

BACK TO SCHOOL

2023
2024



STA

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS CATHOLIC SCHOOL

FIRST DAYS OF SCHOOL

Tues., August 15th: PK, K, 3rd, 5th, and 7th

Wed., August 16th: 1st, 2nd, 4th, 6th, and 8th

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Download your First Day Photo Placard and share your picture.

  @staschooldallas #staschooldallas

FIRST DAY PLACARDS →

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear St. Thomas Aquinas Families,

As President of St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School, it is my pleasure to welcome everyone back for another great year at STA. A special welcome to all our new students and families. We can't wait to have the students back in our classrooms and hallways, filling them with energy and enthusiasm for learning. Our mission, "To lead each student in the formation of a strong Catholic faith through the balanced pursuit of knowledge, prayer, responsibility, and service," guides all we do at the school. Whether this is your first child entering PreK or your last child entering 8th grade, please know we are committed to making the experience joyful, challenging, and faith-filled. This year we welcome 887 Wildcats! Please take some time to read this Back-to-School Guide; it contains important information on making the first days of school seamless.



As our teachers and staff are busy preparing their classrooms, attending curricular and safety training, and planning curriculum with their teams, we are also completing many facility enhancements. One important change is the relocation of the Upper School's main entrance. In our continuing effort to increase security measures, the new entrance is a secure and dedicated area to welcome visitors and volunteers. This area includes a reception area, lobby, and conference room. Please note that morning and afternoon carlines will remain the same, but you will use the new entrance when picking up early or dropping off after 8 AM, or anytime you need to come to campus. Also, we will continue to have off-duty police officers on both campuses every day.

Additionally, this year we are adopting a staggered opening for the first two days of school. The first day of school is extremely important and impactful, and sets the tone for a successful beginning of the school year. By adopting a staggered opening, students will have the gift of space and time to familiarize themselves with their classrooms, meet all their teachers, and go over procedures for the cafeteria, arrival and dismissal, lockers, restrooms, and many others. You are invited to park and walk your children in on the first day of school.

On behalf of Fr. John, Dr. Roberts, and Ms. Watts, I thank you for entrusting us with your children as we begin the 2023-24 school year.

God Bless,

Dr. Patrick Magee, President



The Upper School main entrance has changed!

The new Upper School main entrance is complete, and we are so excited to share it with you. Starting this year, all visitors coming onto the Upper School campus will need to enter through the new front entrance off of Abrams Road. Morning and afternoon carpool will remain the same as last year (see pages 18-19), but you will use the new entrance when picking up early or dropping off after 8 AM, or anytime you come to campus to meet with faculty/staff or to volunteer.

Come to the Upper School Main Entrance on Abrams when you need to :

- **Volunteer**
- **Meet with a teacher or administration**
- **Drop off your child late**
- **Pick up your child early**



STA introduces a new dismissal process. Download the Pikmykid app today!

Pikmykid



- Dismissal Management
- Safety & Emergency Tools
- Parent Engagement
- Real-Time Reporting

In our ongoing efforts to enhance our students' safety, we will begin using the Pikmykid Dismissal Application. This new online app will simplify dismissal, reduce traffic congestion, and most importantly, improve overall safety for your children and our campus.

The unique features of **Pikmykid** allow you, as parents, to easily change pickup modes, quickly delegate to an alternate individual for pickup, or change to Extended Day, if enrolled, or a Walker at the click of a button. You will even be able to set modes for future pickups. You will receive a notification from our school as your child leaves campus, whether they are picked up in carpool or walking home (from the Upper School). This means you will be aware of the precise moment your child is dismissed, whether it be by walking/biking or in the carline. The app allows you to

be in full control of your child's dismissal, and it gives us the ability to acknowledge every change and to instantly check your child's dismissal status should you have a question.

Please take a moment to download the Pikmykid app from the App Store or Google Play Store. **Your children's carpool tags will be emailed to you and available at the Spirit Store on Friday, August 11th from 9:00 AM-12:00 PM and Monday, August 14th from 1:00 PM-5:00 PM.** You will use the tags to register on the app. More information on how to use Pikmykid is in the Parent Portal on the website.

PIKMYKID →

Uniform Changes

There are a few uniform changes as we start a new school year. These modifications to the school uniform roll back some of the informality necessitated by COVID. Beginning in August, STA hoodies and sweatshirts may be worn on Wildcat Wednesdays over uniform tops and bottoms. Students may wear the navy fleece, the new gray quarter zip, the navy cardigan, or the gray performance quarter zip over their uniform tops and bottom for the other days of the week. Formal uniforms for 3rd-8th grade will still be required for all Masses. Lastly, girls have the option of wearing all-white tennis shoes or navy and white saddle shoes. See page 16 for more details.



Welcome

Please help us welcome the following new faculty and staff to our STA family this year!

UPPER SCHOOL



Fr. Ryan Hiaeshutter
Parochial Vicar

Please join us in welcoming
Fr. Ryan to St. Thomas
Aquinas Catholic Church.



Tanner Coffin
PE Teacher



Cathie Dunphy
5th Grade
Teacher



Kristin Jackson
6th Grade
Teacher



Charlene Little
Academic
Support Specialist



Lorena Lopez
5th Grade
Teacher



Matt Navarro
Middle School
Religion Teacher



Jimmy Belasco
Student
and Academic
Support



Therese Stephens
3rd Grade
Teacher



Marty Wilkerson
PE Teacher



Rose Wingert
Middle School
English Language
Arts Teacher



Jennifer Emerson
Student
and Academic
Support

UPPER SCHOOL ART



Molly Vaudry
Art Teacher



Dee Dee Gonzales
Art Aide

Last year Molly Vaudry stepped into the US art teacher position. We are proud to announce she will be our full time art teacher along with Dee Dee Gonzales as her aide.

Congratulations!

