ST. THOMAS AQUINAS CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Family Handbook

2026-2027

Fr. Ryan Hiaeshutter, Pastoral Administrator
Dr. Lisa Long, President
Dr. Lauren Roberts, Lower School Principal
Mrs. Sara Casner, M.Ed., Upper School Principal

www.staschool.org

LOWER SCHOOL
6255 E. Mockingbird Lane
Dallas, TX 75214
(469) 341-0911

UPPER SCHOOL
3741 Abrams Road
Dallas, TX 75214
(214) 826-0566

Dear St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School Families,

Welcome to the 2026-2027 school year! It is a joy and blessing to welcome you and your family to commence a new academic year as a part of our excellent school community. At St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School, we are dedicated to leading each student in the formation of a strong Catholic faith through the balanced pursuit of knowledge, prayer, responsibility, and service. Inspired by our patron, St. Thomas Aquinas, we strive to cultivate both faith and reason, encouraging our students to pursue academic excellence while growing in wisdom, virtue, and discipleship.

We recognize that parents are the primary educators of their children, and we are honored to partner with you in this important mission. Together, we seek to nurture the spiritual, intellectual, social, emotional, and physical development of every student entrusted to our care. Through prayer, service, rigorous academics, and a strong sense of community, we prepare our students to become compassionate leaders and faithful followers of Christ. This STA Family Handbook is designed to serve as a valuable resource for understanding our school's policies, procedures, expectations, and traditions. We ask that you review the Handbook carefully and keep it as a reference throughout the school year. Clear communication and commitment to our mission help create a positive and supportive environment where all students can thrive.

Thank you for choosing a St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School education for your sons and daughters. We are grateful for your partnership and look forward to working together to provide a faith-filled and enriching educational experience.

May God bless you and your family abundantly throughout the year ahead.

Go Wildcats!

In Christ,
Dr. Lisa M. Long
President

"The things that we love tell us what we are."
~ St. Thomas Aquinas

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Handbook Organization

This Handbook contains information needed by both students and parents during the school year. The information is organized by section. The term "parent" refers to student's parent or legal guardian. The information in the Handbook reflects the requirements, policies, and procedures that are in effect as of the printing date. The school reserves the right to institute changes that alter any of the information. IF the school makes changes to any of the requirements, procedures, or policies set forth in this Handbook, the change will be published in WAAG and will be effective immediately.

The Handbook Release Form must be signed during enrollment/re-enrollment.

Section 1: About Our School

1.1 Mission Statement

To lead each student in the formation of a strong Catholic faith through the balanced pursuit of knowledge, prayer, responsibility, and service.

1.2 Vision Statement

To seek the light and hope of Christ in everything we think, say, and do.

1.3 Philosophy

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School strives to educate children of parishioners who desire a Catholic education and develop the highest possible level of potential in each child, both as a person and a Christian. The needs of the individual and his or her potential for good will be considered foremost in each decision and policy of the school.

1.4 History of School

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School is home to 880+ students and is the largest Catholic PK-8th grade school in the state of Texas. Opening its doors in September 1947, St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School had humble beginnings serving as an extension to the families of the Sacred Heart Cathedral. Known initially as Sacred Heart School #2, 250 students began their St. Thomas Aquinas experience in four classrooms with the Sisters of Divine Providence as the first teaching order at the school.

With Monsignor John T. Gulczynski thoughtfully serving as the founding pastor, St. Thomas Aquinas Church was erected in 1957, following several years of the community celebrating Mass in the school auditorium. Today, St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church serves over 6,000 households.

Parish and school growth, as well as the growth of the East Dallas community, led to the expansion of the school to two campuses. In 2005, a successful capital campaign made it possible to acquire and renovate the First Community Church building and property located on Mockingbird Lane, approximately .5 miles from the church and school. Known as the Lower School, the Monsignor John T. Gulczynski Early Childhood Center serves 335 students in PK4 through 2nd grade.

