



ST. THOMAS AQUINAS
HIGH SCHOOL

STUDENT HANDBOOK
2026-2027

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PURPOSE STATEMENT

With Christ as our model and guided by our Catholic tradition, St. Thomas Aquinas High School develops young men and women into courageous leaders in service to others through faith, academic excellence and the recognition of the value and dignity of each individual.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF ST. THOMAS AQUINAS HIGH SCHOOL

The members of St. Thomas Aquinas High School strive to meet the needs of the individual, the country, and the Catholic church.

They believe each student is an individual who has the right to be challenged and the responsibility to develop as a person. As a Christian educational community, the school creates an atmosphere where development can occur; respect, dignity, compassion, and faith in God can be nurtured; knowledge, self-confidence, self-realization, and true freedom can be achieved; love, communication, understanding, and service to others can be realized. This development is guided by a professional and dedicated faculty and staff which serves, directs, and teaches the student through instruction and example.

St. Thomas Aquinas High School believes that a mature and educated student will become a better person, a more responsive citizen, and a more dedicated Christian. Thus, the ultimate service of the school is the formation of Christian values, attitudes, and ideals witnessed in a commitment to the kingdom of God and the community of men and women.

THE BELIEFS OF ST. THOMAS AQUINAS HIGH SCHOOL

We believe that:

1. Religious understanding is achieved through proclaiming the message of the Gospel and beliefs of the Church.
2. Christian teachings foster an understanding of men and women's responsibilities for one another.
3. The contributions of all cultural groups are valuable.
4. Personal experiences in Christian living through liturgy, prayer, guidance, example, and service provide opportunities for Spiritual growth.
5. Essential academic skills are developed through a sound educational program.
6. Positive critical thought is achieved through qualitative and quantitative analysis.
7. Students benefit by exposure to diverse career opportunities.
8. Students and faculty benefit from the educational use of up-to-date technology.
9. Effective education includes an accumulation of culture and knowledge through the liberal arts and sciences.

10. Involved citizenship requires an appreciation of the forms and processes of the American democratic government and provides opportunities to put them into practice.
11. Physical fitness is achieved through the promotion of habits that build and maintain good health.
12. Instilling a love of learning in each student prepares them for further education and learning.
13. Developing the ability to successfully adapt and grow with the impact of change is an essential skill.
14. Effective education provides ample opportunities for special enrichment.
15. Constructive and creative use of leisure time broadens the students' interests.
16. Successful schools promote professionalism of the faculty and staff.
17. Goals are achieved when the responsibilities of the student, parents, faculty, and staff are clearly defined.
18. A faith-based community service program extends beyond charitable works to social justice efforts, which change the lives of both volunteers and recipients.

GRADUATE PROFILE

St. Thomas Aquinas Graduates:

- Demonstrate an internalized ethical code that frames their life choices and behaviors.
- Are mature responsible citizens.
- Incorporate Christian values in their daily lives.
- Are empowered with an educated, analytical mind capable of critical thinking.
- Possess current technological literacy.
- Exhibit an awareness of cultural diversity and a commitment to social justice.
- Recognize that the world is a global community.
- Recognize and embody a strong sense of community.
- Are prepared to have a full understanding of oneself in deciding on educational and career opportunities.

POLICY STATEMENT

St. Thomas Aquinas High School admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded to or made available to students. This school does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, national and ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, its admission policies, or in any school administered program.

Attending St. Thomas Aquinas High School is a privilege, not a right. Young men and women who attend St. Thomas Aquinas High School must adhere to the philosophy of the school. Any student who violates this philosophy whether by attitude, actions or being continuously troublesome throughout a school year may be denied the privilege of returning to St. Thomas Aquinas the following school year.

Please Note: The Principal is the final recourse in school matters and reserves the right to amend this handbook. Parents will be given prompt notification.

ACCREDITATION

St. Thomas Aquinas High School has met the requirements established by the Cognia Accreditation Commission and Board of Trustees and is fully accredited by the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement.

ADDRESSING DISPUTES WITH THE SCHOOL

St. Thomas Aquinas High School and parents should strive to communicate with one another in an open and collaborative manner. It is the goal of STA to address parent concerns regarding their child's experience in the school. In turn, there may be times St. Thomas Aquinas must raise issues pertaining to a student that are related to disciplinary, educational, or social issues.

Recognizing that students are best served when families and the school can find mutually agreeable solutions to resolve differences or problems, it may sometimes not be possible to find a solution or compromise to accommodate the needs of STA and the student and their family. It is agreed by St. Thomas Aquinas and the family that it is not an effective manner of communication to bring third parties into the conversation as it impedes collaboration and creates an adversarial relationship.

It is the policy of the school and the Diocese of Metuchen that in the event a family engages an attorney, the student cannot remain in St. Thomas Aquinas as it represents a complete and irrevocable breakdown of the relationship between the school, the student, and the family. Accordingly, the student must immediately withdraw from St. Thomas Aquinas. The student is not eligible to be reenrolled at a later time.

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS HIGH SCHOOL CRISIS MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Crisis Management Team has developed a crisis management plan that will be activated in the event of any crisis that would pose an imminent threat to the health and/or safety of the entire school community or any segment of the school community. The crisis team, faculty, staff, and students are trained every school year.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

A crisis is a stressful event that upsets the balance in the STA community. St. Thomas Aquinas High School recognizes that crisis situations have been increasing in our society. A systematic team approach has been developed as a strategy to intervene and act as a preventative measure on behalf of the STA

community. These procedures were developed by the Crisis Management Team (CMT) to deal with crises. Complete and detailed information is given to all students, faculty, and staff by the CMT during training sessions. The purpose of this plan is to provide immediate and orderly response to any emergency. The steps for the four procedures used to protect the STA community are Fire, Evacuation, Lockdown and Shelter in Place.

During any emergency, the use of cell phones or other electronic devices are limited by the authorities. Everyone needs to be alert and open to decisions made at a moment's notice. Silence must be maintained.

Fire Procedures

When the fire alarm sounds, police and fire officials respond immediately. Teachers and students exit the building in an orderly manner and assemble 300 feet from the school. Teachers bring class lists, take attendance, and report any missing students to the Vice Principal through a Crisis Management Team (CMT) member. Once back in classrooms, attendance is taken again and any missing students are reported to the main office. If re-entry is not possible, students and staff will be directed to an evacuation area where bus transportation will be provided.

Evacuation to a Safe Location

In the event of a bomb threat or similar emergency, an alarm or announcement will signal evacuation. Teachers bring class lists, and students leave the building calmly to one of two designated safe locations announced at the time, with John Adams Middle School as the primary site. Teachers take attendance and report missing students through a CMT member. Classes held outside the building will be directed to a safe location. Parents may pick up students only after notifying a CMT member. If the school is re-entered, attendance is retaken and missing students reported.

Lockdown

A lockdown is called if there is an intruder in the building. Students and teachers remain in classrooms, windows are closed, and everyone assembles away from doors and windows. Students in hallways, stairwells, or other locations remain in place until directed by police, while those in common areas such as the cafeteria or library take shelter under tables or desks. Outdoor classes are directed to a safe location by a CMT member. Doors remain locked until police issue an "all clear" or order an evacuation.

Shelter in Place

If the school or township declares a shelter-in-place, no one may leave the building. Students and staff report to assigned containment areas or may be asked to stay in the classroom until the all-clear is given. Teachers shut down electrical equipment, close doors and windows, and take attendance. Students may not go to lockers. Provisions for food, water, and emergency supplies are available. Everyone must remain alert and prepared to follow directions. Once the alert ends, students will be retained or dismissed as directed by authorities.

Emergency Drills and Safety Procedures

St. Thomas Aquinas High School complies with state mandates requiring one fire drill and one additional emergency drill (such as evacuation, lockdown, shelter-in-place, tornado, or hurricane) each month. Additional safety measures include controlled building entry and mandatory ID badges for all staff, students, and visitors.

DISCIPLINE AT ST. THOMAS AQUINAS HIGH SCHOOL

No person can exist alone; an individual is always a member of a group, whether universal or local, permanent or temporary. Individuals in each group have an influence upon one another and upon the whole group. For the individual and the whole group to function properly, there must be order based on rules. This principle applies to all group associations from birth to death. At this moment in life, the school is a very important group association for a student. The rules of St. Thomas Aquinas High School are designed to maintain order in the school so that each student and the entire student body can function properly.

The discipline system will undergo constant evaluation. Our goal is to make the student aware that a breach of discipline affects the individual and the total group in some way. To counteract this negative effect, we hope to develop positive sanctions which will rectify the harm done to the individual or to the group. Listed below is an outline of the basic rules, regulations, and procedures of discipline at St. Thomas Aquinas High School.

Actions which violate the law, threaten or cause harm to any person, disrupt or impede the welfare and progress of the school community or bring discredit to the school will not be tolerated. Such actions or other severe violations of school rules may result in immediate expulsion. Any student charged with a felony is removed from the school community until the charge is dismissed or the student is acquitted of the charge.

The vice principal is responsible for maintaining the good order of the school, thereby protecting the student's right to learn, the teacher's right to instruct, and the safety and security of all. The vice principal's function is not only to enforce the rules of the school, but to refer students with problems to school counselors or student assistance counselor.

CATHOLIC VIRTUES

Grounded in the profound teachings of our patron saint, St. Thomas Aquinas, we inspire our students to be faith-filled, academically motivated, respectful, compassionate, and actively engaged in the school community. St. Thomas Aquinas teaches us, "The things that we love tell us what we are." Guided by this wisdom, we strive to cultivate a love for faith and learning in every student.

We demonstrate our faith through how we live, taking responsibility for both our deeds and actions. As a Catholic school in partnership with our families, our mission extends beyond managing behavior; we

seek to shape the heart of every student. Reflecting the teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas, we believe that “To love is to will the good of the other,” and this principle is at the core of our discipline plan.

Our school-wide discipline plan includes clear guidelines for appropriate behavior and embodying Catholic values. We are dedicated to providing a high-quality Catholic education in an environment conducive to both learning and teaching. Our behavior expectations are based on a cooperative approach to discipline, emphasizing the building of self-esteem through encouragement and the implementation of strategies that foster positive classroom environments.

In the spirit of St. Thomas Aquinas, we encourage our students to govern their actions with integrity and compassion. This approach not only nurtures personal growth but also strengthens our entire school community, ensuring that every student flourishes both academically and spiritually.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES (SER)

Discipline is a process whose purpose is to strengthen religious and social values; to mold concrete personality traits; to correct not only negative behavioral patterns, but also negative actions. This purpose is implemented through a program of teaching, a plan of supervisory control, a system of essential rules, and when necessary, just and constructive consequences.

Discipline, with parental support as its core, is the responsibility of every administrator, every teacher, and every student in the school. Cooperative effort is the prime factor in achieving any degree of success. Consequently, all must try to understand one another, and all must work together.

Discipline will be administered in a fair and consistent manner. When school policies are enforced, we are responding to situations in a manner that is best for both the entire school community and the individual student. In cases of severe disciplinary action, parents and students will be provided notice of pending actions and be given an opportunity to meet with appropriate school personnel to discuss the matter.