We are happy to announce that the following faculty and staff are changing positions beginning next school year:

UPPER SCHOOL



Claire Galvin
Science Lab
Coordinator



Olivia Guffey
5th Grade
Teacher



Lindsey Hill
5th Grade
Teacher



Chelsea Moffet
Student and
Academic Support



Amanda Neinast
Receptionist and
Assistant to the
President



Abby Orr
Librarian



Francesca Orzech
Computer
Teacher

LOWER SCHOOL



Lindsay Morris
1st Grade Aide



Karla Ring
Kindergarden Aide



Madeline Schnurr
LS Library and
US/LS Director of
Library Services



Safety & Security

As we begin the 2023-2024 school year, school safety remains our priority, and we are dedicated to the security of our entire school community.

Over the summer, the school continued to work on school safety initiatives which impact our security infrastructure, and we will continually review safety procedures and protocols through training, emergency preparation, and safety drills throughout the school year. We realize that despite all the steps taken, we are not immune to unforeseen incidents, and we must all remain vigilant to keep our school community safe. We all play a critical role in the safety and security of STA.

STA Protocols:

- STA is a closed campus. All doors always remain locked with one monitored main entrance on each campus.
- The school hires off-duty police officers to be on campus every day and assigns extra staff at exterior Church doors during student Masses.
- STA continues to foster our relationship with the Dallas Police Department and other local law enforcement organizations.
- ID badges are required for all students, staff, visitors, vendors, and volunteers.
- STA uses an electronic communication/notification system to notify our community of emergencies.
- STA utilizes the Standard Response Protocol (SRP).
- A comprehensive Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) guides our response to emergency situations at each campus. The STA Crisis Management Plan is site-specific and shared with our local law enforcement liaisons.
- Our Crisis Management Teams are trained to implement emergency procedures and participate in practice drills throughout the year.
- The school uses Raptor, a school safety software, that enables the school to screen visitors, track volunteers, report on drills, and help respond to emergencies.
- The school routinely conducts, reviews, and reinforces our emergency response training and drills, including video-based safety and security training for all employees.
- Portable emergency kits are provided for all classrooms, offices, and common areas.
- Youth Mental Health First Aid training is provided for school staff.



Here's how you can help:

- Be familiar with the SRP on the parent portal or by clicking [HERE](#).
- Talk to your children about the importance of reporting any threats of violence to a trusted adult, school administrators, or the Dallas Police Department.
- Be vigilant when in carpool or on campus and report any suspicious activity to the Dallas Police Department and school principals.
- Talk to your children about the importance of not participating in or promoting any threats of violence. Making a threat against a school is a punishable offense that could lead to being charged with a misdemeanor or felony. Posting threatening language on social media violates the Student Code of Conduct which could lead to expulsion from school.



Catholic Identity

Under the leadership of Fr. John Libone, St. Thomas Catholic School and Church are dedicated to the Catholic formation of our students.

Service Projects

Led by Director of Service and Outreach Will Keffler, students, faculty and staff, and families at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School will have opportunities this school year to support our local and global community through the development of empathy and practice of Catholic Social Teaching, virtues, and our school values.

Throughout the school year, students will participate in community service events both on campus and in the local community/neighborhood that correlate directly to the seven themes of Catholic Social Teaching:

- **Life and Dignity of the Human Person**
- **Call to Family, Community, and Participation**
- **Rights and Responsibilities**
- **Preferential Option for the Poor**
- **The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers**
- **Solidarity**
- **Care for God's Creation**



Catholic Schools
United in Faith and Community

Catholic Schools Week

Catholic Schools Week is a national celebration of Catholic education and an opportunity to recognize the importance, the value, and the contributions of Catholic education to the Church and the world. Catholic Schools Week is sponsored by the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA). STA will celebrate Catholic Schools Week **January 29th - February 4th.**

Know it. Show it. Live it.

For more information on Service Learning:



Will Keffler
Director of Service and Outreach
wkeffler@staschool.org
214-826-0566 ext.4312

Need More Information on your child's Sacramental Preparation?



Dottie Lucas
Religion Program and Sacramental Preparation Coordinator
dlucas@staschool.org
214-826-0566 ext.4431

IMPORTANT: Students in 3rd – 8th grade will wear their formal uniforms on Mass days.

First *Full* Days of School

The first day of school is **Tuesday, August 15th** for PK, Kindergarten, 3rd, 5th, and 7th grade students, and **Wednesday, August 16th** for 1st, 2nd, 4th, 6th, and 8th grade students. Students will be released at 3:00 PM at the Lower School and 3:15 PM at the Upper School, and there is no Extended Day. Parents may walk their child to their classroom at both the Upper School and the Lower School on their first day only.

Lower School
8:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Upper School
7:55 AM – 3:15 PM



**Tuesday
August 15th**
PK, K, 3rd,
5th, and 7th
(full day)



**Wednesday,
August 16th**
1st, 2nd, 4th,
6th, and 8th
(full day)



Class Lists*

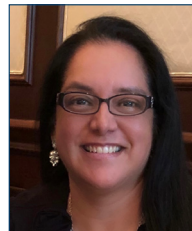
Class lists and schedules are posted in FACTS Family Portal and on the My STA App under announcements. Please do not request changes. Log in to your account and view your child's school details.

*Class lists are subject to change for administrative purposes only

CLASS LISTS →

Safe Environment & Volunteering

In compliance with the Diocese of Dallas, STA has a comprehensive Safe Environment Program in place for all of our volunteers. In order to volunteer at the school, church, or any affiliated event, you are required to be Safe Environment cleared. This is an easy process that is outlined on the school [website](#). Once you receive your Safe Environment badge, it must be updated annually on the anniversary date and worn on school premises any time you are on campus. Please know that for the safety of our students and teachers, this policy is strictly enforced. All visitors who do not have a Safe Environment badge must sign in at the front desk, receive a yellow visitor sticker, and be accompanied by a cleared person at all times.



For more information:

Gina Rangel

Safe Environment Director

rangel@stadallas.org

214-821-3360, ext. 4115



All volunteers must be Safe Environment cleared and wear their badge at all times when on campus!