An additional 2.68 acres of land, adjacent to the main campus, was purchased by the parish in 2011. The acquisition again expanded the footprint of St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church and School in our community and serves our students as multi-use outdoor space and athletic fields. In 2013, at the Bishop's request, St. Thomas Aquinas moved to a President/Principal administrative model due to its growth.

1.5 Catholic Identity

At St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School, we are committed to nurturing the spiritual, academic, and personal growth of every child in a faith-filled environment rooted in Catholic values. Through academic excellence, service, prayer, and community, students are encouraged to grow as lifelong learners, compassionate leaders, and faithful disciples of Christ. Our dedicated faculty and staff partner with families to provide a safe, welcoming, and Christ-centered education that supports the development of the whole child.

Mass Days
Students in 1st through 8th grades attend Mass weekly. Students in PreK and Kindergarten attend a weekly prayer service. All students attend Mass on Holy Days of Obligation and other special celebration days.

Sacramental Program
The sacramental life of children in the Catholic tradition is an important part of the religion program at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School. Preparation for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Eucharist is the focus of religious instruction in Grades 1 and 2. Preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation is the focus of instruction in Grades 7 and 8.

In accordance with diocesan guidelines, students preparing for First Eucharist must first receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Students preparing for Confirmation ordinarily receive the sacrament in Grade 8. These sacraments are parish- and school-based programs.

Parents are expected to be active partners in preparing their children to receive the sacraments. The Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Eucharist are offered to students who have been baptized in the Roman Catholic faith. Students preparing for Confirmation must be baptized and must have already received, or be prepared to receive, the Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Eucharist prior to Confirmation.

1.6 Administration
The Bishop
The Bishop is the chief administrator of the diocese. He is responsible for educating the faithful in the teachings of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Dallas. Part of his educational responsibility is overseeing Catholic schools in Dallas. The Bishop has ultimate authority in all things relative to education in the Diocese of Dallas.

Catholic Schools Office
The Catholic Schools Office (CSO) of the Dallas Diocese provides spiritual and professional guidance for all Diocesan Catholic schools. The Superintendent of Catholic Schools is appointed by and accountable to the Bishop and represents him in the administration and supervision of Catholic schools in the Diocese.

The Pastor
The chief administrator of the parish within the Diocese is the Pastor and he is canonically responsible for the total operation of all organizations within his parish. The Pastor is both spiritually and fiscally responsible for the school.

School President
The President is the leader of the school. The President is the Chief Executive Officer and has general charge of controlling the school's operation, budget, and facilities.

Principals
The principals oversee the day-to-day operation of the school. The Lower School Principal is directly responsible for grades PK-2, and the Upper School Principal is directly responsible for grades 3-8, overseeing curriculum development, faculty and staff, and students. The principals are assisted by the Assistant Principal of Academic Affairs, the Deans of Students, and school support services for the well-being of each student.

1.7 Accreditation Agencies

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School is accredited by the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops Education Department (TCCEBD). St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School is a member of the National Catholic Education Agency (NCEA).

1.8 STA Honor Code and Pledge

As a member of the St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School community, I pledge to:

- ✞ Be responsible for my actions
- ✞ Always do my best as an individual and as a part of a team
- ✞ Respect the uniqueness and gifts of others
- ✞ Be forthright and honest in my words and actions
- ✞ Not lie, cheat, or steal

I will follow this honor code, and I will help others do the same.
I Am the Difference.

1.9 School Mascot and Colors

Wildcat
Navy Blue and White

1.10 Right to Amend

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School reserves the right to amend this handbook at any time. Notification of amendments and changes will be sent to parents when necessary.

Section Two: Academic Policies

2.1 Academic Dishonesty

Students are solely responsible for the integrity and authenticity of all work they submit. Academic honesty is expected at all times and is essential to the learning process. Academic dishonesty in any form is not permitted and undermines both student growth and the values of fairness and integrity.