Our discipline plan is designed to accomplish the following:

- Set the expectation that ALL students will be held accountable for ALL of their behavior ALL of the time.
- Create safe, orderly and positive classrooms and school environments.
- Show students how to monitor their behavior and evaluate their choices.
- Achieve consistency in behavioral standards and expectations throughout the school.

We have four important standards for our school:

1. Students will be Respectful.
2. Students will be Responsible.
3. Students will be Prepared.
4. Students will be Safe.

DEMERIT NOTICES (POINTS)

If a student commits an infraction, he/she will be informed about the infraction and given a demerit notice. Students are encouraged to discuss the matter with the person issuing the demerit points and, if necessary, the Vice Principal. Although discussion is always encouraged for clarification, it should be noted that discussions will not necessarily remove demerit points.

Demerit points will be subtracted from the students' "SER- Virtues (Student Expectations and Responsibility/Cardinal Virtues)" grade which begins as a 100 and is represented as a class on the student's academic record. Parents will be able to access these notices through the use of PowerSchool.

SER Grades are viewed as a quarterly grade in PowerSchool. This grade is updated daily and can be found under the student's homeroom grade.

Students must use the opportunity to learn from the consequences of their actions so as to not commit similar infractions in the future. Demerit points and the demerit notices are managed by the Vice Principal.

SER DEMERIT POINT SCALE

If a student commits infractions, a Demerit Notice will be filled out with a point reduction according to the following scale:

- **35 Point Infractions (Administrative Use):** Include but are not limited to Truancy from school, Alcohol/Tobacco (smoking, vaping, and chewing)/Drugs, Harassment/Intimidation/Bullying/Hazing, Fighting, Stealing/Unauthorized entry into private property, Leaving School Without Permission, Willful destruction of school property.
Please Note: Very often, 35-point infractions have additional consequences above and beyond the failure of "SER" for one quarter. This may include out of school suspension, expulsion, and/or the involvement of law enforcement.
- **15 Point Infractions + Saturday Detention:** Include but are not limited to Dishonesty/Forgery/Deceit/Academic Integrity Violation, Cutting Class, Misconduct on School Transportation, Disrespect/ Defiance, and Other (at teacher or administrator discretion)
- **10 Point Infractions:** Unacceptable language, Cell Phone/ Electronic Device Violations, Abuse of school property, Failure to report to detention, Disobedience, Disruption in class, cafeteria, assembly, Mass, halls, etc.
- **5 Point Infractions:** Uniform/Lanyard Violations, Unexcused lateness to class, or school, Procedure Violation/ Out of Bounds, Parking violation, Littering, Eating/Drinking outside of the Cafeteria, etc.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITY FAILURE (CONDUCT)

All students will begin each quarter with a grade of 100 in SER. If the student's SER grade for any quarter falls below a 65 their parent/guardian will be notified. Students will be immediately suspended from all

school activities (including being a spectator and service to school) for the remainder of that marking period. A student fails SER when the grade falls below 65.

Additional Consequences Include:

- **Failure for One Quarter:** 14-day suspension from all school activities (including being a spectator). Additional measures (i.e. service to the school) may be considered.
- **Failure for Two Quarters:** 21-day suspension from all school activities (including being a spectator) from the day after a parent/guardian is notified and a Parent/Guardian conference will be required within one calendar week. Participation in proms and special school events is at serious risk. In the case of seniors, participation in senior events (i.e. prom, Florida trip, etc.) and graduation are at risk, all without reimbursement of any payments towards said events. Additional measures (i.e. service to the school) may be considered.
- **Failure for Three + Quarters:** If a student should fail SER for three quarters he/she will be suspended from all school activities for the remainder of the school year. Participation in proms and special school events is revoked. In the case of seniors, participation in senior events (i.e. prom, Florida trip, etc.) will also be revoked without reimbursement of any payments towards said events. **The student will also be subject to review by the Discipline Committee in regards to their enrollment status.**

SUSPENSION AND POSSIBLE EXPULSION

Attending St. Thomas Aquinas High School is a privilege, not a right. As a school community we are committed to seeing our young people thrive and leave us prepared to take on the world. While general disciplinary concerns are handled with a plan of forgiveness and repentance, there are certain offenses that may force St. Thomas Aquinas High School to remove a student for the safety and security of all our community members. When expulsion is necessary, the decision made by the Administration is final. The following offenses could lead to immediate expulsion from St. Thomas Aquinas High School and possible involvement from law enforcement:

- **WEAPONS/EXPLOSIVES:** The possession and use of weapons, slingshots, chains, explosives, and/or any other items which have the potential to inflict bodily harm to oneself or others are not permitted. A student who brings a weapon to school will be suspended immediately during the law enforcement investigation of the incident and expelled from St. Thomas Aquinas High School if convicted.
- **HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION, BULLYING (HIB), HAZING:** Harassment, intimidation, bullying or hazing of students will not be tolerated. Harassment, intimidation, bullying, and hazing take many forms, including, but not limited to, physical abuse/assault, verbal abuse, sexual innuendo/abuse and inappropriate use of electronics including the internet, cell phones and social media. Following administrative review, students involved in a harassment, intimidation, bullying, or hazing incident will be an automatic SER failure for the quarter. Consequences, in addition to a

failure in SER, may include suspension, and/or expulsion from school. See Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying Policy.

- **FIGHTING:** Fighting of any kind between students will not be tolerated, as it is contrary to the mission and philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas. Students involved in a fighting incident will be **suspended from school for a minimum of three full school days** and will not be able to return to school until a parent meeting is scheduled. Following Administrative review, students involved in a fighting incident may receive 35 points. Consequences, in addition to a failure in SER, may include suspension, and/or expulsion from school.
- **FALSE BOMB THREAT:** Making a false bomb threat is a violation of federal law and diocesan policy. A student who makes a false bomb threat will be suspended during the investigation of the incident and expelled from St. Thomas Aquinas High School if convicted.
- **THEFT/UNAUTHORIZED ENTRY INTO PRIVATE PROPERTY:** Students must respect the property of others. Stealing and/or unauthorized entry into a teacher's or student's property will not be tolerated and will subject the student to a 35-point deduction in SER. Consequences, in addition to a failure in SER, may include suspension and/or expulsion from school.
- **USE OF DRUGS/STEROIDS/ALCOHOL/TOBACCO/VAPORIZER PRODUCTS:** St. Thomas Aquinas High School recognizes that the possession and misuse of drugs, tobacco, steroids, electronic cigarettes, vaporizer products, and alcohol has a deleterious effect on students and staff and jeopardizes the welfare of the entire school community. The school is committed to the prevention of drug, tobacco, steroid, vaping, and alcohol abuse through educational means and other appropriate programs and services. **St. Thomas Aquinas will take necessary and firm action to protect the school community from harm and from exposure to the negative aspects of drug, tobacco, steroid, vaping, and alcohol use/abuse.** See Substance Abuse Policy and Procedures.

Parents and students are expected to read and support these policies. Additionally, any student who attends school or a school sponsored event or activity and is suspected of being under the influence of alcohol or a controlled substance will be dealt with in accordance with the school's policies. Smoking or the use of tobacco and/or drugs in the school or in the drug free school zone is illegal and may result in law enforcement involvement. Consequences, in addition to a failure in SER, may include suspension and/or expulsion from school.

TRUANCY

Truancy is any unauthorized absence from school, with or without parental permission. A student who is truant will not be readmitted to the school unless his/her parents accompany him/her. Work must be made up, but no credit will be given. The student will receive 35 points and a failure in SER. Repeated truancy may be cause for suspension or expulsion.

OTHER STUDENT CONCERNS

NON-SANCTIONED EVENTS INVOLVING STA STUDENTS

Students engaged in conduct that is contrary to the mission and philosophy of the school may be subject to disciplinary action regardless of whether the SER occurred at a school-sponsored function.

CUTTING CLASS AND LEAVING SCHOOL WITHOUT PERMISSION

Students are required to attend all classes on their roster and are not permitted to leave the premises or go to their cars during the school day without permission from the Main Office or administration. Once students report to St. Thomas Aquinas by car, bus or walking, they must stay at the school. The penalty for cutting a class or leaving school without permission is a 35-point deduction in SER and detention.

OUT OF BOUNDS

Reasons for a student being considered Out of Bounds include, but are not limited to, being in places that they are normally restricted from entering, such as private offices, school elevator, storage rooms, faculty lounges and/or restrooms. Students are not permitted in the St. Thomas Aquinas theater, gymnasium, STEM Lab, Commons, cafeteria (during classroom hours), and/or classrooms without adult supervision. During class periods students should not be in the hallways without a pass from a teacher.

HALLWAY REGULATIONS

Hallways are places of quiet throughout the school day. During all prayers and the Pledge of Allegiance there is to be no movement in the hallways. All students are to be in their classrooms when the late bell rings. Passing time is to get to your next period class. Students should use the most direct route to their next class. Students may use cell phones in the hallways, but they must abide by the computer use policy agreement.

USE AND CARE OF FACILITIES

The school and its facilities are intended for the use of students of St. Thomas Aquinas High School. Students are expected to take pride in the care and cleanliness of the entire school building, but especially their own homerooms and classrooms. Cooperation in this area will help immensely in keeping the cost of maintenance as low as possible.

- **Malicious Damage:** A student who is responsible for any willful damage to the school or to the property of another person will be dealt with in an appropriate manner.
- **Restroom Damage:** Students caught damaging restroom equipment/fixtures receive demerit points and will be responsible for the cost of damage done to the restroom.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

The use of personal electronic devices (cell phones, headphones, earbuds, electronic readers, digital music devices, tablets, smartwatch, video equipment, cameras, smart glasses, etc.) is permitted only before and after school. During the school day, students may use their individual cell phone in the

cafeteria and in the hallways. **Once the bell rings to start the day, students MAY NOT use individual headphones/earbuds. Unauthorized use of electronic devices is prohibited in the classrooms and during class periods.** This is strictly enforced. Students are only allowed to use school issued chromebooks during the school day. Classroom teachers are directed and expected to have cell phones collected and placed in the appropriate lockbox to maintain this prohibition. All other electronic devices should be stowed away in students' bags. See Ethical Use of Technology Policy.

- **Inappropriate Use:** If a student is found using a cell phone/smartwatch or personal electronic device at an inappropriate time, the student will be in violation of St. Thomas Aquinas High School's Electronic Use Policy.
- **Photos/Videos:** If a student is found taking or sharing photographs or videos of other students or staff members without consent, the student will be in violation of St. Thomas Aquinas High School's Mutual Respect Policy (See Mutual Respect Policy, Addendum A) AND they will receive a Demerit Notice.
- **Headphones/Earbuds:** Headphones/Earbuds may NOT be used after the bell rings in the morning. The classroom teacher may permit headphone use when it is directly related to classroom instruction. Headphones/Earbuds are a school security concern. Students must be able to hear directions and public address announcements. Headphones/Earbuds that are used inappropriately during the day will be considered an "electronic device violation" and will follow the consequences listed for "inappropriate use."