Top Ten Reminders

1. Complete the summer reading and math assignments. Information for replacing missing math books can be found on the parent portal.
2. Set up your child's lunch account, or don't forget to pack his or her lunch. See page 15 for more information or click [HERE](#).
3. Remember there is no Extended Day on the two first days of school. Registration is still available if you would like to have your child attend Extended Day. See page 15 for more information.
4. Get haircuts and check skirt and shorts hem lengths and uniform quality. STAPA will host a used uniform sale on **Friday, August 4th from 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM** in the Upper School Drama Room. Looking for new merchandise? Visit the STA Spirit Store on **Friday, August 11th from 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM** and **Monday, August 15th from 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM**. To purchase bottoms, sweaters, and ties, go to the [Risse Brothers School Uniforms](#) website.
5. Be on time! School starts promptly at 7:55 AM at the Upper School, and 8:00 AM at the Lower School: students need to be in class by these times. Doors open at 7:30 AM on both campuses every school day. Please do not allow your child to exit your car without an STA staff member present.
6. Each student needs to bring a water bottle and single serve snack to school each day. Please label your child's water bottle.
7. Have patience in the afternoon carpool line the first few weeks as we settle into the new Pikmykid routine. Please follow carpool procedures to ensure the safety of our students and teachers.
8. Never miss campus news by reading the WAAG, STA's Week-at-a-Glance e-newsletter. The WAAG is delivered to your email every Friday at 1:00 PM and posted on the MySTA App.
9. Get the My STA App and subscribe to the school calendar located on the Parents page of the website.
10. Attend the Back to School Mass on **Sunday, August 27th**. The Mass at 9:00 AM will be followed by a school and church ministry fair.



Don't forget to bring a water bottle labeled with your child's name each day.

School Pictures



Lower and Upper School photos will be taken on **Thursday, August 24th**. Proofs and order forms from Impressionist School Portraits will be sent home with your child a few weeks after the photos are taken. Retakes are scheduled for October 5th on both campuses. If you wish to have a retake, please return the proof marked RETAKE to your child's home-room teacher. These are the photos used for the yearbook, so look your best!



Students in 3rd–8th grade will wear their formal uniforms.

The teachers are ready to greet you and your child!

Dates to Remember



Summer Assignments

Don't forget that your child's summer assignments are due the week school begins. Math books were sent home with your child before school was out.

SUMMER ASSIGNMENTS →

Meet the Teacher Night

Parents are invited to join us (no children) to learn more about the upcoming school year and discover what will be going on in the classroom.



Thursday, August 17th

PK – 2nd Grades

7:00 PM – 7:30 PM or 7:35 PM – 8:05 PM

Parents with children in PK through 2nd grade can choose from two Meet the Teacher sessions on **Thursday, August 17th**. Class starts promptly and is for parents only!



Monday, August 21st

6th – 8th Grades

6:00 PM–8:00 PM

Experience a day in the life of our middle school students in 6th–8th grades on **Monday, August 21st**. Parents will meet in their child's homeroom and follow an abbreviated bell schedule to meet our teachers.

The IT team will be available to answer any questions regarding FACTS Family Portal, ClassLink, Moodle, and more in the Upper School cafeteria.



Wednesday, August 23rd

3rd – 5th grades

6:15 PM–7:00 PM

Parents with children in 3rd–5th grades will meet their child's teachers and get information for the year on **Wednesday, August 23rd**.

The IT team will be available to answer any questions regarding FACTS Family Portal, ClassLink, Moodle, and more in the Upper School cafeteria.

Celebrating Birthdays

Birthday Dress Down Days are designated days, once a month, for students celebrating their birthday. They may wear free dress in compliance with the dress code on that day.

Dates **August 28**
September 25
October 30
November 27
December 11
January 22
February 25
March 25
April 29
May 20
(May, June, and July)

Birthday blessings will be given at your child's scheduled Mass or prayer service during the same week of Birthday Dress Down in most months.

Individual birthday celebrations in the classroom are only allowed at the Lower School. Contact your child's homeroom teacher for more information.



Friday, August 18th

Wildcat Athletics and DPL Orientation

Any parents new to the STA Dallas Parochial League - DPL (5th - 8th grade) are asked to join our STA Athletic Director, Genevieve Dittmar, in the Upper School gym to learn more about our STA Wildcat athletic program and the Dallas Parochial League (DPL) on **Friday, August 18th from 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM**. This is an exciting time for your child as he or she becomes an STA Wildcat athlete. Please attend to ensure a smooth transition to our school sports program.



Friday, August 18th

Booster Club Fall Sports Kick Off

All families are welcome to attend the Booster Club Fall Sports Kick Off on **Friday, August 18th at 6:00 PM** on the STA field. Booster club volunteers will be providing food and organizing activities for kids in kindergarten - 8th grade with a chance to win great prizes. It's guaranteed to be fun for the whole family! For more information, contact Amy Schroeder at amy@schroedersix.com.



Sunday, August 27th

Back to School Mass and Ministry Fair

Attend the Back to School Mass on **Sunday, August 27th at 9:00 AM**. After Mass you are invited to an STA Church and School ministry fair in the Upper School gym from 10:00 AM - 12:30 PM.

Grandparents Day

Grandparents Day will be celebrated on two separate days. Special friends are invited to attend if grandparents are not available. More details will be provided later in the year.



Thursday, February 2
Upper School



Friday, February 3
Lower School



General Information

Attendance

Attendance is of vital importance at every grade level - PK through 8th. Please refrain from scheduling vacations when school is in sessions as it creates an unnecessary burden on the student and the teachers. Emergencies are unavoidable, but vacations are not. The [SCHOOL CALENDAR](#) provides many opportunities for travel over long weekends and extended time over holidays. Teachers will not give assignments in anticipation of a vacation. Thank you for your cooperation!



Upper School:

Amanda Neinast

Receptionist

USfrontdesk@staschool.org

Main Number and Attendance:

214-826-0566, opt. 1

Health Services:

214-826-0566, opt. 3



Lower School:

Cheryl Neeley

Receptionist

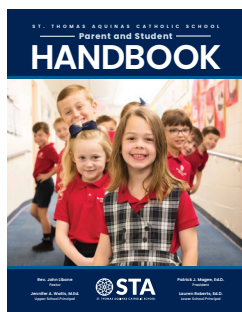
cneeley@staschool.org

Main Number and Attendance:

469-341-0911, opt. 1

Health Services:

469-341-0911, opt. 3



Front Desk Rules

With 887 students, their parents, our volunteers, and our teachers, the front desk can seem like Grand Central Station. Help us stay focused on your child's education and safety by following the Front Desk Rules!

