.79 GPA **Honor Roll:** 3.00-3.49 GPA

Academic Probation

A student whose academic performance indicates serious deficiencies may be placed on academic probation. Academic probation is for students who can learn, but who choose not to learn. Students on academic probation will be placed on a two week improvement plan. At the end of the two week period, the student's academic progress will be assessed. Students whose average is an F will not be allowed to participate in any sport or academic competition until the grade has improved to a passing grade of C- (70% or higher). Academic probation may be extended for an additional two weeks. At the end of the academic probation period, a student who has made no effort toward improvement, may be involuntarily separated from the school. No tuition will be refunded if a student is involuntarily separated, and the parents will be responsible for the remainder of the tuition based on the Financial Obligations policy.

Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences will be scheduled once a year, typically in October or early November. We will publish dates and times prior to the conferences. Additional conferences are held only as needed at the teacher's or parent's request. The purposes of conferences are:

1. To provide an opportunity for a meeting of parents, students, and teachers to discuss academic and personal successes.
2. To set goals, with plans to achieve them.
3. To show samples of completed work.
4. To express possible concerns with academics or behavior
5. To answer questions about the student and/or his/her progress.

E-Learning

An E-Learning Day is an UNPLANNED student learning day at home. E-Learning Days are often issued due to a weather cancellation, school emergency, or an event preventing students attending school in person. Students learn from home, at their own pace, ASYNCHRONOUSLY, utilizing Google Classroom or completing assigned tasks delegated by classroom teachers. All E-Learning work is due 5 school days after classes resume.

Academic Integrity

The honest presentation of students' own work is the basis of effective instruction, in addition to being a sign of good character. Cheating and plagiarism are not tolerated at St. Thomas. Plagiarism is defined as "stealing somebody's work or idea: the process of copying another person's idea or written work and claiming it as original." Cheating is defined as "to deceive or mislead somebody, especially for personal advantage; to break the rules in a game, examination, or contest, in an attempt to gain an unfair advantage." Cheating constitutes cheating by any means on any test, quiz, and/or assignment; copying the written work of other students; supplying students with answers. Consequences for plagiarism and/or cheating may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Point deduction of conduct grade
- Grade of zero for the test/quiz/assignment
- Detention(s)
- Teacher/Principal/Parent Conference
- Academic Probation
- Suspension

Artificial Intelligence

If a quiz/test/assignment is open book and note, no other sources may be used (websites (this includes, but is not limited to Artificial Intelligence), dictionaries, other people, etc.) Any information used from outside course materials will result in a zero on the quiz/test/assignment and could also result in additional disciplinary action.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (Diocesan Policy [4170](#))

A notice concerning parental access to educational records is available in the school office which any parent/guardian or eligible student may review during regular business hours.

Buckley Amendment

St. Thomas the Apostle School adheres to the Buckley Amendment (Family Education Rights and Privacy Act) in regard to privacy of student records and the rights of non-custodial parents. It is the responsibility of the parents to share any official custodial information decided through the courts. Official custodial agreements will be kept in a confidential file in the office of the principal. In the absence of any court document, the school will view each parent as having full legal custody of his/her child. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, non-custodial parents have the right to receive records about their child's academic progress or lack thereof. The school reserves the right to charge a shipping and processing fee for extra records sent to more than one home address. Be advised that if a teacher, staff member, or principal is subpoenaed to testify in a child custody case, the parent will need to pay the cost of a substitute teacher and any other costs associated with the testimony (mileage, parking, food, etc.).

Textbooks

Students are issued textbooks for most classes at the beginning of the academic year. Students retain assigned textbooks for the duration of the year. Students are stewards of textbooks; therefore, they are responsible for their care and usage. Students will pay for any textbook damaged or lost. This includes shipping and handling fees. Unpaid fees may result in a hold on records.

Student Records (Diocesan Policy [4170](#))

St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School maintains student records and deems them confidential. The official record of the student contains the academic transcript, academic testing, health records and an emergency sheet. In the case of a transfer, the official record will be forwarded to the new school upon the request of the receiving school. No records will be sent to transferring schools of students whose financial commitment is in arrears.

Student Desks and Lockers (Diocesan Policy [4590](#))

All students who enroll in a diocesan school must consent to the search of their person and personal belongings, lockers, school desks, vehicles, etc., at any time and for any reason consistent with diocesan policy. Students should not slam any locker door shut with force. A student may open and enter only his or her designated locker. Entering another student's locker is a privacy violation warranting disciplinary action or other consequences. Students may hang personal items such as family photographs, note boards, or mirrors, using magnets only. All items must be appropriate for the school environment and will be monitored by teachers. No food or drinks may be stored in desks or lockers. Students are expected to keep their desks and lockers organized and free of trash.

Faith Formation (Diocesan Policy [4410](#))

The teachings and traditions of the Catholic Church are the guiding principles of behavior for all students. All students receive instruction in Catholic doctrine and tradition in formal classes during the week. Students are given additional opportunities for participation in prayer and formation during the year, such as the Rosary, Stations of the Cross, Eucharistic Adoration, Prayer Services, Opportunities for Reconciliation, and seasonal celebrations.

Religious Education (Diocesan Policy [4060](#))

It is the policy of the Diocese that all students enrolled in the Catholic schools shall participate in the complete religion program, including religion classes, and attend liturgical functions.

Sacramental Program

The sacramental life of the children of the Catholic tradition is an important component of the religion program at St. Thomas. Preparations for Reconciliation, Eucharist, and Confirmation form the core of instruction in Grade 2 and Grade 8. In accordance with the diocesan guidelines, candidates for First Eucharist will receive the sacrament of Reconciliation prior to First Eucharist. Parents are required to be active partners in the preparation of their children for these sacraments. The sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist are only conferred to students baptized in the Roman Catholic tradition.

Safe Environment Program

Our Diocese requires all school students to participate in age-specific safe environment training. Students in preschool through grade five will receive a 15-minute presentation. Grades 6, 7, and 8 will have safe environment presentations during religion class. All sessions will be conducted in late October. Parents may view all the Safe Environment materials [here](#). If parents do not want this training offered to their child, they may download the “Safe Environment opt out” form.

Field Trips (Diocesan Policy [4320](#))

Field trips are educational in nature and a privilege. When classroom teachers schedule a field trip, they will send home a permission slip requesting certain information. The parent must sign, date, and return this permission slip to school by the due date. Students without signed permission slips will not be permitted to attend the trip. An email is not acceptable for permission to go on a field trip. The teachers arrange transportation and supervision for these trips with the assistance of room parents. In some instances, students may be responsible for certain expenses relating to the trip. Field trips are a privilege, not a right. St. Thomas reserves the right to withhold this privilege if necessary. Field trips are considered a day of instruction. Students not attending the field trip will be marked absent, and standard rules regarding absences will apply. **All chaperones must complete safe-environment training prior to field trip.** Chaperones may not bring siblings or others along when they are chaperoning. Parents or guardians not selected as chaperones should not attend field trips with the class.