CELL PHONE POLICY

At St. Thomas Aquinas High School, we recognize that digital tools bring severe temptations and distractions that pull students away from what truly matters. In alignment with our commitment to fostering wisdom, virtue, and academic excellence, this policy enforces a focused environment. By removing personal electronics during instructional time, we encourage balance, mindfulness, and our core community values.

Device Guidelines: Designated Drop Zones - Every classroom is equipped with a secure, drop-in lockbox placed directly by the teacher's desk.

- **The Rule:** Students must deposit all personal mobile devices into the classroom lockbox immediately upon entering the room.
- **Duration:** Devices must remain in the lockbox during "Instructional Time" (the entire instructional period).
- **Zero Hallway or Bathroom Use:** Students are strictly prohibited from accessing or using personal devices while out on a hall pass, inside restrooms, or within locker rooms.
- **Scope:** This policy covers smartphones, smartwatches, smart glasses, tablets, and all wireless headphones/earpieces. Students have access only to school-provided Chromebooks for learning.

Student and Teacher Responsibilities

Student Expectations

1. Power off or silence all devices before entering the classroom.

2. Place the device securely inside the designated slot of the lockbox.
3. Do not attempt to access or retrieve the device until the final exit bell rings.

Teacher Expectations

1. Monitor the lockbox drop zone during classroom entry.
2. Lock the storage box precisely when the tardy bell rings.
3. Safely unlock the box at the conclusion of the instructional period.
4. Take the lockbox with you during both practice and live security drills.

Required Steps for a Medical Device Exception

St. Thomas Aquinas High School accommodates students who require personal mobile devices for verified medical needs, such as continuous glucose monitors (CGM) or heart rate trackers.

1. **Obtain a Doctor's Note:** You must secure a formal note of medical necessity from your student's licensed healthcare provider. The note must explicitly state the medical condition and name specific smart devices (and any associated applications) required during the school hours.
2. **Submit to the School Nurse and Counseling:** Deliver the doctor's note directly to the school nurse and the counseling department.
3. **Classroom Protocol:** Approved students will receive a "Medical Device Pass" and noted in a medical accommodation plan. They do not place their phone in the drop box.
4. **Strict Restrictive Use:** The phone must remain face down on the student's desk or kept in their pocket on silent mode. It may only be accessed to view vital health metrics.
5. **Violation of Waiver:** Any unauthorized use of a medically exempted device (e.g., texting, social media, taking photos), the privilege is subject to administrative review. The student will then need to use an alternative dedicated medical reader instead of a smartphone.

Consequences for Violations

Using or keeping a device without authorization violates academic integrity and school rules.

Non-compliance will result in immediate disciplinary action:

- **First Offense:** The device is confiscated by staff, documented, and sent to the main office where it is securely held. The student can pick it up at the end of the school day.
- **Second Offense:** The device is confiscated and held securely in the main office. A parent or guardian is notified and must physically come to the school to retrieve the phone and the student is given an am detention.
- **Third Offense & Beyond:** Persistent refusal to comply is treated as a behavioral infraction (insubordination). This results in a mandatory parent-administrator conference and a Saturday detention. Additionally, the student will have to drop off the phone each morning in the main office for the rest of the quarter.

Strict Parent and Emergency Communication Protocols

To maintain the safety and integrity of the school day, direct contact with student devices is prohibited during class.

Urgent Inbound Messages: If a parent or guardian needs to urgently contact their high school student during the active school day, they must call the school's main office. Staff will immediately relay the message or locate the student. Students may not use their personal phones to call or text parents during school hours.

School-Wide Emergencies: In a crisis or lockdown event, classroom teachers retain master keys to the lockboxes. They will distribute devices only when explicitly authorized by emergency personnel or school administration.

VALUABLES

Students should not bring valuables to school. **Purses, bags and/or backpacks should never be left unattended.** When not in use, they must be **locked in a locker.** During Phys. Ed. class, personal items should be locked in a locker. **St. Thomas Aquinas will not assume responsibility for money or valuables left in lockers (locked or not) or left unattended.**

DETENTIONS AND SATURDAY DETENTIONS

In addition to the demerit point system, St. Thomas Aquinas High School may employ the right to detain students during or outside regular school hours as the result of policy violations. Additionally, the Vice Principal may assign a student to Saturday detention as a result of violation. In all cases, the Vice Principal shall use their discretion in deciding appropriate consequences in response to student behavior.

ADMINISTRATIVE DETENTION

Administrative Detentions exist in two forms:

1. Before school detention (from 7:15 a.m. to 7:50 a.m.)
2. Saturday Detention (from 8 to 11 a.m.)

Detention is served in conjunction with violations of school expectations/responsibilities and/or a failure of SER.

- When an SER Grade drops below 90 - Morning Detention
- When an SER Grade drops below 80 - Saturday Detention
- When an SER Grade drops below 70 - In School Suspension
- When an SER Grade drops below 65 - One day out of school Suspension and additional consequences (see Demerit notice points-additional consequences)

DETENTION REGULATIONS

Students assigned to morning detention must arrive on time, and in full uniform. Students assigned to Saturday detention must arrive on time, dressed according to St. Thomas Aquinas's Dress Down Code regulations. They are expected to remain the entire time they have been assigned. Cell phones will be

collected by the proctor and returned at the end of the assigned time. All other electronic devices should be stowed away in students' bags. Students are expected to remain quiet and have enough work with them to last the entire time they have been assigned. All school policies are in effect. **Work, sports, and extracurricular activities are not acceptable reasons for missing a detention. If a student uses the bus as transportation to arrive at school, 24 hours will be given for the student to make appropriate adjustments to attend detention.**

SUSPENSION AND IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION

Suspension from school is the final decision made by Administration due to repeated events and should put the student on notice that their continuation as a student at St. Thomas Aquinas High School is in serious jeopardy. Out of school suspension or In-school suspension are imposed for major violations, accumulated points for the same offense(s), and/or repeated failures in SER. The length of suspension from school is at the discretion of the administration and is a minimum of one full school day during which time the student is the responsibility of a parent or guardian. **Any student on suspension (in-school or out-of-school) may not participate in any extracurricular activities, athletic practices or games, be in attendance at any school function, or be permitted on school grounds (if serving out of school suspension) during the length of the suspension. Students who have been suspended are responsible to complete class work and assignments given during the suspension period.** Students and parents may request work, but teachers are only expected to direct students to materials already given through Canvas. If a student misses an assessment (quiz, test, project), the teacher is to mark the grade as missing and put a "0" in its place in PowerSchool and it is the responsibility of the student to work with the teacher to make up the assessment. The school lateness policy is still in effect. Specific rules regarding the suspension (i.e. duration) will be determined by the Administration. Repeated suspensions will result in expulsion from St. Thomas Aquinas High School.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Learning is a personal process. Students are encouraged to grow and develop as individuals. A student should be evaluated on his or her own ability. In accordance with the teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas, students are expected to uphold the principles of integrity and honor to God, oneself, and the institution. There are three types of unacceptable behavior or actions that violate academic integrity: cheating, plagiarism, and academic misconduct. All violations are subject to appropriate consequences designed to eliminate any future temptation in this regard.

Cheating is defined as receiving information from a student, giving information to a student, or using an unauthorized source during an academic assignment. More specifically, it involves but is not limited to:

4. Allowing someone the use of your work, sharing of work, or attempting to share work without permission.
5. Using unauthorized test aids, including but not limited to written material and technical devices during a test or exam.

6. Copying another's ideas or work, including homework, workbook assignments, projects, labs and presenting it as your own.
7. Before, during or after a test or exam supplying or attempting to communicate unauthorized information to another student about a test or exam.
8. Submission of the same work for credit in two courses without obtaining prior permission of the teacher.

Plagiarism is a form of theft and is defined as using another person's words or ideas without proper acknowledgement. Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to, intentional or unintentional use of the following without citing the source (including the Internet):

5. A phrase, written or musical
6. A graphic element or design
7. Artistic material
8. Specific language
9. An idea
10. Facts and data
11. Paraphrasing of another's words or ideas
12. The use of AI to write an assignment in place of a student's own words also falls into this category. Refer to the AI Usage Policy.

Academic Misconduct includes the alteration of grades and involvement in the acquisition or distribution of unadministered tests and the deliberate use of invented information. Examples of such misconduct include, but are not limited to:

1. Theft of answer keys, manuals, and other materials for academic advantage.
2. Changing or falsifying documents, including but not limited to progress reports, electronic grade books, report cards, graded assignments, and official transcripts.
3. Forging another person's signature or falsifying information for any purpose.
4. Fabricating information of any kind.

CHEATING/PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT CONSEQUENCES

Follow the SER Demerit system.

GENERAL REGULATIONS FOR STUDENT ATTENDANCE

ATTENDANCE

ATTENDANCE DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

School attendance is a basic responsibility of the student and his/her parent/guardian(s). While absences are excused and unexcused for verification purposes, it does not exempt the student from academic and/or behavioral consequences. Students are required to be in school every day when school is in session.

Regular attendance is fundamental to the academic achievement of students in high school. St Thomas Aquinas High School places a high value on student attendance and requires high standards for its students. Attendance is required of all students enrolled during high school days and hours. It is expected that each student will be in full attendance in all classes and reports to all classes on time. Absences are accumulated on a block-by-block basis. An absence refers to a student not being present in school for a full block or missing 30 minutes or more the block. Absences from class will be counted toward a specific limit based on the length of the course. An appeal process is in place for extenuating circumstances.

ARRIVAL AT SCHOOL

The school doors will open at 7:15 am for students to go to the cafeteria. The official start of each school day is 7:55 AM. All students are required to be in their assigned homeroom for attendance, other school-related matters, and instruction. Any student arriving after 7:55 AM must report to the main office. Failure to do so will result in appropriate disciplinary action. Students arriving late to school will receive a 5 point demerit.

ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

All student absences are recorded as either **UNEXCUSED** or **EXCUSED**. **ALL** absences, except those that are **excused** as set forth below, are classified as “**unexcused**” absences from class. These unexcused absences are applied towards the maximum number of unexcused absences that a student may have for a course.

A student may not exceed a total of **18 unexcused** absences for the school year.

Excused Absences (Absences that do NOT count towards the 18) Absences that are exempt (excused) based on the Attendance Policy include the following:

1. Suspension from school.
2. Field Trips (Out of school or in-house field trips) as approved by the administration.

3. Post-Secondary School Visits – students are allowed three (3) days in the eleventh (11th) grade and three (3) days in the twelfth (12th) grade for post-secondary school visits. Written verification from the institution is required. The verification must include the dates of visits and must be signed by the appropriate school officials.
4. Personal Observance of Recognized Religious Holiday(s) as published by the New Jersey Department of Education.
5. Death in the immediate family which includes a parent or guardian, sibling, grandparent, or other family members can be discussed with the administration.
6. Home Instruction.
7. Administrative excuse with required documentation, which includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - a. Chronic illness with written verification from a physician, which should be registered in the nurse's office (with a copy to the attendance office) by September 15th of the academic year or within three weeks of the diagnosis. If verification of a chronic illness is not provided within the time limits set forth above, it must be provided promptly after the first absence caused by the chronic illness.
 - b. Court appearance with written documentation from the court.
 - c. Driver's test with appointment card presented to the administration.
 - d. Required college orientation. Written verification from the institution is required. The verification must include the dates of visits and must be signed by the appropriate school officials.
- E. Absences due to illness with a doctor's note.