At the Beginning of the School Day

- Report an absence if your child will be out for the day.
- No items or messages will be delivered after the 8:00 AM bell, unless it is an emergency. In the event of an emergency please call the receptionist.
- Students will need to bring a lunch with them each morning, unless they decide to buy lunch from the cafeteria. See page 15 for more details regarding lunch.

During the School Day

- Students are expected to be present in school for the entire day and attend every period.
- If a student will be leaving for an appointment, parents should email the homeroom teacher and the receptionist to let them know what time the child will be picked up. **Come inside to sign your child out.**
- A doctor's note is required for return to school from dental or medical appointments.
- Students may not be pulled from class for a sibling event (only exceptions are Kindergarten Graduation and 8th Grade Tribute).

At the End of the School Day

- To avoid classroom and dismissal disruptions, no student may be picked up after 2:30 PM for an appointment.
- Students may not be pulled early from school for extra-curricular activities.
- Follow the carpool rules.
- Students not picked up on time will be escorted to Extended Day and an additional fee will be charged to your FACTS account.

Parent/Student Handbook

The [St. Thomas Aquinas Parent/Student Handbook](#) is located on the [Parents page](#) of the website. This is a live document that changes as the Diocese and school administration implement and modify policy. All families electronically signed the acknowledgment of handbook policies when enrolling/re-enrolling their children in the spring. Please feel free to refer to these policies and procedures at any time, especially those which pertain to uniform dress code and free dress policies.

HANDBOOK →



Lunch and Lunch Accounts

- All students may bring their lunch or purchase from options provided by our food service vendor, Guess Who's Coming To Dinner Caterers. All families should set up a lunch account before school starts. Instructions on how to set up and monitor your child's account, along with monthly menus, are located on the Parents page of the school website.
- Guess Who's Coming to Dinner Caterers (GWCTD) has an online lunch account system, LINQ Connect. Please register [HERE](#).
- Students have a limited lunch/recess period and are not allowed to have visitors at lunch. Upper School students bringing lunch to school must bring it with them. No dropping off lunches after 7:55 AM.



LUNCH INFO →

Extended Day

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School is committed to providing a fun and safe place for your child to spend time after school. Extended Day hours are from school dismissal until 6:00 PM, and **4:00 PM on half days**. An additional fee will be assessed for any child picked up after 6:00 PM. Extended Day is not a drop-in program; in order to participate, all families must enroll their children in the 2, 3, 4, or 5-day program. Both the Lower School and Upper School Extended Day staff provide a time to decompress from the school day with friends, do homework, receive tutoring, eat a healthy snack, and have fun.

There is still room in the program if you would like to enroll your child. You can find more information about the program and fees on the [Extended Day](#) page on the STA website.

Extended Day is closed on:

Tuesday, August 15th, Wednesday, August 16th, Friday, November 17th, Friday, December 15th, and Friday, May 31st.

For more information:



Sandy Cole
Lower School
Extended Day
Director
469-341-0911,
ext. 4324
scole@staschool.org



Rachel Russell
Upper School
Extended Day
Director and
Registrar
214-826-0566,
ext. 4312
russell@staschool.org

Uniform Guidelines

STA recognizes the effect students' dress and grooming have upon student behavior and commitment to learning. Parents play a big role in assisting their children in making the best choices regarding the official school uniform, healthy grooming, and dress down day wear and accessories. STA expects all students to follow the school dress code, exercise modesty, dress for the weather, and look their best on all school days.

The school uniform is designed to identify STA students for safety reasons on campus and at off-campus events when required to be worn such as on field trips.

The teachers and administration ask for parent partnership and student compliance with the STA Wildcat Dress Code. Uniform violations will be addressed with a written warning or parents may be called to bring an alternative outfit to school.

[UNIFORM CHART](#) →

Everyday Pullovers



Important Reminders: Boys:

- Solid black athletic shoes
- Brown or black belt with uniform short or pants (2nd - 8th)
- Uniform shorts length no more than 4 inches above knee
- Solid white, black, or navy socks worn above the shoe line
- Formal Mass requires STA uniform necktie or bowtie and pants (3rd - 8th grade only)
- Student hair natural color, kept clean and neat, out of face, and away from eyes.

Girls:

- Solid white athletic shoes or navy and white saddle shoes
- Length of uniform skirts, jumpers, skorts, or uniform shorts no more than 4 inches above knee
- Modesty short required under uniform skirt
- Solid white, black, or navy socks worn above shoe line
- Formal Mass requires a navy cardigan sweater (3rd - 8th grade only)
- Student hair natural color, kept clean and neat, out of face, and away from eyes.

Wildcat Wednesday



STA hoodies and sweatshirts may be worn ever Wednesdays.

Jewelry and accessories for boys and girls:

- Expensive jewelry/accessories highly discouraged
- Watches (if worn) must be non-technological/non-texting
- One simple necklace or chain, one bracelet, one pair of stud earrings, and one simple ring allowed
- Boys – no earrings are permitted
- All skin must be kept clean and free of any and all marking, drawing, or writing.

Free Dress Rules:

Shorts may be worn; however, they must be no shorten than mid-thigh length (hems reaching tips of fingers or longer when arms are by your side). Shirts need to have sleeves, a modest neckline, and extend past the waist (no singlet tops, bare shouldered shirts, or midriff tops).

Student ID badges MUST be worn during the school day at all times. Students will receive their school ID badge on the first day of school. If your child needs a replacement badge, your FACTS account will be charge \$5 for a replacement.

STA Spirit Store

The Spirit Store is open every Tuesday and Thursday during the school year from 7:30 AM – 8:30 AM.