Transportation to Enrichment, Athletic, and Field Trip Events (Diocesan Policy [4330](#))

Anyone transporting students in a parish-owned vehicle to a school-related event must be twenty- one years of age. The school must be notified prior to the event. The driver must complete appropriate paperwork (hold harmless agreement) prior to transporting students. If a driver is using their personal vehicle to transport students, no paperwork is necessary.

Part 7: Dress and Appearance Code

Rationale and Guidelines

The dress code is a direct reflection of the school's overall mission as a Catholic Christian educational institution dedicated to the development of the whole person. Uniforms provide a neat appearance and assist students in concentrating on their studies. School faculty members enforce the uniform code. St. Thomas the Apostle School reserves the right at any time to adjust the Dress and Appearance Code. Pre-K students do not have a dress code but are expected to wear comfortable clothes and closed-toed shoes, preferably tennis shoes. Parents assume the primary responsibility for the appearance of their child. All students are required to meet the following personal hygiene and dress code guidelines. Unresolved questions/concerns will ultimately be decided by the school administration.

School Uniform

All students (K-8) must be in uniform every day. **Students must wear uniforms that fit properly, are neat, clean, and in good repair.** There will be casual days which will be announced during the course of the school year. **A uniform violation will be given to any student out of uniform. Students will not be permitted to call home if they did not wear the correct uniform for the day.**

Shirts

Boys and girls must wear short or long-sleeved plain polo style shirts. You may choose to add the St. Thomas logo to the chest or sleeve. **No other logos are permitted.** Grades K-5 are permitted to wear maroon or gray polo shirts. Grades 6-8 are permitted to wear black or gray polo shirts. Students in grade 8 are permitted to wear black, gray, or gold polo shirts. Shirts must always be tucked in. Shirts must be of sufficient length to remain tucked in while sitting or standing.

Sweaters and Fleece

Solid maroon, black, or gray cardigans, crewnecks, or V-neck pullover sweaters are all acceptable. Gray, black, or maroon half-zip or full zip polar fleece that are **plain or embroidered** (with the school logo only) are permitted. **No stripes or logos are permitted.** **All sweaters and fleece must be worn over the required dress code polo.** Any item with a hood is not permitted.

Pants

Boys and girls may wear uniform style (**no cargo pockets**) khaki, gray, or black pants (no cargo pants) in good repair. They may be tapered, straight legged or gently flared. They may not have split seams, frayed legs, excessive exterior stitching. Students in Grades K through 3 may wear elastic-waistband, pull-up pants that conform to the above specifications. Students in Grades 4 through 8 must have belt loops and wear a belt.

Shorts

Boys and girls may wear uniform style (**no cargo pockets**) khaki, gray, or black shorts of modest length; no more than 2 inches above the knee. Shorts may be worn from the first day of school until the last day of October and again after Spring Break until the end of the school year. Students in Grades K through 3 may wear elastic-waistband, pull-up shorts that conform to the above specifications. Students in Grades 4 through 8 must have belt loops and belts.

Skirts/Skorts/Jumpers/Polo Dress

Girls are permitted to wear khaki, black, gray, or burgundy and gray plaid skirts (ordered from landsend.com), khaki, gray, or black skorts, solid khaki, black, or gray plaid jumpers (ordered from Landsend.com.), and solid maroon, black, or gray polo style dresses. The length may not be more than 2 inches above the knee. Skorts may be worn from the first day of school until the last day of October and again after Spring Break until the end of the school year. During seasons when shorts are not permitted, **plain black, white or gray tights or leggings must be worn.**

Belts

All students in grades 4 through 8 are required to wear a dark brown or black leather belt with no decorations.

Socks

Black, white, or gray socks are acceptable. Socks may have a small logo but cannot have decorations or be trimmed with another color. .

Shoes

All students (including Pre-K) should wear durable, flat-soled shoes that have a closed toe and a full back, completely enclosing the foot. Athletic, dress, or loafer style shoes are acceptable. Shoes are permitted to be solid or a combination of black, white, navy, brown, or gray. Accent colors are acceptable in the logo of the shoe only (not the soles or laces). Shoes must have heels of less than one inch. Roller shoes, light up, moccasins, crocs, clogs, platforms, sandals, tall boots, open toed shoes, and snow style boots(Uggs) are not permitted.

Jewelry/Accessories

Jewelry and other accessories are to be appropriate for school and the child's safety. A religious medal or cross on a small chain may be worn underneath a uniform shirt. The chain should be plain and without ornamentation. One bracelet and one ring may be worn. Girls may wear 1 pair of earrings. Post earrings are acceptable; no hoops larger than 1 inch or dangling earrings are to be worn. Hats are not permitted. Smart watches are not permitted. **Writing on any part of the body and/or temporary tattoos are not permitted.**

Hair

Hairstyles should be neat, well-groomed, and not distracting to other students. Hair ornaments and headbands should be small, so as not to be a distraction. Headbands with cat ears, tinsel or colored hair clips, and other ornamental hairpieces are not acceptable. **Boys' hair must be clean, well-groomed, and neat at all times. If a male student's hair extends past the top of the shirt collar, ears, or eyebrows, it must be gathered and tied securely back in a single, neat ponytail, braids, or bun at the back of the head.** Hair must be kept out of the eyes at all times. Extreme styles, unnatural coloring, or shaved designs are prohibited.

Cosmetics

No cosmetics, lip gloss, colored ChapStick, nail polish, or artificial nails may be worn.

Outerwear

Outwear is defined as anything worn over standardized dress. Outerwear should be worn before and after school, but not in the building during the academic day. Students must immediately remove hoods when entering the building.

Physical Education Uniform

All students (K through 8) must wear a physical education uniform to school on scheduled PE days. On Mass days only, students in grades 5-8 should wear school uniforms and change into PE uniform before scheduled PE class. Students must change into designated PE shoes prior to class. **Students not in PE uniform on scheduled PE day will receive a uniform violation and points will be deducted from students' PE grade for that class.**

The following items may be worn:

- St. Thomas PE uniforms purchased on <https://st-thomaswebstore.myshopify.com/>
- Loose-fitting maroon, gray, or black cotton athletic shorts (with no print, stripes, or designs) that come no higher than 2 inches above the knee
- STS gym uniforms purchased in 2023/2024
- Solid loose-fitting gray, black, or maroon cotton sweatpants (with no print, stripes, logos, or designs)
- Solid gray, black, or maroon cotton crewneck t-shirt (with no print, stripes, logos, or designs)
- Solid gray, black, or maroon cotton crewneck sweatshirt (with no print, stripes, logos, or designs)
- Non-marking athletic shoes that have not been worn outdoors and are for PE use only.