ABSENCE REPORTING PROCEDURES

1. If a student is absent from school, the parent or guardian is expected to call or email our attendance office (Ext. 614 or attendance@stahs.net). If the student's absence is likely to be prolonged, the school's nurse should be notified of this fact.
2. The school will require verification from a medical physician after all absences due to illness. **Notes must be received on the day the student returns to school.** The note must contain the reason for the absence, the date(s) of absence, and the signature of the medical

physician.

3. The student is responsible for submitting the note of verification to the attendance office on the day that he/she returns to school. All notes will be examined by the appropriate administrator during an attendance appeal if necessary.

ABSENCES - IMPORTANT INFORMATION

1. **Students must be present at least 4 hours of instructional time (not including lunch) to participate in co-curricular activities, including athletics and evening events, on that day. Students must be present in school by 9:30 a.m.**
2. Students are responsible for consulting with their teachers to make-up the work missed during an absence.

EARLY RELEASE FROM CLASS

A student on crutches or with any injury, which impedes his/her ability to move with the general student population, will have access to the elevator and/or early release from each class. The school nurse is responsible for approving these criteria.

ATTENDANCE APPEAL PROCEDURE

A written petition must be presented to the principal by the student or parent/guardian no later than five school days after receipt of notification of 18 absences. After receipt of the written petition parent/guardian will be notified to schedule an appeal meeting with the attendance committee.

UNIFORM DRESS CODE

Dressing uniformly develops a sense of community and pride, encourages school spirit and helps set Catholic school students apart from other schools. It also helps us honor the Christian teaching that all people are the same in the eyes of God.

Students are expected to be in full dress-code compliance upon entrance to the school building each day. The administration has the sole authority to determine when the dress code does not meet the school's expectations. In these instances, administrators may request that the parent/guardian bring appropriate

clothing to the school so that the student may change, or the student may be sent home with the parent/guardian to change into appropriate attire. The student will remain out of class until he/she is in conformity to the code and will be issued an absence for any missed class.

STANDARD UNIFORM POLICY: ALL STUDENTS

- **ID's:** All students are to wear their school issued ID as part of the uniform dress code. This also applies to Dress Down Days. The ID must be displayed on the school issued lanyard and worn around the neck at all times. Any pins or other ornamentation should be school or academic in nature and should not be offensive or political in nature. Students will be issued 5 demerit points for every temporary ID issued by the main office. On the 3rd temporary ID, a detention will be issued to the student.

- **Shoes:**

Permitted:

- Closed-toe, closed-heel shoes or sneakers only.
- The back of the shoe or sneaker must fully cover the heel and extend to the ankle.
- Shoes must be solid black, brown, or tan, with the sole matching the color of the shoe.
- All-white or All-black sneakers are permitted.

Not Permitted:

- Sneakers, other than all white or all black
- Crocs
- Tasman UGGs/ UGGs (Boots or moccasin)
- Yeezys
- Hey Dudes
- Open-toe shoes
- Backless or clog-style shoes
- Sandals
- Flip-flops
- Boots of any kind
- Slippers
- **Earrings/Piercings:** Appropriate earrings, maximum 2 per ear/ stud or hoop (not to exceed ½ inch in diameter) may be worn in school. Other facial piercings, including but not limited to nose piercings, gages or extreme facial ornamentation is not permitted. If a new piercing is deemed inappropriate by the school administration, the student will be asked to remove it before returning to school, regardless of healing time.
- **Hairstyle:** Hairstyles are expected to be neat and clean. Hair must be a natural color.

- **Polo Shirts:** All polo shirts must be fully tucked in at all times during the school day, unless otherwise designated by the administration for a specific dress-down event.
- **Belts:** All students wearing pants are required to wear a solid black or brown belt. Belts must be worn properly through all belt loops and secured at the waist.
- **Skirt Length:** Uniform skirts and dress-down skirts, dresses, and skorts must be no shorter than fingertip length when the student is standing upright with arms fully extended at their sides. Skirts that do not meet this requirement are not permitted.

Out of respect and integrity for the uniform of STAHS, we ask that the uniform not be altered in any way with the exception of alterations done for proper fitting.

WOMEN'S UNIFORM

- **Summer Uniform (months of September, October, May and June) for the Class of 2030 and 2029:** Tan khaki pants (*Flynn O'Hara — no skinny pants, leggings, or jeans*) with belt or khaki pleat skort (*sold via Flynn O'Hara.*)
- **Summer Uniform (months of September, October, May and June) for the Class of 2028 and 2027:** Tan khaki pants (*Flynn O'Hara — no skinny pants, leggings, or jeans*) with belt , khaki pleat skort (*Flynn O'Hara,*) 2 Pleat Skort (*Flynn O'Hara,*) Wrap-Around Kilt (*Flynn O'Hara.*)
- **Winter Uniform (months of November through April) Tan khaki pants** (*sold via Flynn O'Hara — no skinny pants, leggings, or jeans*) with belt, 2 Pleat Skort (*Flynn O'Hara,*) Wrap-Around Kilt (*Flynn O'Hara.*)
- **Red Uniform polo** (*Class of 2030 required, Flynn O'Hara*) optional for ALL CLASSES.
- **Red/ Black Nike STA polo** (*Class of 2029, 2028 and 2027, Bookstore*)
- **Socks** must come above the ankle and must be either white or black.
- **Black opaque tights** (*Flynn O'Hara*) must be worn with all skirts November 1st - May 1st. No ribbing, no tears and no holes. No leggings. Must be worn without socks.
- **Shoes** of a solid color (see above)
- **Red Uniform quarter-zip.** (*Class of 2030 required, Flynn O'Hara*) optional for ALL CLASSES.)
- **Red/ Black Nike quarter-zip** (*Class of 2029, 2028 and 2027, Bookstore*)

MEN'S UNIFORM

3. **Tan khaki pants** (*Flynn O'Hara — no skinny pants, leggings, or jeans*) with belt
4. **Red Uniform polo** (*Class of 2030 required, Flynn O'Hara*) optional for ALL CLASSES.
5. **Red/ Black Nike STA polo** (*Class of 2029, 2028 and 2027, Bookstore*)
6. **Socks** must come above the ankle and must be either white or black.

7. **Red Uniform quarter-zip.** (*Class of 2030 required, Flynn O'Hara optional for ALL CLASSES.*)

8. **Red/ Black Nike quarter-zip** (*Class of 2029, 2028 and 2027, Bookstore*)

NOT ALLOWED ANY TIME:

- Thermals or T-shirts with any design or lettering
- Skorts/Kilts rolled at the waistband
- Shorts, sweatpants or pants worn below the hips
- Sandals, clogs, slippers or shoes without backs, heels or toes including Uggs or Crocs
- Sunglasses worn or carried
- Hats
- Contact lenses that are not a solid, natural color

DRESS DOWN DAY POLICY:

On Dress Down Days, students should keep in mind that they are still required to be appropriately dressed for the school environment and as representatives of STAHS. Any student wearing inappropriate attire will be required to call home to have their parent/guardian bring clothes that conform to the code. The student will remain out of class until he/she is in conformity to the code and will be issued an absence for any missed classes.

Spirit Days/ Dress Down Attire: All students must wear ankle length pants. Shirts or blouses must have sleeves.

Permitted:

- St. Thomas Aquinas spirit wear (t-shirts, sweatshirts, quarter-zips, hoodies, and jerseys)
- Jeans in good condition (no rips, tears, fraying, holes, or patches)
- Athletic pants or joggers that are solid-colored grey, black or red and in good condition
- Sneakers or other closed-toe shoes
- STA authorized pajama style pants, sold in the STA Bookstore

The following items are NOT permitted:

- Students must be in above permitted attire for school spirit days.
- Shorts, non-uniform skirts, or non-STA branded pajama-style pants (including flannel pajama pants) are not permitted.
- No ripped, distressed or patched jeans.
- No leggings.
- No footwear that is considered unsafe, including but not limited to: open back shoes, flip flops and slippers.
- No revealing clothing, including but not limited to: midriff showing shirts, tank tops, strapless shirts, clothing which reveals undergarments.

- No clothing which promotes/endorse/advertises alcohol, drugs, tobacco products, gang affiliation, or political stances.
- No clothing which displays biased, prejudicial, and/or profane language
- No hats, inappropriate headbands, do-rags, bandanas, sunglasses.
- No ripped or fishnet stockings.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION UNIFORMS

Physical Education uniforms are worn by students and may be purchased through the school store. Sneakers and athletic socks must be worn as part of the uniform.

CRUTCHES AND/OR CASTS

A physician's note is required to allow students to use the stairs while on crutches. This note must be given to the school nurse upon return to school and prior to attending any classes. Students will then be given permission to use the stairs, to have an escort and to have extra time between classes. Students who have the proper permission from the school nurse are permitted to wear school gym sweats with school shirts and non-regulation shoes during the period of disability; all other uniform regulations are in effect.

ETHICAL USE OF TECHNOLOGY POLICY

GENERAL STATEMENT

St. Thomas Aquinas High School will provide computer equipment, services and internet access for its students and staff. The sole purpose of providing these resources is to enhance teaching and learning at St. Thomas Aquinas High School. Access to the internet will allow students and staff to explore databases, libraries, internet sites and academic career and learning management services. Thus, St. Thomas Aquinas High School as an educational institution will have the resources to exchange information with other individuals and institutions throughout the world.

St. Thomas Aquinas High School supports and encourages pupil and staff access to the worldwide web and its boundless reservoir of information and resources. Since some sectors of the Web are considered inappropriate for student consumption, the administration reserves the right to limit the use of technology for educational purposes only. To ensure legitimate application, the system supervisors will monitor computer and internet activity.

Access to technology resources will not be available as a carte blanche right. Students and staff must accept the use of these resources as a privilege. The user is expected to possess both the requisite skills necessary to utilize these resources properly as well as the judgement to use them appropriately.

The administration has the right to monitor and audit all communication on the network.

Any user of our technology resources agrees to abide by the St. Thomas Aquinas Technology Policy and in addition agrees to indemnify St. Thomas Aquinas High School for any losses, costs, or damages, including attorney's fees, incurred by St. Thomas Aquinas High School relating to or arising out of any breach of this section.

Use of the technology resources will be permitted for all students, teachers, and staff members with enabled user accounts. By logging onto the St. Thomas Aquinas network, all users agree to the St. Thomas Aquinas Technology Policy. Any user who does not consent to STA's Technology Policy is prohibited from using STA's technology resources.