Back to School Spirit Store Hours

The STA Spirit Store will be open to sell STA logo shirts, fleeces, spirit wear, and Wildcat socks on **Friday, August 11th from 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM** and **Monday, August 14th from 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM**. Pre-order pick ups will also be available.

The Spirit Store is located next to the Upper School Gym. Please park in the front (north) parking lot when shopping on school days.



New Gray
Quarter Zip



Navy Fleece



Polos



T-shirts



STA Socks



Hair Accessories



Shorts



Hats



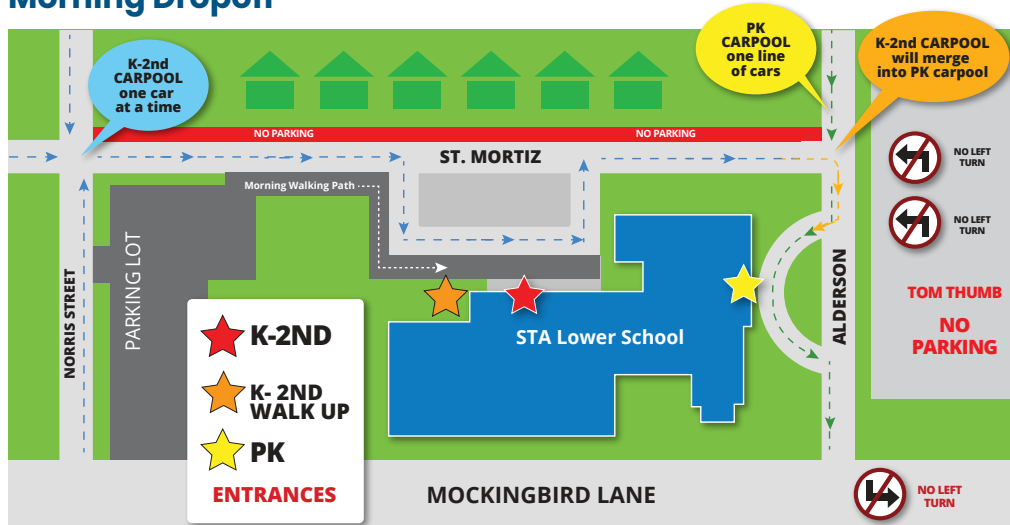
Pencil Bag

Carpool

Lower School

K-2nd grade morning and afternoon carpool begins at the west entrance of the school parking lot on St. Moritz. PK families can drop off, beginning at 7:30 AM, and pick up at the circle drive on Alderson. Assisted morning carpool begins at 7:30 AM. Children may not be dropped off before 7:30 AM. Due to limited parking on campus, parents who wish to walk their child to the door are asked to only park in the Birdies Eastside parking lot adjacent to campus. PK families must use the carline for morning and afternoon carpool.

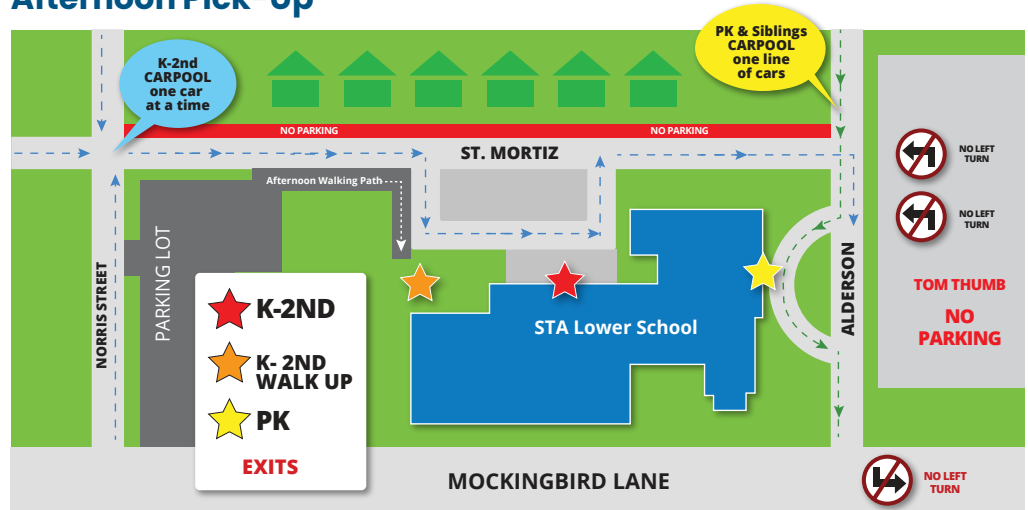
Morning Dropoff



Please be aware that families with K-2 grade students and PK students will drop their older students off first and then enter the PK carline when they turn right on Alderson. Please be patient with one another.

Afternoon Pick-Up

K-2 parents who walk up at dismissal should bring their carpool tags when picking up.



Pikmykid

STA introduces a new dismissal application!

Your children's carpool tags will be emailed to you and available at the Spirit Store on Friday, August 11th from 9:00 AM-12:00 PM and Monday, August 14th from 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM. Tags must always be displayed in order to pick up children from school carpool, whether driving through the carline or walking to pickup your child.

PIKMYKID →

Please be patient the first few weeks of school as we adjust to the new Pikmykid routine, ensuring the safety of our students and our teachers.

Upper School

Third through 8th grade morning carpool begins at 7:30 AM. Families can drop off at the north or south lots in the morning. Children may not be dropped off before 7:30 AM.

During afternoon carpool, 5th - 8th grade students will use the north parking lot. Students in 3rd and 4th, along with their siblings, should use the south parking lot.

Walkers

Every Upper School family completed a Release to Walk Form with enrollment/re-enrollment indicating if their child may leave the campus unsupervised. If you wish to change your child's walker status, fill out a new form located on the [Parents page](#) of the website and email Amanda Neinast at USfrontdesk@staschool.org. Just a reminder, walkers will not be released until carpool has begun. In the case of severe weather, parents will be advised through Pikmykid and ParentAlert that walkers will be held on campus for pickup through the carpool line. Always have an updated phone number on record and a good back up plan with your child.