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, collusion; copying, sharing, or receiving answers; providing answers to others; plagiarism of any kind (including copying text or ideas without proper citation); cheating on quizzes, tests, or assignments; fabrication or falsification of information, data, or sources; submitting work completed in whole or in part by another person or generated by artificial intelligence without authorization; multiple submissions of the same work without teacher approval; failure to properly cite sources; altering answers during self- or peer-grading; and the misuse of academic materials, resources, technology, or AI tools.

Students are expected to complete all assignments honestly, demonstrate their own understanding, and use technology and AI tools only when explicitly permitted by the teacher and in accordance with school guidelines.

2.2 Accelerated Classes

Accelerated classes are offered for qualifying students in math (grades 6-8). The criteria for qualifications include a combination of quarterly grades, various test scores, and teacher recommendation. The final decision for placement in any homeroom and/or class will be made by the administration and is reevaluated annually.

2.3 Advancement Policy

A student is advanced to the next higher grade or course if all State of Texas and Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops Education Department (TCCB ED) requirements have been met. The final decision for retention rests with the administration.

2.4 Curriculum

The curriculum of St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School complies with the academic requirements as set forth by the Diocese of Dallas, the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops Education Department, and the Texas Education Agency. The Diocesan curriculum can be found at csodallas.org/guides.

2.5 Grading Scale and General Conduct Grades

Upper School

The Upper School (grades 3 - 8) report card will display academic grades as follows:

A = 94 -100
B = 85-93
C = 76-84
D = 70-75
F = 69 and below

At the Upper School: The general conduct grade is issued by the homeroom teacher and reflects the student's behavior in all classes, with all teachers. The Upper School report card will display conduct grades as follows:

S = Satisfactory
NI = Needs Improvement
U = Unsatisfactory

Comment codes*, represented by numbers, for each class are as follows:

1. Observes school rules
2. Demonstrates self-control
3. Completes homework/assignments on time
4. Prepares for class/test
5. Demonstrates positive attitude
6. Participates in class/uses time wisely
7. Makes up work when necessary/absent
8. Class attendance enhances progress
9. Meets expectations

**A negative (-) sign before a number indicates need for improvement.*

Lower School

Grades 1-2 report cards will display grades for religion, reading, phonics, written language, spelling, mathematics, science and social studies as follows:

E = Exceeds grade level expectations
The student has advanced understanding and exceeds grade level expectations. (94 - 100) This student shows initiative, will challenge him/herself, and demonstrates advanced knowledge of a content area. An "E" is difficult to achieve and indicates a high ability in an academic area.

G = Grade level expectations
The student has proficient understanding and meets grade level expectations. (80 - 93) This student is on track with our high academic expectations. A "G" is a celebrated success.

M = Minimum grade level expectations
The student has a basic understanding and minimally meets grade level expectations. (70 - 79) This student understands basic skills and concepts but has not reached a proficient level. An "M" indicates the child may require extra help in a content area.

N = Needs improvement
The student has minimal understanding and does not meet grade level expectations. (0 - 69) For this student, serious academic weaknesses exist according to our Diocesan expectations. This student may require remedial assistance in order to be academically successful in a content area.

For oral expression, handwriting, social development, work skills, art, computer, music/drama and PE, measurement codes are O = Outstanding, S = Satisfactory, U = Unsatisfactory.

Kindergarten utilizes a skills-based report card with the following indicators:
Academic Performance Level

Meets Grade-Level Standards	3
Making Adequate Progress Toward Grade-Level	2
Not Making Adequate Progress Toward Grade-Level	1
Not Assessed At This Time	

Habits of a Learner
E=Exemplary; M=Most of the time; S=Sometimes; R=Rarely

Preschool utilizes a skills-based report card with the following indicators:
Academic Performance Level

Meets Grade-Level Standards	3
Making Adequate Progress Toward Grade-Level	2
Not Making Adequate Progress Toward Grade-Level	1

2.6 Honor Roll (Grades 5-8)

Academic High Honors will be awarded to those students who receive all As in the core curriculum areas: religion, English, literature, mathematics, science, and social studies.