EQUIPMENT

The user will recognize the value of the hardware, software, and all computer-related materials and will not misuse or abuse any of these items.

No user will alter, install, modify, upgrade, repair or remove any school hardware, including but not limited to computers, interface cards, monitors, printers, scanners, modems, switches, routers, wiring or cabling, mouse, or other accessories.

Users who damage any hardware or software will be responsible for replacing the damaged articles at their own expense.

Software

Commercial software is copyrighted; each user must abide by the licensing agreement published with the software.

The user will not violate any copyright laws regarding print, electronic or visual information.

The user will not read, change, create, delete, copy, or modify any parts of the resident software or the operating system.

INTERNET ACCESS

The user may use the network resources for educational or administrative purposes only. Information collected from the Internet must be properly referenced by the student. Commercial uses are strictly prohibited.

The user will not upload, download, or bring into the school material deemed inappropriate. This would include but not be limited to any material that contains profanity, vulgarity, obscene, or violent content. Materials that are racist, abusive, degrading, demonic or promote intolerance, prejudice, harassment, or insult any individual, ethnic, or religious group are unacceptable.

Transmission of material, information, or software in violation of any church, school, local, state or federal law is prohibited.

The user will not meet in person any individual whom he/she made contact with through the school technological resources. Meetings with resource people contacted through the Internet will be arranged only with the approval of the school administration.

In addition to filtering sites based on specific criteria, a Website Evaluation committee determines if a site is appropriate for access from school. Any member of the STA community may request, through the librarian who is the committee chair, evaluation of a website. The committee reviews the site based on the "Ethical Use of Technology Policy" and in keeping with the Mission Statement and Philosophy of the school. The site may be made available or blocked.

E-MAIL

E-mail is intended for educational and administrative uses. The user will not reveal addresses, phone numbers, photographs or other personal information of him/herself or others.

Any form of harassment via e-mail, telephone or paging, whether through language, frequency or size of messages is prohibited.

The user will report any message received through technology resources, which makes him/her insecure, anxious, or uncomfortable.

MISCELLANEOUS

The user will work in a quiet, respectful manner, which is not disturbing or distracting to others.

The user will not disclose or attempt to access personal passwords or access codes assigned to him/her or any other user.

The user will not attempt to defeat security measures instituted by the school.

Unauthorized access to computers after designated hours or from locations other than those approved for specific computer assignments is prohibited.

The user will not use school technological resources to support candidates for public or elected office.

The user will exercise due diligence and is bound not to disclose or use any confidential or personal information acquired as a result of using the schools' technological resources.

The school makes no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, for the use of this technology. It will not be responsible for any damages suffered, such as loss of data resulting from delays, non-deliveries or service interruptions caused by its own negligence or the user's errors or omissions.

The school specifically denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through its technological resources.

PASSWORD POLICY

No passwords are to be spoken, written, e-mailed, hinted at, shared, or in any way known to anyone other than the user involved.

No accounts or passwords are to be shared or offered to another user. This includes a situation where a user has forgotten his/her password and wants to access the network through another user's account.

Users who have forgotten their domain passwords should report to the Commons.

Passwords are not to include one's name, address, date of birth, username, nickname, or term that could easily be guessed by someone who is familiar with the user.

Passwords are not to be displayed or concealed on personal items, lockers, or in workspaces.

PASSWORD STANDARD

Passwords may not contain all or part of the user's account name.

Passwords are at least eight (8) characters long.

Password contains characters from three of the following four categories:

- Uppercase characters (A...Z)
- Lowercase characters (a...z)
- Base 10 digits (0...9)
- Non-alphanumeric (!, \$, #, %, etc.)

STA AI USAGE POLICY

Philosophy

"Wonder is the desire of knowledge" (St. Thomas Aquinas). As a school, we emphasize each student's uniqueness and creativity, and we encourage their continued search for knowledge.

Our goal as an educational institution is to provide every student with the opportunity to develop critical thinking skills and the ability to communicate their thoughts in a cogent manner (essential life skills). That can only be accomplished by each individual student completing their own assignments without the assistance of any external tool, such as any form of artificial intelligence (AI).

To that end, STA has established the following policy regarding the use of AI.

Policy

This policy provides general guidelines relating to the use of AI within STAHS; each teacher may supplement this policy with additional requirements or clarification for use in their classes.

As this policy represents STA, it should be included in every teacher's Policy/Procedure/Expectation overview along with any class specific requirements, which is distributed to students at the beginning of the year. This current document is intended to reinforce the policy to students and parents.

The only acceptable use of AI is as an editing tool, applied after a student has solely created the initial assignment. Such use is only acceptable when its use is properly acknowledged/documented. For example:

- AI Acknowledgement: I used Grammarly to offer grammar corrections during the editing process. I attest to the fact that all ideas and writing are my own.

If AI is used as an editing tool and not acknowledged, the teacher may apply the same consequences as stated below:

The use of AI will be determined by the standard of "reasonable suspicion" (We will use www.turnitin.com to assess possible plagiarism). This means that if there is reasonable suspicion of use, then the teacher has grounds for:

- rejecting an assignment
- giving a 0 (zero) for the assignment
- treating the incident as a violation of the STA Academic Integrity (Cheating/Plagiarism) Policy and appropriate consequences will be applied.

STUDENT SERVICES

SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAM

The Counseling Department offers comprehensive services to support students and their parents in areas such as personal and social adjustment, goal setting, identifying strengths and talents, course selection and scheduling, post-secondary planning, and college financial information. Each student is assigned a school counselor for all four years of high school, ensuring consistent, personalized guidance. In addition, students will meet with a career counselor during their sophomore and junior years to explore career interests and pathways, and they will have access to the Student Assistance Counselor

whenever personal or emotional challenges arise. We view students and their parents as our clients, and we are committed to their success through personal attention and open communication. As the crossroads of the school, the Counseling Department works closely with students, parents, faculty, and administration to help every student reach their full potential.

STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Student Assistance Program is here to support students who may be going through a difficult time—whether it’s about school, friends, or life outside of school.

Troubling behavior might look like:

- A sudden drop in grades or lack of interest in schoolwork
- Withdrawal from friends, family, or activities they used to enjoy
- Frequent absences or lateness
- Mood changes such as irritability, sadness, or anxiety
- Risky or unsafe behavior
- Concerns about alcohol, drugs, or vaping

Anyone who cares about a student’s well-being can make a referral—teachers, friends, parents, school staff, or even the students themselves. Sometimes referrals are made simply because someone is concerned, and sometimes they’re required by school policy. Support may include working together with families, school staff, and, when needed, outside professionals to make sure the student has the resources they need.

INTERVENTION AND REFERRAL SERVICES (I&RS) TEAM

The I&RS Team identifies and supports students whose behavior may hinder their school success. Composed of trained STA staff—teachers, administrators, and counselors—the team meets regularly to review referrals, gather information, and develop action plans. Support may include setting goals, making recommendations, and tracking progress. The I&RS Team is committed to using all available resources to help every St. Thomas Aquinas student grow into a caring, productive, and responsible citizen.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

St. Thomas Aquinas High School (STA) is committed to protecting the health, safety, and success of all students by preventing drug and alcohol misuse. Use, possession, or distribution of drugs or alcohol is strictly prohibited on school property, at school-sponsored events, or on school-provided transportation. Violations may result in suspension, expulsion, and notification of law enforcement.

Staff Responsibilities & Education

Teachers and staff must remain alert to signs of substance use and follow established procedures. Training is provided to help staff recognize warning signs. Drug and alcohol education is included in the Health curriculum, and referral and support services are available for students in need. STA also cooperates with outside rehabilitation programs when students are enrolled.

Procedures for Suspected Use or Possession

1. **Reporting-** Staff who suspect a student is under the influence or in possession of substances must report immediately to the school nurse, Student Assistance Counselor (SAC), or vice principal (or designee).
2. **Parent Notification & Medical Examination-** The SAC or vice principal will notify the parent/guardian and arrange for an immediate medical exam by the school's contracted lab or, if refused, at a hospital emergency room. The student must undergo a mandated physical examination by a healthcare provider. A written report of the examination must be provided within 24 hours to the student's parent/guardian and the school administration or designated personnel (Student Assistance Counselor). The cost of the examination is the responsibility of the parent/guardian, regardless of the results.
3. **Counseling & Treatment-** Students found under the influence, in possession of substances, or whose use poses a danger to their health must attend counseling or an approved treatment program. The student will meet with the SAC to assess substance use and determine any additional support needed.
4. **Discipline-** Discipline may include suspension, expulsion, or removal from school activities. If parents/guardians refuse to comply with testing or treatment, it will be treated as a positive result, and the student may face counseling requirements, activity restrictions, or dismissal.

USE OF TOBACCO OR TOBACCO PRODUCTS POLICY

In accordance with the New Jersey Smoke-Free Air Act (P.L. 2005, c. 383; N.J.S.A. 26:3D-55 et seq.), St. Thomas Aquinas High School prohibits the use of tobacco, tobacco products, and electronic smoking devices on all school grounds, including buildings, property, and vehicles. This policy applies to all individuals—students, staff, faculty, parents, visitors, and coaches. Any such items found on school premises will be confiscated, and the student will be required to undergo a mandated drug test. We expect all members of our community to comply with this law and support a healthy, smoke-free environment for all.

SUICIDE PREVENTION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Protecting student health and well-being is a top priority at St. Thomas Aquinas High School. All faculty and staff are trained to recognize warning signs of suicide and must report any concerns immediately to the administration. Regular suicide prevention training is provided by mental health professionals. The principal designates a trained staff member to serve as the school's point of contact for suicide prevention.

Procedure:

1. The student is referred to the Student Assistance Coordinator (SAC) or designee (school counselor, nurse, principal) to assess the crisis.
2. If the student is determined to be at risk, the SAC or designee notifies administration immediately.
3. Parents/guardians are contacted and asked to come to school. If unavailable, the student will be taken to the local hospital emergency room by police and a school designee. The student is never left alone.
4. Parents/guardians meet with the SAC or designee and must ensure the student is screened by a mental health professional immediately.
5. A re-entry contract is signed by the parent/guardian, student, administrator, and SAC, and a Release of Information form must also be completed. Failure to comply may result in immediate withdrawal from St. Thomas Aquinas High School.

HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION, OR BULLYING (HIB) POLICY

St. Thomas Aquinas High School prohibits all acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying (HIB) by students, staff, or school vendors. A safe and respectful environment is essential for learning, and HIB disrupts both student learning and the school's mission.

HIB includes any gesture, written, verbal, physical act, or electronic communication that:

- Is motivated by actual or perceived characteristics (e.g., race, religion, gender, disability, sexual orientation) or other distinguishing traits, and
- Occurs on school property, at school events, on school transportation, or off-campus, and
- Substantially interferes with learning, causes physical or emotional harm, insults or demeans, or creates a hostile environment.

Student Expectations:

Students must behave respectfully and responsibly, supporting a safe learning environment. Violators are subject to disciplinary consequences.