If your child walks to school or walks off campus at the end of the day, we ask that you:

- Follow all traffic laws as you drive and park throughout the neighborhoods.
- Be considerate of our neighbors on both the east and west sides of campus.
- Do not block driveways or alleys while you wait for your child.
- Give other cars and emergency vehicles room to get down the street.
- Talk with your child about being respectful to our neighbors' yards and property.
- Do NOT park on Alderson or Kenwood to pick up your child or designate pick-up spots at the corners of Hillside/Kenwood and Alderson/Malcolm.
- The carpool lane is the safest and easiest way to pick up your child at school and is almost always finished about 10-15 minutes after school is dismissed.



Carpool Rules:

During carpool, the safety of our students and teachers is our highest priority. Please follow the rules below at all times.

No Left Turns No left turns into or out of school property during carpool times. No exceptions.

Stay in the Carpool Queue. Do not drop off your child at any other place on campus.

Do not Attempt to Pass other Vehicles.

Carpool Tags Tags must always be displayed in order to pick up children from school carpool. If you need extra tags, you can print them from the Pikmykid app.

Stay in your Car Do not get out of your car during carpool. Teachers at the Lower School will help your child in and out of the car.

Lower School Walk-Ups Kindergarten - 2nd grade families walking their children to the school door must park in the Birdies Eastside parking lot adjacent to campus. Do not park on the street, at Tom Thumb, or in the Lower School parking lot. PK families must use the carline for morning and afternoon carpool.

Communicate any changes in afternoon carpool arrangements to your child and the school through Pikmykid. Please do not request that students be released after 2:30 PM.

We ask for your cooperation and your partnership with us in leading by example as representatives of our St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Community.

Academic Services

Student Counseling and Academic Support Services

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School has full time guidance counselors at both campuses. Any student, parent, or faculty member may consult with the counselor to address individual needs of students. The counselor, in collaboration with our on-staff learning specialists, teachers, administrators, and, when needed, outside professionals, will make recommendations to help students meet the academic, behavioral, and/or emotional challenges affecting student success.

If your child has a diagnosed learning difference, parents are required to provide the Upper School Learning Specialist, Cynthia Redden, or Lower School Counselor and Learning Specialist, Padmini Dayal, with a copy of the diagnostic report. Parents are responsible for providing updated testing or changes in their child's diagnosis.

UPPER SCHOOL



Amy Miller
Upper School Counselor
214-826-0566,
ext. 4421
amiller@staschool.org



Shannon Storey
Dean of Students
3rd - 5th
214-826-0566, ext. 4416
sstorey@staschool.org



Andrew Gagie
Dean of Students
6th - 8th
214-826-0566, ext. 4412
agagie@staschool.org



Cynthia Redden
Learning Specialist
214-826-0566,
ext. 4436
credden@staschool.org



Zack Courtney
Reading Specialist, CALT
214-826-0566,
ext. 4423
zcourtney@staschool.org



Charlene Little
Academic
Support Specialist
469-341-0911,
ext. 4446
clittle@staschool.org

LOWER SCHOOL



Padmini Dayal
Counselor and
Learning Specialist
469-341-0911
ext. 4318
pdalay@staschool.org



Abby Rosellini
Reading Specialist
469-341-0911
arosellini@staschool.org



Shannon Storey
Dean of Students
214-826-0566,
ext. 4416
sstorey@staschool.org



Becky Alost
Reading Specialist,
CALP (part time)
469-341-0911
ext. 4446
balost@staschool.org

Health Services

The Health Clinic

The Health Clinic is open at both the Lower School and Upper School campuses during school hours. Services provided by the clinic include basic first aid, managing medical emergencies, administering prescribed medications, and monitoring ill students until a parent arrives to pick them up.

The clinic does not supply medication for students. Parents must supply all medications in original pharmacy bottles. All prescription and over-the-counter (OTC) medications must be kept in the clinic. Students are not allowed to hold medicine or self-medicate. If your child has prescription medicine, please use the Diocesan Medication Form located on the Parents page of the website when bringing the medication to the school. Parents are expected to communicate and plan with the nurse.

In consideration of your child, classmates, and our staff, keep your child home from school if he/she is ill or not feeling well.

Sick and Absence Procedures

If your child is sick or not attending school, please do **ONE** of the following:

- Notify the school of absences as soon as possible by emailing your child's homeroom teacher and the school receptionist.

Upper School: Amanda Neinast
USfrontdesk@staschool.org

Lower School: Cheryl Neeley
cneeley@staschool.org

- Fill out the absence form on the school website or My STA App.
- Call the Upper School or the Lower School and **press 1** to leave a voicemail.

Upper School: 214-826-0566

Lower School: 469-341-0911



Nikki Ramos
Lower School Nurse
nramos@staschool.org



Renée Pinkston, RN, BSN
Upper School Nurse
rpinkston@staschool.org

Doctor's Notes

Per Diocesan policy, notes from the doctor/dentist office are required to return to school from an appointment.

HEALTH CLINIC →



Communications

How do I know what is happening?

Website

The [Parents page](#) can be found by clicking the Parents tab located at the top right of the homepage. This is a great resource for information parents need including lunch menus, forms, and more.

School Calendar

A detailed school calendar is located on the website and on the My STA App. You can subscribe to any and all of the school calendars on any device; if an event changes, it will automatically change on your calendar. Directions to filter and subscribe to the calendar are at the top of the page.

[STA CALENDAR](#) →



Week at a Glance (WAAG)

Every Friday afternoon at 1:00 PM you will receive the school's weekly e-newsletter in your inbox. The Week at a Glance (WAAG) is your primary source of information for the upcoming weekend and the week ahead. Please add communications@staschool.org to your address book to ensure delivery. We ask that you take a moment over the weekend to read the WAAG and mark your calendar accordingly.

Homeroom Parent and Teacher Emails

You may receive email reminders from your child's teachers and homeroom parents of upcoming events or changes in already scheduled events. Please check your email regularly.

ParentAlert

Our ParentAlert system sends text messages directly to your phone. ParentAlert is for urgent matters only, including severe weather and emergency information.