PE uniforms can be ordered throughout the school year on <https://st-thomaswebstore.myshopify.com/> and will be delivered to St. Thomas.

Casual Days

On casual days students will be permitted to dress down or wear specific “themed” attire.

Casual days are scheduled twice per month. One casual day per month is free and the other is \$2. The \$2 will be donated towards the designated recipient that month (Riley’s Children’s Hospital, Birthday Bag Program, Youth Group, etc.) Students who repeatedly violate the uniform policy, will be denied participation in the next free casual day. (per administrative discretion).

On casual day, students are permitted to wear their normal uniform or:

- Loose fitting, regular cut, cargo, flared, or plain colored jeans, exclusive of holes and decorations.
- Loose fitting athletic pants, cargos, or shorts (follow shorts schedule)- no spandex, **leggings**, or pajama pants
- St. Thomas spirit wear tops or sweatshirts
- Properly fitting sports jersey or club uniform
- T-shirts and tops appropriate for school
- 1 pair of earrings that do not distract from learning
- Any school appropriate athletic shoes, crocs, clogs, or sandals

Please keep in mind that on any casual or non-uniform day we will not allow any logo, design, printing, words, or images that are political or that go against the teachings of the Church. School administration has the right to deem something inappropriate, unsafe, or distracting and require a student to change.

Dress Code Violations

Teachers and school staff members will continually monitor students' dress for compliance with the dress code. Students must always adhere to the dress code. Refusal to follow St. Thomas' dress code policy will result in disciplinary action. If there is a time when the prescribed uniform cannot for some legitimate reason be worn, a note from the parent/guardian must be written to the Principal. Students who are out of uniform without this excuse will receive a uniform violation form (see next page). Students dressed inappropriately will be sent to the office and the parent will be called to bring the proper clothing. Any questions about the dress code should be directed at the school administration.

Uniform Purchasing

Embroidered polos and fleece can be ordered from <https://st-thomaswebstore.myshopify.com/>. PE uniforms can be ordered throughout the year by visiting <https://st-thomaswebstore.myshopify.com/>. Items ordered from the webstore will be delivered to St. Thomas around 3 weeks after ordering. Solid polos or fleece can be purchased anywhere. Jumpers, skirts, and skorts can be ordered throughout the year from Lands' End.

Spartan Closet

Our Spartan closet contains gently used uniform items and is available for families at any time. If you would like to visit our Spartan closet, check in at the main office. Donations for our Spartan closet are gladly accepted by our PTO. Items donated should be washed and free of any holes or stains. **Only current uniform items**, including belts and shoes, may be donated. The closet also has a section for first communion attire. Please do not donate items not aligned to our current dress code.

Club/Sports Uniforms

Students may wear their jerseys, warm-ups, and/or scout uniforms on game or meeting days. If the game or meeting is on a weekend, they may wear them on the Friday preceding the weekend meeting or game.

St. Thomas Uniform Violation Form

Student: _____ Grade: _____ Date: _____ Grading Period Number: _____

- ☐ 1st incident this grading period
☐ 2nd incident this grading period (no free casual day)
☐ 3rd incident this grading period(lunch detention + no free casual day)
☐ 4+ incidents this grading period(after school detention + no free casual day)

☐ Pants ☐ Shorts ☐ Skort/Skirt/Jumper ☐ Shirt ☐ Sweater/Fleece ☐ Belt ☐ Socks ☐ Hair
☐ Cosmetics ☐ Outerwear ☐ PE ☐ Jewelry/Accessories

STS Uniform Requirements

Pants: Standard uniform style khaki, gray, or black pants (no cargo pants) in good repair. They may be tapered, straight legged or gently flared. They may not have split seams, frayed legs, excessive exterior stitching. Students in Grades K through 3 may wear elastic-waistband, pull-up trousers that conform to the above specifications. Students in Grades 4 through 8 must have belt loops.

Shorts: Standard uniform style khaki, gray, or black shorts of modest length; no more than 2 inches above the knee. Students in Grades K through 3 may wear elastic-waistband, pull-up shorts that conform to the above specifications. Students in Grades 4 through 8 must have belt loops and belt. Shorts may be worn from the first day of school until the last day of October and again after Spring Break until the end of the school year.

Skirts/Skorts/Jumpers: Girls are permitted to wear khaki, black, gray, or plaid skirts, khaki, gray, or black skorts, solid khaki, black, gray or plaid jumpers, and solid maroon, gray, or black polo style dresses. The length may not be more than 2 inches above the knee. During no shorts seasons, white, black, or gray leggings or tights must be worn under skirts, dresses, and jumpers.

Shirts: Boys and girls must wear short or long-sleeved plain polo style shirts. Grades K-5 are permitted to wear maroon or gray polo shirts. Grades 6-8 are permitted to wear black or gray polo shirts. Students in grade 8 are permitted to wear black or gold polo shirts. Shirts must be always tucked in. Shirts must be of sufficient length to remain tucked in while sitting or standing.

Sweaters and Fleece: Solid maroon, black, or gray cardigans, crewnecks, or V-neck pullover sweaters are all acceptable. Gray, black, or maroon half-zip or full zip polar fleece that are plain or embroidered (with the school logo only) are permitted. No stripes or logos are permitted. All sweaters and fleece must be worn over the required dress code polo. Any item with a hood is not permitted.

Belts: All students in grades 4 through 8 are required to wear a dark brown or black leather belt with no decorations.

Socks: Black, white, or gray socks are acceptable. Socks may have a small logo but cannot have decorations or be trimmed with another color.

Shoes: All students (including Pre-K) should wear durable, flat-soled shoes that have a closed toe and a full back, completely enclosing the foot. Athletic, dress, or loafer style shoes are acceptable. Shoes are permitted to be solid or a combination of black, white, navy, brown, or gray. Accent colors are acceptable in the logo of the shoe only (not the soles or laces). Shoes must have heels of less than one inch. Roller shoes, light up, moccasins, crocs, clogs, platforms, sandals, tall boots, open toed shoes, and snow style boots(Uggs) are not permitted.

Jewelry and Accessories: A religious medal or cross on a small chain may be worn underneath a uniform shirt. The chain should be plain and without ornamentation. One bracelet and one ring may be worn. Girls may wear 1 pair of earrings. Post earrings are acceptable; no hoops larger than 1 inch or dangling earrings are to be worn. Hats are not permitted. Smart watches are not permitted. Writing on any part of the body and/or temporary tattoos are not permitted.

Hair: Hairstyles should be neat, well-groomed, and not distracting to other students. Hair ornaments and headbands should be small, so as not to be a distraction. Headbands with cat ears, tinsel or colored hair clips, and other ornamental hairpieces are not acceptable. Boys' hair must be clean, well-groomed, and neat at all times. If a male student's hair extends past the top of the shirt collar, ears, or eyebrows, it must be gathered and tied securely back in a single, neat ponytail, braids, or bun at the back of the head. Hair must be kept out of the eyes at all times. Extreme styles, unnatural coloring, or shaved designs are prohibited.