Academic Honors will be awarded to those students who receive all As and Bs in the core curriculum areas: religion, English, literature, mathematics, science, and social studies.

2.7 Homework Policies

Homework is an integral part of the total instructional program at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School in grades K-8. It is meant to support the learning experiences that occur daily in the classroom. Homework should promote and develop the following: independent study, independent research, and independent skills practice.

Student Responsibility
It is the responsibility of the student to turn assignments in on time. Homework is considered late if a student does not have the work when they arrive at school. Students are responsible for homework when absent. Students must communicate to their teacher any mitigating circumstances (excluding extra-curricular activities) that prevent completion of homework.

Parent Responsibility
Parents should provide a specific time and place for homework. Parents should help supervise but not complete the child's homework.

Teacher Responsibility
Teachers will plan homework designed to enrich and reinforce work introduced during class time.

Assignments may include the following:

- Practice to help students master objectives
- Study to prepare students for assessments
- Extension to expand understanding of new skills or concepts
- Projects to reinforce interdisciplinary skills

Time Allotment for Homework
The time it takes for individual students to do homework will vary. Generally, homework should not exceed the following:

Grade K	10 minutes
Grade 1-2	20-30 minutes
Grades 3-4	30-45 minutes
Grades 5-6	45-60 minutes
Grades 7-8	60-90 minutes

Parents with homework time allotment concerns should contact the teacher directly. Assigned work brought to the Upper School by parents or guardians during the day will be placed in the designated teacher's box and will be considered late.

2.8 Homework Due to Vacation / Planned Absences

Parents are asked to schedule vacations during regular school breaks only (see official school calendar). The school calendar provides for extended weekends throughout the school year. Parents are encouraged to schedule trips or family outings during these times to eliminate the need to interrupt a child's learning process. Missed assignments are the student's responsibility to make up. Students are required to make up all work missed and will be allowed one day for each day of absence to complete the missing work. Teachers will not provide assignments in advance of a vacation.

2.9 Homework Policy Due to Illness

Students are required to make up all work missed due to absence. Students have one school day to make up work for each day they are absent. Teachers will determine how and when the student will make up missed schoolwork. It is the student's responsibility to obtain and complete make-up work.

Upper School students should check FACTS Family Portal for agendas and homework. Any parent who wants to pick up books and assignments must contact the teacher before 11:00 AM via email. Lower School parents may request makeup classwork and homework by emailing the teacher by 8:30 AM.

2.10 Library

Every grade has a specified library time that supplements the formal reading program. Procedures are in place on each campus for book check out. Students are responsible for the books and materials checked out from the library. Replacement fees are in place for any damaged or lost library materials billed through FACTS incidental billing.

2.11 Physical Education

Physical Education is a required course, and the school does not recognize exemption requests or appeals.

2.12 Progress Reports / Report Cards

Progress Reports

Lower School students in grades 1 and 2 receive a progress report at the midway point of each quarter. This report allows students and parents/guardians to be aware of student strengths and weaknesses.

Upper School parents are responsible for checking their child's progress by reviewing grades posted at the midway check point. Academic grades on this day will be live on FACTS Family Portal at 4 PM.

Report Cards

Report cards are issued quarterly for grades K-8. PK students receive two report cards, one at the end of each semester. Report cards are expected to be reviewed by the student and the parent/guardian. It is the parents' responsibility to maintain a copy of their children's report cards for their records.

2.13 Promotion / Retention

A student is advanced to the next higher grade or course if all State of Texas and Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops Education Department (TCCB ED) requirements have been met. The final decision for retention rests with the administration.

Upper School

A student in grades 3-8 who fails a core subject for the year (math, science, social studies, religion, English, or literature) will be required to successfully complete a summer school program before being promoted to the next grade. Parents of students failing two or more core subjects will be required to meet with administration to determine if it is in the best interest of the student to remain at the school.