MySTA App

Download the My STA App for easy access to FACTS information. You can find it in the App Store for iPhones and Google Play for android phones. Report your child's absence, access Upper School schedules and homework assignments, read the WAAG, and more.

School Directory*

The School Directory is online through the My STA App and FACTS Family Portal. The school directory contains all the contact information for parents and families.

Please keep all contact information current with the school by emailing any changes to rrussell@staschool.org.

* The St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School directory information includes parent and student names and addresses, parent e-mail addresses, and home, mobile, and work numbers. This directory is online and password protected. The directory is for the personal use of St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School families only. It may not be sold or used for mailing lists or solicitation purposes of advertising personal businesses or promoting outside businesses.

Questions or need help logging in?



Julie Hegarty
Technology
Specialist
469-930-5545
jhegarty@staschool.org



Rachel Russell
Registrar
214-826-0566,
ext. 4430
rrussell@staschool.org



Shelley Kirby
Director of
Communications
214-826-0566
ext. 4217
skirby@staschool.org

[FACTS FAMILY PORTAL](#) →



Technology

STA Computer Technology Plan

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School believes that technology is imperative in a collaborative learning environment. Our STEM initiative includes the school's updated technology plan. Each 6th - 8th grade student will receive a school-issued laptop (Dell Latitude 3120). These laptops will stay with the students each school year until graduation.

We also provide devices for classroom use in PK-5th grade. STA is excited to expand and enrich our student technology resources and the teaching and learning possibilities that this new technology initiative will provide across all grades.

Social Media Policy for Students and Parents

Beginning with the first computer classes taken at the Lower School, our students learn about their digital footprint. We know that social media is a big part of our students' lives as they move into middle school. We request that parents monitor their children's social media usage and continue the discussion of what is and is not appropriate to post.

It is also expected that all parents, volunteers, and students using social networking including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and GroupMe refrain from:

- **Posting photos of children other than their own without permission.**
- **Disparaging the character of any individual within our community, St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Parish and School, or the Diocese of Dallas.**
- **Causing embarrassment to St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School, or any associated organizations or members of the community. STA has the right to ask you to take down any posts.**
- **Harassing any member of the St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Parish and School community.**
- **Divulging any personal information about children in the community that would jeopardize their safety or well-being in any way.**

Questions?

Our IT team is available any time to meet or answer questions.



Julie Hegarty
Technology
Specialist
496-930-5545
jhegarty@staschool.org



Andrew Price
Director of
Technology
496-930-5511
aprice@staschool.org



Wildcat Athletics

5th – 8th Grade Dallas Parochial League

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School participates in the Dallas Parochial League. Offering **13 sports** throughout the year, our STA athletic program emphasizes Christian principles and good sportsmanship between teams and among athletes for students in 5th – 8th grade. We encourage all STA 5th–8th grade students to participate in at least one DPL sport.

Important Fall Dates

- **Cheer Camp:** August 10th - 11th in Lower School gym
- **Volleyball Evaluations: Lower School Gym**
 August 15th 5th Grade at 4:00 PM – 5:15 PM
 7th Grade at 5:30 PM – 7:00 PM
 August 16th 6th Grade at 4:00 PM – 5:15 PM
 8th Grade at 5:30 PM – 6:30 PM
- **DPL 5th - 8th Grade Parent Orientation Meeting:**
 Friday, August 18th
 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM in the Upper School gym
- **Booster Club Fall Sports Kick-Off:**
 Friday, August 18th, 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM
 on the Wildcat Athletic Field
- **Opening of DPL Football and Cheer Season:** Sunday, September 17th
- **Opening of DPL Volleyball Season:**
 Saturday, September 16th

In order to participate in athletics, please do the following:

1. Register for your sport before the deadline. The Athletic Director (AD) will send an email with registration and payment information before each season begins.
2. **DOWNLOAD** and complete the DPL Sports Physical Form and email to physicals@staschool.org.
3. Complete Concussion Baseline Testing complete concession testing **BEFORE SCHOOL STARTS**. Make sure you use the parent instructions link: Click [HERE](#) for more information.
4. All STA student-athletes in grades 5-8 that are in good conduct and academic standing may participate in STA sports. Students are ineligible to participate in STA athletics and/or extracurricular events when their grade in any class is below a 70 and/or their conduct reflects a "U" (Unsatisfactory).
5. Become a Booster Club Member. Booster Club provides vital support for our athletic programs.

FALL: (August - November)

Tackle football, flag football, cheerleading, cross country, and volleyball

WINTER: (January - March)

Basketball

SPRING: (March - May)

Baseball, softball, golf tournament, soccer tournament, futsal, swim meet, and track & field

[VOLLEYBALL REGISTRATION](#) →

[CROSS COUNTRY REGISTRATION](#) →



Need More Information?

Genevieve Dittmar
 Athletic Director
gdittmar@staschool.org
 214-826-0566, ext. 4212

Most of our varsity teams are coached by non-parent volunteers. If you are interested in being a volunteer coach, please contact the Athletic Director. Animals are not allowed at any St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School athletic facility, including on the athletic field. Please leave your pets at home.

Booster Club

The STA Booster Club is for everyone!

We are an active group of parents, former STA athletes, coaches, and volunteers committed to the Wildcat Athletics Program through fundraising, supporting the athletic department, and promoting volunteerism and school spirit.

Booster Club Provides:

- Funding for the upkeep and improvement of the Lower School and Upper School gymnasiums
- Support for athletic department needs
- Financial scholarships to graduating 8th grade student-athletes attending a Catholic high school
- Special recognition to our volunteer coaches at the DPL level
- Concessions for all home fall and spring games as part of our fundraising initiatives
- A great time at the Annual Booster Club Golf Tournament, the largest Booster Club fund raising event of the year!
- Many social opportunities for parents and students of all ages through STA community-wide activities

Save the Date:

- **Fall Sports Kick Off**
Friday, August 18, 2023
on the STA Athletic Field
- **BC Golf Tournament**
Thursday, October 19, 2023
Tenison Golf Course
- **BC 3v3 Basketball Tournament (3rd – 8th grade)**
Monday, January 15, 2024
in the Upper School Gym

Booster Club Spirit Wear:

Support the Booster Club today and wear your merchandise with pride!