Cosmetics: No cosmetics, lip gloss, colored ChapStick, nail polish, or artificial nails may be worn.

Outerwear: Outwear is defined as anything worn over standardized dress. Outerwear should be worn before and after school, but not in the building during the academic day. Students may not have jacket hood on their heads inside the building.

PE: Athletic shorts/sweatpants, PE t-shirt, PE Crewneck, PE tracksuit, PE tennis shoes. Worn to school everyday a student has PE class with the exception of mass days for students in grades 5-8. Cargo sweatpants are not permitted.

Infraction Description: _____

Student Signature: _____ Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Supervising Adult Signature: _____

- ☐ 1st incident this grading period
☐ Student may not participate in the next free casual day on _____

Part 8: Student Conduct

General Principles

The teachings and traditions of the Catholic Church are the guiding principles of behavior for all students while enrolled in a diocesan school. We, the St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School community, strive to provide and maintain an environment that teaches and preserves Catholic values. The purpose of school rules, along with the other elements of our total program, is to create a Christian atmosphere animated by the Catholic faith, an attitude of consideration and concern for others and a welcoming, stimulating, and respectful environment. The responsibilities described herein apply to any student who is on school property, in attendance at school, or at any school-sponsored activity, or whose conduct at any other time or place influences maintaining school order and discipline, protecting the safety and welfare of others, or maintaining the reputation of the school.

The Spartan Way

St. Thomas the Apostle School works to educate students on acceptable social behaviors, managing the environment with a positive approach. The Spartan Way is defined as:

Respectful, Responsible, Safe.

Students, along with teachers and administration, are involved in creating behavior expectations. Students must understand that rules and regulations exist to promote harmony in the school. Students do not have the right to prevent teachers from teaching and other students from learning. No student may stop the teaching of a class or another student's learning by engaging in behavior that is not in the best interest of the class or himself or herself. Because student self-discipline is our goal, students have a special responsibility to learn and adhere to all acceptable etiquette in the classroom integrated with all Gospel principles; therefore, every student is expected to:

- Be prepared for school and participate in class.
- Follow directions the first time given.
- Raise your hand and wait to be called upon before speaking.
- Practice the Gospel Values and Gospel Guide, practice good manners, and show respect for others at all times.
- Strive to model the actions of Jesus.
- Attend and participate in Mass regularly.
- Demonstrate honesty, courtesy, and fairness in all actions.
- Use respectful language; show respect for adults and peers and for school and church property.
- Conduct him/herself as a representative of St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School always.
- Be accountable for all personal actions.
- Strive for personal best.
- Help maintain order and cleanliness of classrooms as well as common areas of the building.

Discipline Policy

Discipline is each individual student's responsibility. The purpose of discipline is to protect an atmosphere of learning. Discipline is an aspect of moral formation. We also believe that no one has the right to prevent another individual from learning. In guiding a child's growth in the proper formation of Christian values and attitudes, the St. Thomas discipline policy was developed to foster in our student's responsibility for one's actions, self-discipline, problem solving skills, and respect for the rights and property of others. Discipline is a cooperative effort among parents, teachers, school personnel, and the administration.

Teachers oversee their respective classrooms and are expected to set, explain, and enforce behavior management plans that are consistent with our Mission, Code of Conduct, and this handbook.

When the action of a student requires a consequence, the teacher or staff member involved will evaluate the situation and determine the level of misconduct. The level of violation and consequences can be modified based on the situation. Teachers and administrators will use their discretion to determine the level based on all contributing factors of all parties involved. Disciplinary actions by school administration will be implemented as determined at the discretion of school administration.

The following disciplinary sanctions may be invoked by the school:

- verbal warning
- counsel and release
- loss of privileges
- detention
- service hours
- parent conference
- suspension
- expulsion

Below is a list of different types of infractions and possible, but not limited to, consequences they carry:

Level 1 Behaviors	Possible Consequences
• Teasing • Horseplay • Spreading rumors or talking ill of peers • Not prepared for class • Inappropriate language • Non-compliance • Verbal confrontation • Violation of technology policy • Disruption of classroom learning • Disregard of classroom or school rules	• Verbal warning • Loss of class points • Parent contact • Problem solving • Loss of privileges • Detention • Time out in office • Counsel with administration • Apology letter
Once a student accumulates five (5) total infractions in a semester, a subsequent offense will warrant a disciplinary conference with a parent present. The student will be excluded from extracurricular activities until that meeting takes place. If a student commits 3 or more level 1 infractions, the consequence will automatically be after school detention.	

Level 2 Behaviors	Possible Consequences
● Habitual Level 1 behaviors (2 or more incidents is considered “habitual”) ● Insubordination/non-compliance ● Inappropriate behavior at Mass or at an assembly ● General dishonesty ● Bullying ● Profane or indecent language or gestures ● Defacing of school property ● Cell phone/ personal electronic device violation ● 6+ school/class tardies ● 3 or more dress code violations (per semester) ● Violation of technology policy ● Disrespect of staff or peers	● Parent contact ● Detention ● Suspension ● Loss of privileges ● Loss of device usage ● Time out in office ● Admin/parent/student/teacher conference ● Service hours ● Apology letter
Once a student accumulates two (2) level 2 infractions in a semester, a subsequent offense will warrant a disciplinary conference with a parent present. The student will be excluded from extracurricular activities until that meeting takes place.	

Level 3 Behaviors	Possible Consequences
● Fighting, threats, and/or violent behavior ● Academic dishonesty ● Theft ● Vandalism ● Harassment ● Language or behavior deemed discriminatory. ● Disrespectful, defiant, or insubordinate behavior ● Incidents related to drug and alcohol use/abuse. ● Possession of drug paraphernalia/vape pens ● Possession of weapons or firearms ● Any other offense deemed severe by school administration.	● Suspension ● Expulsion ● Restitution ● Detention ● Loss of privileges ● Service hours

Detention

Detention can be issued immediately when serious offenses occur or after a series of repeated offenses. The purpose of detention is to provide a consequence for negative behavior. The goal of detention is to reduce future occurrences of negative behavior. Anytime a student is assigned detention, parents will be contacted. Detentions are silent and students will be required to complete a written reflection. Two or more detentions will jeopardize a student being placed on honor roll.

Students can be issued:

- **Lunch/Recess detention:** Student eats lunch in office and does not attend recess. Student reflection sheet is completed.
- **After school detention:** Student reports to office from 3:15-4:00 on assigned day. After school detentions will take precedence over appointments, practices, lessons, tutoring, athletic games, etc. Student reflection sheets are completed.