Lower School

Students in grades K-2 must be able to demonstrate mastery of current grade-level subject matter in reading, language arts, and mathematics, and have reached a developmental stage of maturity for learning. Summer school, tutoring, retention, or referral to another school may be required. The final decision for retention and placement is the responsibility of the administration based upon developmental maturity, report card grades, and conferences with teachers and parents/guardians.

2.14 Standardized Testing

In compliance with Diocesan policies and procedures, St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School administers the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) two times a year. Grades 1-2 are tested

in reading and mathematics while grades 3-8 are tested in reading, language arts, mathematics, and science. The Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) will be administered in the fall in grades 3-8. The results of these tests are used by teachers for assessment purposes and to direct instruction. Additional testing may also be administered at the school's discretion.

2.15 Student Records / Cumulative Records

Parental Access to Student Records

Parents will be allowed to inspect and review their child's education records, at a date and time convenient to the school, unless a court has ordered otherwise. Records will always be reviewed in the presence of school personnel appointed by the chief administrator. The school may provide copies of the records and, if it does so, may charge a fee. The transcript request form is located on the school website at staschool.org/parents and should be filled out by the parent.

In the event a court order is in place which limits a parent's access to a student's educational records, or which otherwise limits the contact a parent may have with the school regarding the student, the family must provide a complete, final, signed copy of the order to the school when the student is enrolled. If such a court order is issued after a student has enrolled, the family must provide a complete, final, signed copy of the order to the school as soon as it is signed by the judge.

The school will, when and to the extent reasonably possible, honor restrictions on access to educational records imposed by such an order. However, school personnel are not family lawyers and it is not the school's responsibility to enforce court orders.

Schools will generally not release a student's records to third parties without the written consent of a student's parent or legally responsible adult. As an exception to this rule, a school may disclose student records to or for:

a) School officials with legitimate educational interest;
b) Other schools to which a student is transferring;
c) Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
d) Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
e) Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
f) Accrediting organizations;
g) To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
h) Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
i) State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific state law.

If a specific reason exists to further limit access to a student's educational records, the student's parent or legally responsible adult must provide a specific, written request that explains the basis for the additional restriction to the school's chief administrator. The chief administrator, in his or her sole discretion, will determine whether implementing special procedures for a student's records is appropriate and reasonably feasible on a case-by-case basis.

2.15 Student Support Services

The purpose of Student Support Services is to ensure that each individual student's learning needs are addressed to help him/her meet the unique and rigorous challenges of our curriculum with success and a sense of confidence. In order to meet this purpose, the services provided utilize a team approach, collaborating with teachers, parents, administration, and outside

professionals to identify and meet student learning and social development needs. Because the program is individualized, the application of these guidelines will vary.

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School has an excellent support system, which is further enhanced by:

- Reading Specialists – Availability of this support is supervised by the school Learning Specialist based on a concern made by the classroom teacher. The Learning Specialist and Reading Specialist collaborate to meet the needs of Lower School students who need additional reinforcement in order to meet grade-level goals. Students with diagnosed reading disabilities take first priority when creating the Reading Specialists' schedules at the beginning of each school year.
- Build / Take Flight – These are programs are specifically designed to provide qualifying students a multi-sensory approach to reading instruction. This service is provided only for students who have a diagnosis or when a professional with the appropriate credential to make the diagnosis has authorized this intervention.
- Upper School Math Specialist - Availability of this support, supervised by the school Learning Specialist, is based on students with a diagnosed math disability that specifically identifies the need for math intervention.

2.16 Student Referral for Testing & Evaluation

Student support services are available to any student who is having academic, behavioral, and/or emotional difficulty with particular focus on identifying and serving students with learning disabilities.