For more information, contact Amy Schroeder at amy@schroedersix.com.



Booster Club provides funding for:

- Membership drive
- Concessions for all home fall and spring games
- Golf tournament
- 3v3 basketball tournament

Membership Information:

Join Booster Club by August 17th and you will be entered in a drawing for a spot in the golf tournament on October 19th.



\$100 – Wildcat Silver Membership

- Booster Club yard sign
- Wildcat athletics sticker
- \$10 in Wildcat bucks to be used at the STA concession stand

\$50 - Wildcat Blue Membership

- Wildcat athletics sticker
- \$5 in Wildcat bucks to be used at the STA concession stand

Join TODAY!

JOIN TODAY →



BOOSTER MERCHANDISE →

STAPA – STA Parents' Association

Volunteer and get involved!

Every Parent is a Member of the Parents' Association

One of the reasons St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School is such a special place is parent involvement. Not only do parents provide support to our school through manpower, they make friendships that last a lifetime. There is a job for everyone, whether you want to volunteer in the classroom, assist with recess, help with special events, or support our teachers with projects that can be completed at your home. SignUpGenius links for these volunteer needs will be emailed from your homeroom parent throughout the year and on the My STA App.



Here are some of STAPA's Opportunities*:

Buddy Families	Class Photographers
Fine Arts Volunteers	Yearbook Photographers
Library Volunteers	Used Uniform Volunteers
Material Moms & Dads	Teacher Appreciation Events
PSIA Volunteers	Lost and Found Volunteers
Recess Volunteers	Carnival and Auction
Science Lab Volunteers	*Must be Safe Environment cleared

Need More Information?

Kourtney Murphy
STAPA President
kourtneyh@sbcglobal.net

Jennifer Emerson
STAPA VP/Volunteer Programs
jennifer_emerson@hotmail.com



Click the Bidpal link
below to purchase
your child's spot

[RISING PARTIES](#) →



Bingo Night

Friday, October 20th • 5:00 PM - 9:00 PM

Carnival Day

Saturday, October 21st • 11:00 AM - 6:00 PM



2024 Auction

Saturday, March 23rd • 6:00 PM

Silent Auction • Live Auction
Big Board • Online Bidding
Live Music

...And so much more

FOSTA – Fathers of STA

It's for the kids!

Fathers of St. Thomas Aquinas (FOSTA) is a volunteer support organization providing boots on the ground for Upper School and Lower School activities and initiatives, and manpower for STA Parents' Association events, all while providing fellowship with other STA dads.

Joining FOSTA provides:

- Monthly opportunities to support our children, our teachers, and our school
- Fun ways to get your service hours for the school year*
- Connections through fellowship and social events to get to know other dads at STA

*Must be Safe Environment cleared - contact Tim Smith (tsmith@lpc.com) if you need more information on getting your badge and get trained.



FOSTA Fridays!

Carpool duty on the last Friday of every month

Need More Information?

Zad Neisman, FOSTA President
zniesman@gmail.com

JOIN FOSTA



New to STA Dads Get Together

August 19, 2023 - Drew Ray's House



Cowboys Sunday Night Football KickOff Party

September 10, 2023 - Membership Drive



FOSTA Christmas Event

December 2023



2024 Meat Fest

Saturday, April 20, 2024 - 12:00 PM – 9:00 PM

Meat Fest is an all-community dads cooking competition.



2023–2024 Key Dates Calendar

AUGUST

- 7-14** Teacher In-Service/No School
- 15** First Day of School/Q1 begins

SEPTEMBER

- 4** Labor Day Holiday
- 29** Early Dismissal/State Fair Day

OCTOBER

- 9-13** Standardized Testing
- 16** Q2 begins
- 20** Teacher In-Service/No School
- 27** Parent/Teacher Conferences/No School

NOVEMBER

- 17** Early Dismissal
- 20-24** Thanksgiving Holiday

DECEMBER

- 19** Early Dismissal
- 20-29** Christmas Holiday

JANUARY

- 1-2** Christmas Holiday
- 3** Teacher In-Service/No School
- 4** Classes Resume
- 15** Martin Luther King Jr. Day/No School
- 16** Q3 begins

FEBRUARY

- 2** Early Dismissal
- 19** Presidents' Day/No School

MARCH

- 8** Early Dismissal
- 11-15** Spring Break
- 25** Q4 begins
- 28** Holy Thursday/Early Dismissal
- 29** Good Friday/No School

APRIL

- 1** Easter Monday/No School

MAY

- 27** Memorial Day/No School
- 31** Last Day of Instruction/Early Dismissal

AUGUST

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

OCTOBER

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

DECEMBER

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

FEBRUARY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29		

APRIL

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

SEPTEMBER

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

NOVEMBER

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

JANUARY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

MARCH

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

MAY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

- Faculty In-Service/No School
- First Day of Instruction/Start of Q1
- Standardized Testing
- School Holiday/No School

- Early Dismissal
- Beginning of Quarter
- Last Day of Instruction/End of Q4/Early Dismissal

In the event of inclement weather or school closing, STA will implement e-learning protocols. For a list of school events, visit www.staschool.org/campus-life/calendar.



Welcome Back!

Dr. Lauren Roberts, Lower School Principal
Mrs. Leslie Reeves, Assistant Principal of Academic Affairs
Dr. Patrick Magee, President
Ms. Jen Watts, Upper School Principal
Mr. Shannon Storey, Dean of Students
Mr. Andrew Gagie, Dean of Students (not pictured)

FOLLOW US Get plugged in
and stay up to date on the latest
STA news & events.

LIKE US ON SOCIAL MEDIA



@staschooldallas
#staschooldallas
#staprez
#staparents

To make an appointment with the president or principals, please contact their administrative assistant. For a complete faculty directory, go to www.staschool.org/about-us/faculty-directory.



ST. THOMAS AQUINAS CATHOLIC SCHOOL

www.staschool.org