Suspension and Expulsion (Diocesan Policy [4520](#))

Students may be assigned an In-School Suspension, Out-of-School Suspension, or Expulsion based upon the severity of the violation.

- **In-School Suspension:** requires the student to gather classroom and homework for the date of suspension and to complete it under the supervision of the office. All classroom and homework for the time of suspension is due at the close of the day of suspension. The student is not allowed to participate in activities with classmates for the date of suspension. This will be a marked absence for the student.
- **Out-of-School Suspension:** requires that the student remain off school campus during the time of suspension. Students are required to gather and complete classroom and homework for the time of suspension while at home. All classroom and homework during the time of suspension is due to the teacher the first day following the suspension.
- **Expulsion:** possible if students do not improve the stated behavioral problems for which they have already been disciplined. Expulsion is the permanent dismissal of a student from the school for disciplinary reasons. Students who have been expelled will not be allowed to return to the school for any reason without prior permission from the principal and pastor.

The grounds for suspension or expulsion below apply to student conduct which occurs:

- A. On school grounds;
- B. Off school grounds at a school activity, function, or event;
- C. Online communication with another student;
- D. Traveling to or from school or a school activity, function, or event; or
- E. At any other time when the principal and/or pastor determines that the student's conduct either causes harm or could potentially cause harm to the other students, school employees or property, or the reputation of the school or the Diocese.

The following types of student conduct constitute a non-exclusive listing of grounds for suspension or expulsion subject to the school's provisions for disciplinary review according to Diocesan Policy 4530:

- A. Any conduct which, in the opinion of school officials, is contrary to the principles and teachings of the Catholic Church.
- B. Using violence, force, noise, coercion, threat, intimidation, fear, passive resistance, or other comparable conduct constitutes an interference with school purposes or urging other students to engage in such conduct.
- C. Causing or attempting to cause damage to property belonging to any other person, student, school employee or the school, or stealing or attempting to steal property belonging to any other person, student, school employee, or the school.
- D. Intentionally causing or attempting to cause physical injury or intentionally behaving in such a way that, in the opinion of school officials, could cause physical injury to any person.
- E. Threatening or intimidating any individual for whatever purpose.
- F. Violation of the diocese's Gun-Free School Policy.
- G. Possessing, using, transmitting, or being under the influence of any controlled substance or intoxicant of any kind. The prescribed use of a drug authorized by a medical prescription from a physician is not a violation of this rule.
- H. Engaging in the unlawful selling of a controlled substance or engaging in a criminal law violation that constitutes a danger to other students or constitutes an interference with school purposes and/or educational function.
- I. Failing in a substantial number of instances to comply with the directions of teachers or other school personnel during any period of time when the student is properly under their supervision.
- J. Engaging in any activity forbidden by the laws of the State of Indiana that interferes with the school purposes or educational function.
- K. Violating or repeatedly violating any rules that are, in the opinion of the school officials, necessary in carrying out school purposes and/or educational function.
- L. Using on school grounds during school hours an electronic paging device or a hand-held portable telephone in a situation not related to a school purpose or educational function.
- M. Engaging in any unlawful activity on or off school grounds if the unlawful activity is considered by school officials to be an interference with school purposes or an educational function.

Disciplinary Review for Suspension or Expulsion (Diocesan Policy [4530](#))

Any student accused of wrongdoing in violation of school or diocesan policy that could result in the student's suspension or expulsion from the school will be given:

1. An explanation of what the student is accused of doing that is wrong; and
2. An opportunity for the student, in the presence of the student's parents, to respond to the accusations before either the principal or an impartial tribunal established by the school's administration for the purpose of making a recommendation on the matter to the principal.

The principal and pastor make the final decision in all serious disciplinary situations. Decisions regarding expulsion will be made through consultation with the principal, pastor, and Superintendent and in accordance with due process procedures, as defined by the Diocese. The principal's decision shall be final and binding on all parties.

Role of Parents/Guardians in Disciplinary Proceedings (Diocesan Policy [4420](#))

Parents are the first educators of their children. The failure or refusal of parents/ guardians/ custodians to participate in Diocesan or school discipline proceedings concerning their child's improper behavior may be considered educational neglect and the child may be considered a "child in need of services" in accordance with I. C. 31-6-4-3-(a) (7), and, in that case, the matter shall be referred to Child Protective Services.

Student Accused of Non-School Related Criminal Act (Diocesan Policy [4550](#))

When a student is accused of a non-school related criminal act, the school shall follow diocesan policy.

Substance Abuse (Diocesan Policy [4570](#))

The school shall assist students experiencing substance abuse problems in accordance with diocesan policy.

Smoking, Vaping, and Tobacco (Diocesan Policy [5430](#))

All facilities where pre-school, kindergarten, elementary, and/or secondary education or library services are being provided to children shall be smoke free. Possession and/or use of vaping devices, smoking paraphernalia, or chewing tobacco are not permitted at school, at school functions, or on school property, including student lockers.

Gum

Students are NOT permitted to chew gum at school or at any time that they are on school/parish property. Disciplinary action will occur for students who are chewing gum during the course of the school day.

Cell Phone and Personal Electronics Policy

Personal electronics are not permitted. The practice of students bringing cell phones to school is strongly discouraged. If a student needs a cell phone for **pick up after an after-school event**, students may bring the cell phone to school. **Cell phones must be powered off from 7:30am till 3:30pm.** Lockers may be randomly checked for violations of cell phone policy. The cell phone of any student not following this policy will be sent to the office and the student will be issued a consequence. Parents must schedule a meeting with administration to retrieve any confiscated electronic device. Repeat violations may result in loss of privilege to bring a phone to school. The administration reserves the right to search the contents of a confiscated cell phone. St. Thomas is not responsible for lost or stolen cell phones/personal electronics.

Weapon Policy (Diocesan Policy [4560](#))

Students are prohibited from bringing a firearm, destructive device or deadly weapon to school or school functions. Further, students are prohibited from possessing a firearm, destructive device or deadly weapon en route to or from school or school activities, or on school property or at school activities. A violation of this policy carries an automatic expulsion from school. An item viewed in the eyes of the school administrator as a weapon shall be confiscated, the student subject to immediate disciplinary action, and, if appropriate, the police notified. A weapon could be any instrument, tool, or device that can cause bodily harm to an individual and/or cause damage to personal property. This includes a Swiss Army knife. These knives will not be permitted on school property or at school-sponsored events. Please do not send plastic knives in your child's lunch; he or she may use the bottom of a plastic spoon for spreading.