In some instances, the Learning Specialist will need to investigate a student's academic/emotional challenges through a more detailed process. This process may include student observation, teacher input, parent input, and/or screening instruments. When the results indicate a need for additional intervention/evaluation, the Learning Specialist will provide recommendations for outside services that may include tutors, psychologists, diagnosticians, speech language pathologists, occupational therapists, medical providers, or other professionals.

2.17 Students with Learning Differences – Accommodations

Although St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School does not offer special education services, students with diagnosed disabilities may qualify for accommodations in the classroom. The student will have an Individual Accommodation Plan (IAP) written, implemented, and monitored by the Learning Specialist. Accommodations provided will not alter the curriculum of St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School. Accommodations are utilized only when academic integrity can be maintained. The Learning Specialist and/or Counselor determine what accommodations are made based on the diagnostic testing results/report, teacher input, parent input, and the individual needs of the learner. Modifications to curriculum may be made only for students with a diagnosed need.

All form requests related to outside diagnostic testing or special services (occupational therapy, speech, etc.) must be submitted directly to the Learning Specialist, not teachers.

Criteria for Accommodations in the Classroom

Eligibility for accommodation necessitates the student meets the following requirements:

- The student must have an educational need or diagnosis that directly affects his/her ability to learn.

- The student must have been evaluated by a professional with the appropriate credential to make the diagnosis (e.g. psychologist, diagnostician, doctor).
- Evaluations must be current as outlined in the ETS guidelines (Educational Testing Service, www.ets.org). Extenuating circumstances may warrant an individualized decision for a student's reevaluation.
- A full report must be submitted to the Learning Specialist for use in developing an Individual Accommodation Plan (IAP).
- The report will be kept on file with the Learning Specialist.
- The report must include a clear description of the diagnosis listed in the current edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) or in the current edition of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD), scores from measures of cognitive functioning and academic achievement, and information that supports the diagnosis along with specific recommendations for appropriate accommodations.

2.18 Counselor

The Counselor helps students and their families overcome difficulties that may interfere with the educational experience at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School. Students may be referred to the school Counselor by parents, teachers, and/or the student themselves. The school Counselor uses brief solution-focused counseling modalities tailored individually to each student and family and assists with crisis interventions, testing and psychological referrals, individual/group counseling, child safety, drug education, and preliminary screenings for mental health. The school Counselor also serves as a liaison providing outside community resources to assist families when indicated and collaborating with outside providers for a multidisciplinary approach to optimize student success and well-being. The school Counselor does not provide ongoing therapy to students.

A comprehensive guidance program is initiated and implemented under the direction of the Counselor. Guidance is provided to students in order to assist them in making decisions that impact their school life and home life in a positive way.

2.19 Guidance

Social and emotional learning is a critical component of the educational experience at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School. At the Lower School, teachers lead students through the Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS)® Program using weekly lessons. PATHS® addresses the five distinctive components of social emotional learning: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship management, and responsible decision making. At the Upper School, grades 3-5 utilize Second Step®, a social emotional learning program that builds a culture of connectedness and empowers students with the skills and concepts to succeed socially, in academics, and in life. Grades 6-8 use programming from Sandy Hook Promise Foundation alongside customized lessons that align with the Diocese of Dallas Catholic Schools Guidance Curriculum Standards.

2.20 Physical, Mental, and Emotional Health Concerns

Physical, mental, and emotional health concerns that have been brought to the school's attention will be discussed with the parent/guardian. At the discretion of the administration, the school may require an evaluation by a licensed medical professional for the student to return to school at the parent/guardian's expense. Upon receipt of the evaluation, the school will review to determine

enrollment eligibility as well as potential required protocols to ensure the student's safety, wellness, and continued academic success upon the student's return to campus.

Students with a substance abuse problem, eating disorder, or any other mental/emotional health issue, diagnosed or documented by a medical or mental health professional, will be required to successfully participate in a treatment program to maintain enrollment eligibility. A meeting will be held with the parent/guardian, student, administration, and school counselor to discuss appropriate treatment options and communication about that treatment program.