Reporting:

- All HIB incidents must be reported immediately to the Vice Principal or designee.
- Students may also report anonymously via the STOPit mobile app.
- Staff who report incidents in good faith are protected from legal action.
- Retaliation or false reporting is prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

Investigation:

- Reports are investigated by trained staff, including the anti-bullying coordinator.
- Investigations begin within one school day and conclude within 10 school days.
- Due process and confidentiality of all parties are respected.
- Parents, police, or other agencies are informed as appropriate.

Remediation and Discipline:

- Consequences range from behavioral interventions to suspension or expulsion for students, and disciplinary action for staff.
- Remedial measures aim to correct behavior, prevent recurrence, support victims, and address systemic issues.
- Vendors found in violation may face contract termination, personnel removal, or law enforcement notification.
- All students involved will meet with the anti-bullying specialist for education and counseling.

Notification & Prevention:

- The policy is shared annually with students, staff, parents, and posted in handbooks and on the school website.
- Ongoing educational programs and curricula promote interpersonal skills, respectful behavior, and HIB prevention.

HOME INSTRUCTION

Home Instruction is available to any student who will be absent from school for an extended period due to a medical condition, typically three weeks or longer. Since it takes a minimum of ten days to set-up tutors for home instruction, a student who will be out of school for two weeks or less will not be able to receive home instruction. Students may access assignments through Canvas or by emailing their teachers. For students on Home Instruction the procedure is as follows:

- Parents must sign 407-1 form.
- A doctor's note must be available stating the condition and approximate length of time the student will be out of school.
- The Counseling Department sends these forms to the Monmouth Ocean Educational Services Commission for processing. The Commission provides tutors in as timely a fashion as possible.

If a student is institutionalized, the 407-1 form must be signed by the parent and will be sent to the Monmouth Ocean Educational Services Commission by the Counseling Department. The institution will then make all necessary arrangements for instruction with the MOESC.

In all cases of home instruction, the Counseling Department will request material from teachers. However, the family is responsible for picking up all materials from the Counseling Department and returning completed work.

The home instructor (tutor) is responsible for grading all work which he/she teaches and will provide such grades to the Counseling Department. Grades received from the tutor will be incorporated into the classroom teachers' grades for the student.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

A student with a disability who is enrolled in a nonpublic school, such as St. Thomas Aquinas High School, is not individually entitled to receive the same special education programs and related services that would be available if the student were enrolled in a public school. By enrolling their child at St. Thomas Aquinas High School, parents acknowledge and accept the school's determination regarding its ability to address recommendations outlined in a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Individualized Service Plan (ISP). The school may provide reasonable classroom accommodations and adjustments that can be implemented within the educational framework and resources of the school.

St. Thomas Aquinas High School does not formally implement Section 504 Plans. However, the school will make reasonable efforts to consider and accommodate documented needs supported by appropriate medical documentation. Acceptance of a student with an IEP, ISP, or other educational recommendations does not imply that the school can provide or implement all services, accommodations, modifications, or programs specified in those plans.

All students are expected to meet the academic, behavioral, attendance, and extracurricular requirements established by the school. This expectation includes eligibility requirements for participation in athletics and other extracurricular activities. Parents are encouraged to carefully consider these factors when selecting the educational environment that best meets their child's needs.

Parents seeking continuation of special education services from a previous school must provide the Counseling Department with copies of the student's most current IEP or ISP, evaluation reports, and any relevant supporting documentation. Accommodations and support services cannot be considered until this documentation has been received and reviewed.

Students enrolling with an existing IEP or ISP will be referred to the Child Study Team through the Monmouth-Ocean Educational Services Commission (MOESC) for review. The Child Study Team will determine eligibility for nonpublic school services and whether an Individualized Service Plan (ISP) should be developed or continued.

A student with a learning disability who is enrolled in a nonpublic school such as St. Thomas Aquinas, does not have an individual entitlement to receive some or all the special education and related services that he or she would receive if enrolled in a public school. By their child's enrollment at St. Thomas Aquinas High School, parents agree to accept the school's decision regarding its ability to address the recommendations made by the child study team in the IEP (Individual Educational Plan) or SP (Service Plan). The nonpublic school may make certain classroom adjustments for the child that can be managed within the educational framework of the school.

While St. Thomas Aquinas does not accept 504 Plans, we will attempt to meet certain modifications that are documented by the student's physician. However, by accepting a classified student to school membership, St. Thomas Aquinas does not imply that it can offer or implement the IEP, SP, or similar recommendation. The student is responsible for meeting all the requirements established by the nonpublic school. This responsibility also includes those rules regarding participation in extra-curricular activities and sports. Parents are asked to keep this in mind when selecting the school they feel is best for their child. If a parent wishes to have his/her child to be considered for the continuation of special services from either a grammar school or another high school, the parent must present a copy of the most current IEP/ Service Plan and testing information to the counseling department. No prior accommodations will be activated until that time.

STUDENT RECORDS

St. Thomas Aquinas High School maintains student records in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and New Jersey law (N.J.A.C. 6A:32-7). Academic records—including transcripts, standardized test results, letters of recommendation, and registration forms—are kept in the Counseling Office and are accessible only to the student, parents, or legal guardians. Records are released to outside parties only with a signed consent form.

Health records are maintained in the Health Office until graduation, after which they are transferred to the student's permanent file. Disciplinary records are kept separately from the academic file. Educational or psychological evaluations from outside agencies, such as the Monmouth Ocean County Educational

Commission Child Study Team, are not part of the permanent record and are shared only at the discretion of parents or guardians.

All legal documents must reflect the student's name exactly as it appears on the birth certificate.

INFORMATION UPDATE

Any change of address, telephone number, employment of parents/guardian, or emergency contacts during the school year is to be reported to the main office in writing or by calling (732) 549-1108 ext. 614.

CUSTODIAL AND NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS

If there is a court order specifying the rights and responsibilities of individual parents/guardians, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent/guardian to provide the school with an official copy of the court order that outlines the non-custodial parent's rights of access to the child, restraining orders, etc. The custodial parent must provide an updated court order at the beginning of each school year. The school abides by the provisions of the Buckley Amendment. Thus, non-custodial parents will be given access to the academic records and to information regarding the academic progress of their children, unless there is a court order specifically stating that the non-custodial parent is denied access to such information.

ACADEMICS

GRADING

GRADE POINT AVERAGE: All subjects except Physical Education, Health, Driver Education, Career Education, Financial Literacy, and single credit courses are used to compute the GPA. The average is computed using the following quality points:

A.P. Courses

A+	=	5.33
A	=	5.00
A-	=	4.67
B+	=	4.33
B	=	4.00
B-	=	3.67
C+	=	3.33
C	=	3.00
C-	=	2.67
D	=	2.00
F	=	0

Honors Courses

A+	=	5.00
A	=	4.67
A-	=	4.33
B+	=	4.00
B	=	3.67
B-	=	3.33
C+	=	3.00
C	=	2.67
C-	=	2.33
D	=	1.67
F	=	0

College Prep Courses

A+	=	4.33
A	=	4.00
A-	=	3.67
B+	=	3.33
B	=	3.00
B-	=	2.67
C+	=	2.33
C	=	2.00
C-	=	1.67
D	=	1.00
F	=	0

Grading Scales

A+	=	97 - 100
A	=	93 - 96
A-	=	90 - 92
B+	=	87 - 89
B	=	83 - 86
B-	=	80 - 82
C+	=	77 - 79
C	=	73 - 76
C-	=	70 - 72
D	=	65 - 69
F	=	50 - 64

The above GPA and grading scales are revised effective September 2024. Grades and GPA's prior to this date will not be changed or recalculated.

Often colleges or scholarship organizations request non-weighted GPA on a 4.0 scale. To calculate the non-weighted GPA, A/A+ grades will be calculated as 4.0.

As of 1996, St. Thomas Aquinas High School no longer computes or reports class rank. Upon college acceptance and for the sole purpose of determining eligibility for financial aid and/or scholarships, a weighted rank will be made available directly to the college/university at the institution's request.

Candidates for Valedictorian and Salutatorian must have completed a minimum of three years of studies at St. Thomas Aquinas High School to be considered for these honors.

HONOR ROLL

The honor roll is based on all subjects including physical education, health, and careers. No student with a grade below a “B+” will be awarded honor roll status. Honor roll status is awarded quarterly based on the following criteria:

Summa Troiana Honors (Distinguished) Honors: Students who have attained a minimum of “A” or better average in each subject.

Magna Troiana (First) Honors: Students who have attained a minimum of “A-” or better average in each subject.

Cum Laude Troiana (Second) Honors: Students who have attained a minimum of “B+” or better average in each subject.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

The minimum requirements for graduation are 145 credits including 80 credits or 15 academic units from English, Math, Science, Social Studies, and World Language. Students cannot retake a course at St. Thomas Aquinas that they have already taken. Students will not be awarded credit for a duplicate course taken outside of St. Thomas Aquinas.

Subjects required for graduation are the following:

Theology	4 years
English	4 years
Mathematics	3 years (4 years recommended)
Science	3 years: Biology/Chemistry/Physics
Social Studies	3 years: 1 year of World History; 2 years of U.S. History
World Language	2 years (3 years recommended)
Fine Arts	1 year
Freshman Foundations	1 year
Career Education	2 quarters over 2 years
Phys. Ed./Health	6 semesters over 4 years
Financial Literacy	1 semester

Students in the Aquinas Scholars Honors Program must maintain a minimum GPA of a 3.5 and complete the following courses:

Theology Honors	4 years
Social Studies	3 years: 1 year of Western Civilization Honors + 2 years of U.S. History Honors
World Language	3 years of a concentration in one modern language (through intermediate level)

ADDITIONAL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

All students must complete the Iowa Tests of Educational Development or equivalent (reading, writing and math) which is our equivalent of the New Jersey basic skills requirement for graduation.

SENIOR EXAM EXEMPTIONS/FAILURES

Senior final exam exemption exists for those seniors achieving an “A-” average at the fourth quarter deadline. Seniors who fail a course in the fourth quarter and/or the final exam for that course may fail the course for the year. Any year-end failures must be remediated before a diploma will be issued.

AP® EXAMS

All students taking AP® courses have the option to take the AP® exam. They must make an exam decision by the November deadline. All students must take the final exam as well, unless exempt. Students with an “A-” average for the year by the fourth quarter deadline are exempt from taking a final exam.

SCHEDULES

After the first semester students are registered for courses for the upcoming school year. School initiated recommendations for course assignments come from a department chairperson. Students are advised of these recommendations by the counselors and are assisted in choosing elective courses. Students are encouraged to discuss all recommendations with parents and teachers.

If a student does not agree with a teacher's course recommendation and wishes to enroll in a more rigorous course, they may request an Academic Waiver. Proper academic placement is essential to student success, and each academic department has specific criteria that must be met before a waiver will be considered. To initiate the process, students should contact the Counseling Department,

complete the Academic Waiver form, obtain a parent/guardian signature, and submit the completed form along with the \$15 waiver processing fee. Approval of an Academic Waiver is not guaranteed and is subject to departmental review.