Harassment Policy (Diocesan Policy [4580](#))

Harassment shall not be tolerated in the Catholic schools. It is the policy of the school to maintain a learning environment that is free from harassment based on sex, race, national origin, color, age, disability, or any other impermissible factor that is prohibited by law and/or the teaching of the Catholic Church. Consequently, it is a violation of this policy for any employee to harass another employee or a student or for a student to harass another student or employee through conduct or communication of a sexual/racial nature as defined below. The term "employee" also includes non-employees and volunteers who work subject to the control of school authorities. This policy and procedure covers situations in which a student claims to be the victim of harassment.

Sexual Harassment

- Sexual harassment shall consist of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other inappropriate verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when made by any employee to a student or made by any student to another student.
- Conduct of a sexual nature may include verbal or physical sexual advances, looks, leers, gestures, comments, jokes, or other inappropriate conduct based on the victim's sex.
- The Diocese forbids sexual harassment and retains the right to address sexual harassment or inappropriate conduct of a sexual nature in the schools through whatever means it determines are reasonable and appropriate.

Other Forms of Harassment

- Harassment may be based on any protected characteristic, including race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, or other protected area. Harassment may consist of unwelcome, derogatory, and/or inappropriate verbal or physical comments or conduct relating to the victim's race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, or other protected trait, made by any employee to a student, or made by any student to another student.
- Comments or conduct of an offensive or harassing nature may include verbal or written comments, jokes, or physical gestures regarding physical, personality, or other characteristics related to a person's race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, or other protected trait.
- The Diocese prohibits harassment and retains the right to address harassing conduct through whatever means it determines are reasonable and appropriate.

Gender Identity, Congruence, and Sexuality (Diocesan Policy [Gender ID](#), Diocesan Policy [Congruence and Sexuality](#))

St. Thomas the Apostle abides by policies established as binding for diocesan institutions, including all diocesan offices, parishes, and schools in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend.

Part 9: Extracurricular Activities

Philosophy

Extra-curricular activities are activities that are outside the academic program of the school – including athletics. Co-curricular activities are activities that deal with the academic program. Both extra- and co-curricular activities are important parts of a student's overall development. It is a privilege for the children of St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School to participate in these activities.

Code of Conduct

All students involved in enrichment activities are expected to participate fully and follow the Gospel Values of **respect, responsibility, compassion, teamwork, and honesty** as well as **all** school rules. Because enrichment participation is considered an additional student privilege, and not a right, students participating are subjected to a higher standard, and additional rules and consequences apply to their conduct. A child not participating or behaving appropriately will be given one verbal warning. A child who continues to have behavior or participation issues will be sent home. If this occurs more than once during an enrichment session, the child will no longer be permitted to participate in the program for that session. This decision will be at the discretion of the adult group leader. This policy applies to all student activities, both during the school day and after school hours. **This policy also applies to the conduct of parents/guardians at extracurricular events.**

Physical Requirements-Athletics

All students participating in athletics must provide a completed Emergency Medical Authorization Form signed by the student's parents or guardians. This document must be on file before the student-athlete may participate in practices and games. Different sports demand varying levels of physical exertion. Players must understand the requirements of their sport and make sure that they are in appropriate physical condition to participate safely.

Extracurricular Policy on School Absences

Students who are absent from school are not permitted to participate in extracurricular activities, (including but not limited to athletics, clubs, choir), on the day of their absence. A student will be considered absent for the day if they are not present in school prior to 11:30 a.m. A student will be considered absent for the day if they leave school for an illness at any time during the day. Students who have medical excuses to be exempted from physical education classes during the day will not be permitted to practice or play on a sports team that day.

Eligibility

St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School aspires to provide an excellent Catholic education to each child according to their needs. Participation in school-sponsored activities and events is contingent on the adequate fulfillment of the primary purpose of the school, which is the religious and academic formation of the students. Therefore, the following policy on eligibility for participation is followed:

Administration may evaluate extracurricular eligibility on a weekly basis or as requested by teachers, coaches/sponsors, and/or staff members. In order to participate in athletics and other extracurricular activities, students should:

- Have a 70% or higher in all classes/subjects*
- Turn in all assignments on time
- Abide by all conduct rules of the school
- Have regular and timely attendance

*When evaluating academic eligibility, we consider many factors including:

- Have offers for corrections and any opportunities for extra credit been utilized?
- Has the student had an opportunity to improve the grade since the last ineligibility period?
- Have all assignments been turned in?
- Is work being turned in on time?
- Is the student asking for help?
- Is the student demonstrating the ability to manage academics and extracurricular activities?

Ineligibility

After an evaluation is conducted, participants may be deemed ineligible by administration. Ineligibility means the student is not permitted to participate in the athletic or extracurricular program. If a participant is deemed ineligible, administration will notify the participant, parent, and coach/sponsor. The student will remain ineligible for one week. After that week, a new evaluation will be conducted. A student will be removed from the team/activity upon the third week of ineligibility within a season. These weeks do not need to be consecutive.

Extra Curricular Uniforms

Students participating in extracurricular activities may be given a uniform/jersey to wear. Those belong to St. Thomas and participants are responsible for returning the washed uniform within 1 week of the season end. Families will be charged for any uniform that is damaged, stained, or lost.

Part 10: Health and Safety

Student Illness/Injury (Diocesan Policy [4200](#))

St. Thomas the Apostle School does not have a school nurse in our office daily. We utilize a diocesan nurse that is available via phone as needed. School personnel are trained annually to assist with student illness and injuries. If an accident or illness occurs while school is in session, the teacher in charge will report this to the office. School personnel shall give what first aid is needed and take any action necessary to protect the student's life, health and safety. Instructions will be followed by directive of the parent as soon as contact can be made, and in absence of contact, according to information on the emergency card and medical authorization. Students claiming to feel ill in a vague or general way may be asked to rest for a period before contacting a parent, unless more specific or severe symptoms become apparent; or, in light of a recent, known condition, the parent has requested immediate notification of continuing symptoms. There is often some question about how serious an injury needs to be before we notify a parent by phone. The following points will be used as a rule of thumb, although each situation will vary:

- head, neck, or eye injuries that result in the student leaving class/recess for more than 5 minutes.
- any injury/illness that results in the student leaving class/recess for more than 20 minutes or 2 separate trips to the office (due to the same cause) within a 20-minute period.
- injuries resulting in bleeding that require more than 1 band-aid to dress.
- any situation of concern where it becomes apparent that it is beyond the school's ability to treat.