Since student scheduling involves a great amount of work hours and data processing expense, any schedule change made after August 15 will require a fee of \$15.00. Before changes are made, approval must be obtained from the Counseling Department. All elective changes must be finalized by September 20. Mid-year course changes cannot be accommodated.

Every effort will be made to honor schedule requests. However, in case of irresolvable conflict, the student will be consulted for alternate choices. Requests based on teacher preferences cannot be accommodated.

Driver Theory is scheduled without regard to the student's birth date during one marking period in the Sophomore year.

TRANSCRIPTS

Official Transcripts are those transcripts sent directly from STA to another educational institution or scholarship program. Official transcripts are requested by using a Transcript Release Form available through counseling. Official transcripts cannot be given to students or parents for personal mailing or for hand-carrying by the student. Every student is entitled to an Unofficial Copy of his/her transcript, providing there is no outstanding financial obligation.

Official standardized test scores, i.e., SAT I, SAT II, AP, ACT, etc., are to be requested directly from the testing company. St. Thomas Aquinas High School does not forward test scores.

FAILURES

A student who fails a subject for the year must repeat and pass the subject in summer school or through private tutoring with an instructor certified in that subject area. Failure in summer school will necessitate automatic dismissal.

The administration reserves the right to ask a student to withdraw from the school under the following circumstances related to failures:

1. Any student on academic probation if any subject is failed during the probation period.
2. Any student who fails subject(s) in consecutive years.
3. Any student who fails two (2) or more subjects for the year.
4. Any student whose GPA is less than 2.0.
5. Any student with excessive absenteeism.
6. Any student with excessive tardiness.

7. Discipline violations/failures.

SUMMER SCHOOL

A failure or failures in any course(s) must be remediated in summer school and cannot be carried into the next school year. The summer school grade will appear on the transcript. However, a grade of “D” will be used to compute G.P.A. Any student failing two major subjects for the year may be asked not to return to St. Thomas Aquinas High School. This decision will be made by the administration in consultation with the School Counseling Department.

The Director of Counseling must approve all college courses prior to registering. Students interested in college/summer courses should see the Director of Counseling during the second semester for approval. College courses or courses taken for new credit at an institution other than St. Thomas Aquinas are indicated on the student transcript but are not calculated into the G.P.A. In addition, any course that is not taken during the academic school year is not calculated into the G.P.A.

STUDENT PROGRESS

Student progress may be monitored on a regular basis throughout the school year. Via PowerSchool, parents/guardians may view the details of their child’s grades, attendance, and other areas.

REPORT CARDS

Final grades are available through PowerSchool at the conclusion of the school year. Student progress may be monitored throughout the year via PowerSchool. Please contact the Counseling Department if a hard copy of a student’s academic record is needed.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

STUDENT CLUBS AND ACTIVITIES

Student clubs, activities, organizations, and athletics are an important part of a student’s education. Together with the academic program they help to develop the person - mind and body. To this end the school offers participation in areas of interest such as culture, the arts, theatre, publications, careers as well as honor societies. Students are encouraged to participate in as many activities as time and talent permit. Clubs, activities, and organizations are a part of student life at St. Thomas Aquinas High School. A current listing of clubs is published on the STA website.

Please Note: Any student with any financial obligation to STA may be excluded from extracurricular activities, including junior/senior prom, senior cruise, senior class trip and graduation. Students who fail more than one course or behavior during any quarter or semester may be excluded from extracurricular activities, based on a review by the administration.

RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES

Since religious activities are a vital part of the school's program, every student is encouraged to attend and participate in them. We hope that these activities will channel the student toward one goal: living Christianity in the truest sense and experiencing its deepest meaning. All students are expected to participate yearly in religious activities scheduled for their class.

ATHLETICS

STUDENT-ATHLETE CONTRACT

RULES AND REGULATIONS

1. Saint Thomas Aquinas is a full member of the NJSIAA and Greater Middlesex County Conference and follows all rules and regulations set out by both associations. [New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association | NJSIAA Greater Middlesex Conference](#)
2. All student athletes should act in a respectful manner at all times, both during the season and off-season.
3. All students are to strive to maintain and achieve the very best grades possible. In order to play a sport in college, students must earn a GPA of 2.0 or better in all major subjects. If students are in need of extra help, they are encouraged to contact their teachers.
4. All players who are going to miss a practice or game for any reason, must contact their coach prior to the game. If they miss school, they are not permitted to attend practices or games on that day. Students must be in school before 9:30 to participate in practice or game.
5. Use of tobacco/vaping/drugs or alcohol products is strictly prohibited.
6. All players are to follow rules given to them by their individual coaches, as well as rules outlined by the Athletic Department.
7. Violations of any part of this contract shall result in any or all of the following penalties as determined by the Athletic Director and Administration: suspension from games; dismissal from the team; forfeiture of letters or awards earned; referral for assessment and evaluations.

NATIONAL COLLEGIATE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION (NCAA) REQUIREMENTS

In order for an athlete to be considered for review by the Eligibility Center to play college level athletics, he/she must register with the NCAA. This can be done at any time before or during junior year.

In order to be evaluated by the NCAA, a student must:

1. Complete the online registration, including the academic information form and the amateurism questionnaire.
2. Payment of fee
3. Submit SAT or ACT scores directly from the testing centers (when registering for the test, be sure to include the code for the Eligibility Center "9999" so that scores are sent directly to NCAA)
4. Request from the School Counseling Office a 6th semester official transcript to be sent via our transcript release form to NCAA.
5. After April 1st of senior year, the student must update the academic information form and the amateurism form, as well as request the amateurism certificate.
6. Final official transcript will be sent by the School Counseling Office after graduation, provided the transcript release form is on file.

Please refer to the NCAA website for specific information regarding Students with Special Services.

NCAA REQUIREMENTS

DIVISION I

- Graduate high school
- Earn a core course GPA of 2.3 or higher
- Complete 16 core courses
- You must complete 10 of the core courses by the end of your junior year (before the start of your seventh semester). Seven of the 10 core courses need to be in English, math or natural/physical science. The grades in these seven courses will be "locked in," meaning you will not be allowed to retake them to improve your grades.
- Earn an SAT combined score or ACT sum score matching your core-course GPA on the Division 1 sliding scale.
- Receive final certification on your amateurism status via the NCAA Eligibility Center

DIVISION II

- Graduate high school
- Earn a core course GPA of 2.2 or higher
- Complete 16 core courses
- Earn an SAT combined score or ACT sum score matching your core-course GPA on the Division II sliding scale.
- Receive final certification on your amateurism status via the NCAA Eligibility Center

Please refer to www.eligibilitycenter.org for more details, including the sliding scale and a complete list of STAHS approved core courses.

PROCEDURES REGARDING STUDENT-ATHLETE CONTRACT

Because athletes sign a Student-Athlete Contract, the following procedures have been developed to provide education and assessment if the contract is broken.

1. If a student-athlete is suspected of using tobacco/vaping products, alcohol, or drugs, he/she shall be reported in writing to the Athletic Director who will report the suspected violation to the SAC. The SAC will follow the procedures already in place in the school drug and alcohol policy and, upon investigation, may require an initial assessment.
2. If a student-athlete is identified as using tobacco/vaping products, alcohol, or drugs, he/she shall be reported in writing to the Athletic Director who will report the identified violation to the SAC. In addition to athletic penalties, the student-athlete shall be required to have an initial assessment via drug and alcohol testing as directed by the SAC. Other objective data will be collected as set forth in the school drug and alcohol policy. His/her parents or guardian will be required to attend an educational session.
3. A reported second offense of the use of tobacco products, alcohol or drugs shall require referral to an outside agency for evaluation and treatment. All recommendations shall be written in a contract and shall be followed.
4. Noncompliance with the above procedures shall result in dismissal from the team and/or dismissal from the school.
5. All athletes are encouraged to avoid situations that would put them in jeopardy of violating the student-athlete contract.

INTERSCHOLASTIC SPORTS

St. Thomas Aquinas High School is a member of the NJSIAA and Greater Middlesex Conference and competes in the following sports:

Baseball	Cross Country	Lacrosse	Swimming
Basketball	Football	Soccer	Tennis
Bowling	Golf	Softball	Volleyball
Cheerleading	Gymnastics	Spring Track	Wrestling
Flag Football	Dance		

ELIGIBILITY RULES FOR PARTICIPATION IN ALL ATHLETIC ACTIVITIES

Per **NJSIAA rules**, students must meet credit requirements to maintain athletic eligibility:

- **Annual Requirement:** Students must pass **27.5 credits per year** to be eligible for the first semester of the following academic year.
- **First Semester Requirement:** Students must pass **13.75 credits** in the first semester to be eligible for the second semester.

At St. Thomas Aquinas, eligibility is determined by **quarter and semester** rather than by season:

- **First Quarter:** Students must have passed all classes the previous academic year to be eligible. If a student fails a class 4th marking period, they must take this course over the summer.
- **Second Quarter:** Students who fail **more than one course** in the first quarter will be ineligible.
- **Third Quarter:** Students who fail **more than one course** in the first semester will be ineligible.
- **Fourth Quarter:** Students who fail **more than one course** in the third quarter will be ineligible.

Mid-quarter evaluations are used to determine participation in sports activities.

SUPERVISION

St. Thomas Aquinas High School is responsible for supervision of students throughout the school day. Once a student enters the building on a school day, permission to leave must be obtained from an administrator. Only students participating in supervised activities are permitted to remain at school after dismissal. No student is to be in a classroom without the direct supervision of a faculty member. Likewise, no student is to be in the gym without a faculty member present. Students are not to congregate in areas adjacent to the school before or after school hours.

AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

All students participating in after school activities should be picked up no later than 15 minutes after the activity ends. The school cannot be responsible for any student left for a great length of time. Please make the necessary arrangements to have your child picked up at the correct time. The school building

closes at 6 p.m. and students are expected to get their books, coats, etc. from their lockers by 3 p.m., at which time security gates are lowered. Students are expected to go home at dismissal if they are not involved in extracurricular activities. The cafeteria will be open daily from 2 to 6 p.m.

CAFETERIA POLICIES

Students are expected to report promptly to the cafeteria during their assigned lunch period. They are to occupy and be responsible for their assigned area. Proper cafeteria behavior is expected of all students. Ten minutes before the lunch period ends, students are to return to their assigned seats. At this time, they are expected to pick up all refuse from the floor and/or table. Students are dismissed by the proctor. No student is excused from the cafeteria unless he/she has a pass issued by a teacher, administrative personnel, nurse or counseling personnel. Students may go to lockers at the change of class before their lunch period or upon dismissal from the lunch period. They may not go to their lockers during the lunch period. Students should not take any food or drink out of the cafeteria, unless permission has been granted. Eating anywhere outside the cafeteria is permitted by administration or by the nurse. Students may purchase school supplies at the bookstore during their lunch period.

Throwing of food, refuse, etc. in the cafeteria will result in automatic suspension. Inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated and will result in disciplinary action.

HALLS & HALL PASSES

Hallways must be clear for passage at all times. Students are not permitted to sit or eat/drink in the hall.