According to the Indiana Department of Education, a student should be temporarily excluded for:

- A temperature of 100 degrees or higher (a student's temperature should be below 100 degrees without medication for 24 hours before the student returns to school).
- Most inflammatory eye conditions, such as pink-eye.
- Rashes or eczema that is known to be contagious or infectious.
- Head cold of any consequence, especially with a persistent cough or discharge.
- Sore or inflamed throat—if strep throat is diagnosed, the student needs to be on medication for 24 hours before returning to class.
- Discharge from the ears.
- Body lice or head lice—must be free of live lice and must be clean of nits in the hair or scalp.
- Vomiting 2 or more times in an hour

If your child is sent home ill during the day, he/she will **not be permitted** to return to school that same day or attend after school extra-curricular activities. Students who are sent home during the school day with a fever will not be allowed to return to school the next day as this would not allow for the 24 hour protection of the entire school community. Likewise, a child on antibiotics should have taken the antibiotics for 24 hours before returning to school. In the event of a serious accident during school hours, we will attempt to notify parents before any medical care is given. If necessary, the student will be transported by ambulance to Elkhart General Hospital or another medical facility as designated by the student's family. If the accident occurs during a field trip, the nearest medical care facility will be utilized as necessary.

Medication (Diocesan Policy [4210](#))

St. Thomas requires parents/guardians to inform school office staff of any medication(s) taken by a student. The school **must be notified** if there is any change in the medication(s) your child has been prescribed. To protect the health and welfare of students and staff members, Indiana law requires that school personnel observe certain safeguards when administering prescription medications to children.

- All medications (including OTC) students take or use at school must have a completed “Medication Permission Form” on file. This form can be obtained from the office staff.
- All medications (unless approved for self-carry) are to be kept in locked areas other than classrooms or kept under proper supervision by office staff.
- All prescription medication to be administered during school hours must be in the original prescription container marked with the student’s name, the name of the medication, the accurate dosage, and when it is to be administered. Any dosage changes must have a doctor’s written statement (which must be faxed to the school) or a new original prescription container. All prescriptions must be current within the year.
- All permission for long-term medication shall be renewed at least annually. Changes in medication shall be documented by written authorization from a licensed prescriber.
- OTC medication shall be provided by the parent for the student with the manufacturer’s original label with the ingredients listed and the student’s name affixed to the original package. It will be stored in the medical room area and secured.
- If it becomes necessary to give a student medication that is not kept at school, a parent/ guardian may come to school and administer the medication. Please inform the school office beforehand.
- In the event of emergency medication administration, such as Epi-pen for signs or symptoms of life threatening anaphylaxis 911 shall be called immediately and the parent/legal guardian shall be notified.
- Students may not transport school administered medications to school at all. Such medications must be brought to school and picked up by a parent or guardian.
- Students who self-carry any medication must have a physician authorization for self-carry emergency medication in school form completed annually and kept on file in the medical room.
- Students diagnosed with asthma must have an asthma management plan completed annually and kept on file in the medical room.

Immunizations

All required immunizations must be up to date to avoid suspension from school. The law in the State of Indiana requires that your child have certain immunizations to attend school. Below is the minimum number of immunizations required according to grade:

- Preschool–Pre-Kindergarten: 4 DTaP, 3 Polio, 3 Hepatitis B, 1 MMR and 1 Varicella or physician written documentation of history of the Chicken Pox Disease including month and year.
- Kindergarten: 5 DTaP, 4 Polio, 3 Hepatitis B, 2 MMR and 2 Varicella or physician written documentation of history of the Chicken Pox Disease including month and year and NEW, 2 Hepatitis A.
- First Grade–Fifth Grade: 5 DTaP, 4 Polio, 3 Hepatitis B, 2 MMR and 2 Varicella or Physician written documentation of history of the Chicken Pox disease including the month and year.
- Sixth Grade–Eleventh Grade: 5 DTaP, 4 Polio, 3 Hepatitis B, 2 MMR, 1 Meningitis, 1 Pertussis, and 2 Varicella or (or physician written documentation of the Chicken Pox Disease including month and year for sixth and seventh grade students; a history of the Chicken Pox disease with a written statement from the parent/guardian including the month and year for grades 8-11).

Please be mindful that these are minimum immunization requirements, and children need to have booster shots for certain vaccinations. Consult your child’s physician or health care provider to ensure your child is fully immunized. **Immunization records must be on file in the school office by the first day of school.** A student may be excluded from school and only allowed to return when records are up-to-date.

Ambulance

If a student suffers a medical emergency precipitating the need for a 911 call to be made, the parent/guardian will be responsible for any/all expenses involved. The parent/guardian will also be called immediately so that proper directives can be given by the parent/guardian to the emergency personnel.

Allergy Management (Diocesan Policy [4220](#))

St. Thomas the Apostle school is an allergy-aware school and follows protocols based on the most recent recommendations from the CDC. Please notify the office to any severe allergies your child may have. These may include allergies to insects, foods, latex or any other severe allergies. Our severe allergy protocol includes the following:

- Teachers, instructional assistants, volunteers, and cafeteria staff are all notified of students with severe allergies and what those allergies are. They help monitor students in the lunchroom and any snacks that are in the classroom.
- Students should not share lunch items with each other.
- Yearly training for school staff members and volunteers on symptoms of severe allergies and how to administer epinephrine.

Screenings

The following services are provided to students as mandated by Indiana State Law:

- Vision screening: Grades 1–3–8 (far acuity)
- Hearing screening: Grades 1–4–7

Other students may be recommended for testing at the discretion of a teacher or parent.

Seclusion and Restraint

As of July 1, 2014, each school must adopt a seclusion and restraint plan. The purpose of the plan is to ensure that all students and staff are safe in school, and that students who may have behavior crises are free from inappropriate use of seclusion or restraint. Seclusion or restraint shall not be used as routine school safety measures; that is, they shall not be implemented except in situations where a child's behavior or action poses imminent danger of physical harm to self or others and not as a routine strategy implemented to address instructional problems or inappropriate behavior (e.g., disrespect, noncompliance, insubordination, out of seat) as a means of coercion or retaliation. If a situation requires the use of seclusion or restraint, a member of the school crisis team who is certified in Nonviolent Crisis Intervention as designated by the Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) will be notified immediately. Any use of either seclusion or restraint shall be supervised, short in duration and used only for the purpose of de-escalating the behavior. A complete copy of the Seclusion and Restraint Plan is available in the school office.

Students or Prospective Students with Communicable Diseases

Catholic schools shall comply with all applicable state law and all Board of Health policies regarding school enrollment and attendance in relation to a student or prospective student having a communicable disease. Prospective students who meet all entrance requirements may not be denied admission solely based on a

diagnosis of a communicable disease unless required by applicable state law or Board of Health policy; similarly, students may not be excluded merely based on a diagnosis of a communicable disease. However, as with any prospective student who is diagnosed as having or is suspected of having a communicable disease, a child with a communicable disease may be excluded, if after an individualized assessment of the child's condition it is determined that the child's presence in the classroom would expose others to significant health and safety risks. Upon being informed that a child is diagnosed as having or is suspected of having a communicable disease, a review team consisting of the student; his/her parent/guardian; his/her physician; a physician representing the school, parish or diocese; and school or parish administrators will be established to determine whether the child's admission or continued presence in the school would expose others to significant health and safety risks. The review team's inquiry will include findings of fact based on reasonable medical judgments given the state of medical knowledge about:

- the nature of the risk—how the disease is transmitted;
- the duration of the risk—how long is the carrier infectious;
- the severity of the risk—the potential harm to third parties;
- the probabilities the disease will be transmitted and will cause varying degrees of harm;
- whether reasonable accommodation exists and/or is required.

The review team must also take into consideration the scope of the problem, education- related civil rights, and the student's right to confidentiality. The recommendation of the review team and the decision of the parish and school administrators shall be considered confidential and will be submitted for review only to the Superintendent of Schools, Vicar of Education, and diocesan attorney. In the event it is determined that a child is unable to attend regular Catholic day school, the parish, school, and diocese will assist the parent or guardian in locating alternative education services and obtaining religious and catechetical instruction.

Child Protective Services

By law, every adult in the State of Indiana has a legal obligation to report any suspicion of child abuse to the Indiana Department of Child Protective Services (DCS). Furthermore, if any member of our St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School Staff has reason to believe that abuse of a child has occurred, the staff member will call DCS as required by law. If any member of our staff suspects abuse of a child, it is not their job to investigate the situation, but to report it directly to DCS and let their professionals investigate the situation. Parents are not notified by the school when DCS is called. If a parent has information about a child being abused, they are required by law to call DCS directly. The reporting number for DCS is: 1-800-800-5556 The website for DCS is: <https://www.in.gov/dcs/2398.htm>

Crisis Response (Diocesan Policy [1510](#))

Our school and the diocese have prepared a Safe and Secure school plan, which addresses events which may threaten our students. During the school year, we will conduct drills for fire and severe weather, as well as lockdown and lockout drills. In addition, the plan outlines the school's response to various crisis situations, identifies evacuation sites, and provides support for students, parents, and staff, including counseling services provided through school counselors or counselors on the staff at Catholic Charities.

Part 11: Technology

Purpose

St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School students use technology to:

- Personalize student learning experiences.
- Increase student productivity and engagement in and outside the classroom.
- Develop and reinforce specific content-related skills through various subject matter applications.
- Access class content using digital textbooks,
- Access video and audio recording
- Play streamed video and audio.
- Access instructional content
- Increase productivity with efficient use of word processing, spreadsheet, database, and presentation applications.
- Conduct research using online resources.
- Manage document sharing without the need for paper printing.
- Connect to a learning management system such as Google Apps for Education.
- Gain access to adapted content and assistive technologies to meet needs.
- Take various assessments.
- Learn about appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking websites and in chat rooms, and cyberbullying awareness and response; and
- Prepare to live and work in a digital environment by applying the knowledge and skills needed for future learning and workforce.

Acceptable Use of Internet (Diocesan Policy [4620](#))

Internet access is available to students of St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School. The Internet has unlimited positive benefits for education. However, due to the freedom of the Internet, the potential for inappropriate use also exists. To help ensure Internet use is consistent with the benefits of a Catholic education, the school has adopted a policy to govern Internet access. The acceptable use and internet can be found [here](#). Parents and students are expected to review the policy at the beginning of each school year and must sign the accompanying forms and return them to the school office. They are kept on file for one year.

Content Monitoring and Filter

Student devices are regularly monitored by administration using the *GoGuardian* program.. St. Thomas the Apostle School utilizes an internet content filter that follows the federally mandated Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA). All Chromebooks will have Internet activity protected by the school. If a website is blocked in school, then it will be blocked out of school on the school Chromebook. Students who abuse internet privileges will face consequences according to our discipline policy.

Google Apps for Education

St. Thomas the Apostle School uses Google Apps for Education, or G-Suite, which is a collection of educational productivity and collaboration tools. This includes Google Drive, Docs, Sheets, Slides, Sites, Calendar, and Gmail. All STS students in grades K-8 will have an @stselkhart.com school-domain account. Students have access to email teachers only with school issued Chromebooks.

Chromebooks

Kindergarten-4th

Kindergarten through fourth grade classrooms will share a classroom set of Chromebooks in the classroom.

5th through 8th

Students in grades 5 through 8 will be issued a Chromebook (formatted by St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School.) They will be permitted to take their Chromebooks home each day. At the start of the school year, they will be issued a Chromebook, power cord, and protective carrying case that will be returned during the final week of school. Students must take their device home and charge it each night. A student who repeatedly comes to school with a dead chromebook will face consequences for not being prepared for class. Chromebook chargers should stay at home and not be brought back to school until the end of the year. The school is not responsible for lost or stolen chargers.

In the case of abuse, neglect, or intentional damage, the student/guardian will be charged a fee for needed repairs. Fees will not exceed the cost of the replacement. Parents/students are responsible for the replacement cost if the case and/or charger are lost or damaged. The cost of a replacement charger is \$20.

Students who forget their devices at home will be required to phone home and have the device brought to school. Each teacher will have access to 2 loaner chromebooks. Loaner chromebooks will only be available for the student in each classroom. When a device is being repaired, students will not have access to a St. Thomas device, but they can access their google accounts from a home device.

Out of School Use of Technology (Diocesan Policy [4630](#))

St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School reserves the right to impose consequences for inappropriate technology behavior that takes place off campus and outside school hours. Inappropriate use includes harassment, derogatory use of the school name, offensive or immoral communications and safety threats. While St. Thomas the Apostle School will not actively monitor student use of technology outside of school, however we will respond to evidence that inappropriate use of technology has occurred. Defamatory or derogatory engagement in any social media regarding St. Thomas Parish, its school, any of the parish/school administration, the faculty, other students, or other students' parents may also result in disciplinary action.

Handbook Disclaimer

The school administration reserves the right to amend this handbook at any time without advance notice. Proper notice of amendments will be provided. School policy will be reviewed and revised as necessary, annually. Failure to sign and return the Handbook Verification Signing Page has no effect on the applicability of the policies here within. Handbooks will be reviewed and revised, as necessary, annually.

VERIFICATION SIGNING PAGE

Please complete and return this page to the St. Thomas Office within two weeks of school start date.

Family Name: _____

I verify that I have received, read, and understood the various school and diocesan policies of this St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School Student/Parent Handbook. My student and I agree to abide by these policies with the understanding that the St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School administration or the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend may amend or change these policies at its discretion without notice.

Parent/Legal Guardian signature

Date

Student signature

Date

Student signature

Date

Student signature

Date

Directory (check one)

- ☐ I agree to listing our family in the STS directory
☐ I do not agree to listing our family in the STS directory

I have received, read, and understand the Adobe policy, Google Notice, STS acceptable use agreement, and chromebook policy. I give permission for my child to access the Internet (on St. Thomas owned computers or Chromebooks), online publication of schoolwork (such as Google Docs, Google Slides, etc.) and the creation of unique accounts for educational purposes.

Parent/Legal Guardian signature

Date