The general pass or teacher paddle pass must be used by each student who is in the corridor during regular class time. The pass will be appropriately filled in by a staff member, teacher, or administrator.

PARKING LOT

Students driving to school are reminded that this is a privilege granted through the school which may be revoked at any time for failure to abide by the policies of the school in regard to the safe and efficient use of the parking area.

Parking on school property is at the student's own risk. The school is not responsible for any damage or theft while parked. The following regulations are in effect:

All drivers must adhere to a speed limit of 15 mph.

All students must register their vehicles with the vice principal and obtain a parking sticker at a fee of \$25. The sticker should be placed on one side of the rear window of the auto.

Failure to register a vehicle may result in the suspension of driving and parking privileges.

Students will be issued parking stickers and permitted to park their cars in areas designated for students. Future infractions will result in the student's car being towed away. This regulation will be in effect between 7 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. on any school day. Students are not permitted to leave campus prior to normal dismissal without express permission from the principal or designee.

Parking regulations apply to cars, mopeds, motorcycles, and any other motorized vehicle.

All student drivers must be in school on time. Student drivers reporting late to school will be required to make up double the time late at the end of the same day. St. Thomas Aquinas High School accepts no responsibility for accidents, vandalism, or theft occurring on school property. Violation of any rules and regulations, chronic tardiness, and/or excessive absences may result in loss of driving privileges. Under no circumstances are students permitted to drive any vehicle with expired insurance, licenses or registration.

THE COMMONS

The Commons is the hub of educational activity for the school. It's a safe environment where all members of the community can meet to research, collaborate and study undisturbed by what goes on outside of its doors.

THE COMMONS HOURS

During the school day: 7:15am until the end of the school day

After school: by appointment only

Please make arrangements with the librarian at least 1 day in advance. On days that The Commons has been reserved, it will only stay open until 3 p.m.

There may be times when The Commons will be closed – a note will be posted on the door.

If a student wants to come to the Commons during his/her lunch period, he/she must obtain a pass from the subject teacher for whom he/she is doing work (the Cafeteria proctor will not give out passes to the Commons). Before the student leaves the Cafeteria to go to the Commons, he/she must show the pass to the proctor, obtain his/her signature, and then sign out.

SIGN-IN AND SIGN-OUT PROCEDURE

You must sign in and present a pass containing:

- student's full name

- date and time
- teacher's signature

If a student does not have a pass, he/ she will be asked to return to the original location to obtain one.

Students must sign out when leaving and obtain a pass to return to class.

SERVICES AVAILABLE

- Research materials (both print and online) and assistance in using them
- Whiteboards for brainstorming
- Quiet study space
- Printing (no remote access)

RESTRICTIONS

- The Commons is a gathering space for learning, not for socializing
- No food or drink is allowed
- If guidelines aren't followed, students be asked to leave

GENERAL INFORMATION

ACCIDENT REPORT

A student who has an accident while in school or while on a school related activity must notify the teacher or person in charge not only of the nature of the accident, but also the time and manner of its occurrence. If an accident occurs on the way to or from school, the student is obligated to report all information to the school.

BACKPACKS

Backpacks and handbags no more than 12" x 12" in size are allowed to be carried during the school day.

EXCUSED ABSENCE - PHYSICAL EDUCATION CLASS

1. Doctors' notes will be accepted ONLY by the school nurse to excuse the student from physical education class. NO parent notes will be accepted as an excuse from physical education classes.
2. Students are to dress EVERYDAY in the proper physical education uniform for class. Students not dressed properly for physical education class will receive a grade of

“unprepared” for the day. Five (5) grades of “unprepared” will result in a failure for the marking period.

3. If the student becomes ill during the school day, he/she should report to the nurse for an excuse.
4. If a special problem should arise, the parent should contact the nurse’s office.
5. Students may not participate in physical education class if they do not have sneakers.
6. Students participating in after school athletics must have participated in their scheduled Physical Education class during the day.

FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Parents and/or guardians are expected to meet financial obligations to the school when they are due. Failure to comply with tuition payment deadlines may result in cancellation of registration/enrollment. The school may withhold transcripts, diplomas, remove student from extra curricular activities and access to grade reports.

FOOD ALLERGIES

Food allergies are a growing health concern in schools across the country. Even a miniscule amount of the allergenic food is sufficient to cause a life-threatening reaction known as *anaphylaxis* in the millions of school-aged children across the country with food allergies. While St. Thomas Aquinas High School cannot provide a completely allergen-free environment for students with food allergies, the school can--through education and compassion--create a safe and respectful place of learning for all students.

HEALTH SERVICES

The following services and policies are in effect during a pupil’s enrollment at St. Thomas Aquinas High School.

No child shall be admitted to a school without proper proof that the child has been immunized as required by the laws of the State of New Jersey, N.J.S.A.26:1A-9. Proper immunization is a condition of admission to the school. No requests for religious exemptions will be considered.

1. Visual testing, heights, weights are performed yearly. Throat cultures are not permitted to be taken in school per the State of New Jersey.
2. Hearing tests are given in the 10th grade.
3. Scoliosis screenings are given in the 10th, 11th, and 12th grades.
4. Aspirin or any other medication will not be administered to any student unless, under exceptional circumstances, the child’s health may be jeopardized.
5. Chapter 14, State Sanitary Code, mandates that all school children be immunized against Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus, regular and German Measles, and Polio. Children who have not received proper immunization will be excluded from school.

6. A student must report any injury to the teacher/supervisor the same day and period that it happened. Contact the nurse if necessary to complete a school insurance claim form which must be filed with the insurance company within three months or will be rejected.
7. Medical notes are required upon return to school after an injury. Under no circumstances should a student on crutches report to class without reporting to the nurse beforehand. If the physician has prescribed crutches, written permission to ambulate up and down stairs is mandatory.
8. Students may not carry or dispense to themselves or others, prescription or over the counter medications. Medication will be kept in the nurse's office and must be in the original container.
9. Students with food and/or nut allergies must notify the nurse. St. Thomas Aquinas follows all state mandated procedures to protect students.

I.D. CARDS

Students are required to wear their I.D. lanyard in school. I.D. cards may not be altered or defaced in any way; stickers provided by the school may be added for club or science lab participation.

I.D. cards must be prominently displayed around the student's neck.

If the I.D. card breaks or is lost, a new I.D. card can be obtained in the Office for \$10.00, but the broken I.D. card must be returned. Any student that needs a new lanyard string, can be purchased in the main office for \$5.00.

A student who forgets the lanyard/I.D. reports to the Main Office between 7:30 and 8 a.m. or during Homeroom to receive a temporary I.D. worn near the collar of the uniform shirt. Students will receive administrative detentions after the second offense. A temporary ID may only be used for one day and must be thrown out at the end of that day.

LOCKERS

Student lockers are the property of St. Thomas Aquinas High School and are on loan to students. They are to be kept locked and in order at all times. The school reserves the right to inspect lockers anytime. Hanging of indecent literature/pictures is prohibited.

Only locks purchased at the school are permitted in the physical education locker room.

LOST AND/OR STOLEN PROPERTY

The school is not responsible or liable for any student's lost or stolen property. Students are discouraged from bringing to school any expensive personal items including electronic devices, clothing, purses, etc.

PARENT ORGANIZATIONS

The Parent organizations serving St. Thomas Aquinas High School fulfill valuable roles in the education of youth attending this school. By contributing time, talent, and money they enable this school to offer a varied academic and activities program. With the full support of all parents these organizations will be able to continue and to improve their service to the students of St. Thomas Aquinas High School.

PHOTOS

Photos may be taken on school grounds by authorized staff and students only. Students must have parent/guardian permission to be photographed for school media. Students who may not be photographed must remove themselves from photo opportunities.

PROMISE TO PROTECT, PLEDGE TO HEAL

The following notice has been mandated to be published in our school policy book by the Diocese of Metuchen and is intended for anyone who has been abused or victimized by someone representing the Catholic Church.

Please believe in the possibility for hope, help and healing. We encourage you to come forward and speak out. Every diocese in the United States now has a **victim assistance coordinator** who is available to obtain support for your needs, to help you make a formal complaint of abuse to the diocese and to arrange a personal meeting with the bishop or his representative, if you desire. For more information contact the Diocese of Metuchen at 732-562-1990.

RETENTION POLICY

As a Roman Catholic High School of the Diocese of Metuchen, St. Thomas Aquinas High School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin or sex in the administration of employment, educational admissions, or financial policies, activities, athletics or school administered programs. However, St. Thomas Aquinas High School does not accept for admission married students and will have to terminate the enrollment of any student currently attending St. Thomas Aquinas High School if that student should marry during the time of their enrollment.

SCHOOL CLOSING

Students will be bused according to the city/township decisions. If school districts are closed, no transportation will be provided. "Delayed Opening" means students follow the decision of their township. If St. Thomas Aquinas is open and your district is closed, parents should use discretion about bringing their child to school. Students who drive to school should follow the decision of their township.

SCHOOL POLICY CHANGES

Any change in the school policy will become effective upon announcement in school and will be printed in the Principal's Newsletter.

SCHOOL TRIPS

It is necessary to submit a parental permission slip to the faculty member sponsoring a trip. Parents are required to provide transportation home when trips return after the normal school dismissal time. Students who drive and have their own cars may drive home.

ALL SCHOOL RULES APPLY ON ANY TRIP OR ACTIVITY SPONSORED BY THE SCHOOL OR ANY ORGANIZATION, TEAM, CLUB, ETC. CONNECTED WITH THE SCHOOL. Students who unofficially arrive at the site of the trip will be subject to disciplinary action and will be required to leave that site.

SEARCH AND SEIZURE POLICY

In order to protect the safety, health, property, values and welfare of the members of the school community, the school reserves the right to call for a search of the student's locker, book bag, desk, automobile, any other object on the school property or the person. Such searches will be with reasonable cause, in the sole opinion of the school administrator, that contraband, illegal substances or inappropriate objects are concealed. Any unauthorized items found may be seized. Additionally, students' desks and lockers, which are at all times under the joint control of the school and student to whom the desk or locker is assigned, may be searched by school administrators at any time, for any reason or for no reason at all.

STUDENT PREGNANCY

St. Thomas Aquinas High School is completely opposed to abortion and premarital sexual relations. If, however, a student should become pregnant during her time at St. Thomas Aquinas High School, she may continue here as a student, on home instruction, as long as she has written permission from her parents and physician. The student must leave school 6 weeks prior to her due date and is not permitted to participate in school activities after that time.

USE OF SCHOOL LOGO

The design of the school logo must remain intact. No alterations, additions, or deletions to any part of the logo are permitted. Any individual, organization or company wishing to use the logo for any purpose must obtain permission to do so from the Director of Communications.

VISITORS

Visitors to St. Thomas Aquinas High School will have their I.D. checked through Raptor technology to be approved to enter the building. Only students who are signed up for the Trojan-for-a-Day program or

with a grammar school visit are permitted to visit the school. All visitors will be issued a visitor I.D. When leaving the building, this I.D. must be returned.