Withdrawal from or nonperformance in a required treatment program may result in a student's dismissal from school at the school's sole discretion. The school will collect all documentation and a re-integration committee consisting of an administrator, (school) counselor, school nurse, and an academic representative will decide on the student's participation and enrollment eligibility at school. The re-integration committee will review the circumstances affecting the student and take into consideration the school resources available and necessary to meet the student's needs while continuing to meet the needs of all students.

A signed release form permitting the exchange of information between the school and medical/mental health service providers may be required as a condition of continued enrollment.

2.21 Tutoring Policy

Teachers provide academic support through tutoring on an as-needed basis to reinforce classroom instruction, address specific learning needs, or assist students who would benefit from additional practice. Tutoring sessions are scheduled at the teacher's discretion before or after school and are typically offered by teacher invitation or in consultation with parents.

Parents who have concerns about their child's academic progress are encouraged to communicate with the classroom teacher. Together, the teacher and parent can determine whether tutoring or other instructional supports are appropriate. Availability, frequency, and duration of tutoring may vary based on student need and teacher schedules.

Section Three: Admissions and Enrollment

3.1 Age Requirements

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School is a parish school and welcomes applicants desiring a Catholic education. The administration will make final decisions as to the admission of all new students to the school, as well as the placement of all new and returning students in grades PK-8. Students must be 4 years old by September 1 of the year they are applying to enter PK and 5 years old by September 1 to enter kindergarten.

The Principal and admissions committee reserve the right to conduct preadmission screenings and evaluations to determine the ability of St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School to meet a student's individual needs.

3.2 Submission of Required Documents

Applications must include:

- birth certificate
- baptismal certificate (only if Catholic)

- most recent report card/transcripts
- any standardized test results
- any diagnostic testing completed
- current immunizations* record signed by a medical physician
- confidential evaluation from the student's current teacher(s) and principal
- non-refundable $175 application fee per child

*St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School does not accommodate provisional enrollment; applicants not in compliance with immunization requirements will not be accepted. Students must always remain current with immunizations while enrolled at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School. If for any reason the student is not current with immunizations and requests to comply are not carried out, the student will be removed from school.

3.3 Enrollment Agreement

Each parochial elementary school and diocesan governed school shall establish a basic tuition rate per student which realistically reflects the actual cost of instruction and the economic characteristics of the school community in accordance with the guidelines listed below.

Each parochial elementary school and diocesan governed school and private school shall use the standard diocesan enrollment agreement. Schools may also prepare a school-specific addendum to the enrollment agreement provided that it does not conflict with or vary the terms of the diocesan enrollment agreement found below. Each student's enrollment agreement must be signed by the student's parents or other adult(s) with the legal right to enroll the student in school.

Parents must agree to the Diocesan enrollment policy as follows:

Authority To Enroll: I/We am/are the natural parent(s) or managing conservator(s) of the student listed below and have the legal authority to enroll this student in school. Having considered all the facts, I/we believe that enrolling this student in St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School for the coming school year is in student's best interest. I/we understand that St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School is a Roman Catholic School and that the student's education and the expectations for the student's behavior and the conduct of the student's family in relation to the school community will be consistent with and governed by Christian morals, values, and principles.

Family Handbook: I/we have been provided with and have read, understood, and had the opportunity to ask any questions regarding St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School's student/family handbook. I/we understand that the handbook is incorporated into this agreement and forms a part of this legally binding contract. As a result, I/we understand that the student's continued enrollment at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School during the coming school year is contingent upon compliance with the policies set out in the handbook by the student and by the student's family in their dealings with the school community. I/we understand and agree that failure to comply with the expectations for conduct set out in the handbook may result in discipline, up to and including separation of the student from the school at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School's sole discretion and without any right to appeal. The handbook is updated annually and released at the beginning of each school year. I/We understand that amendments to this document can be made throughout the duration of the school year at the discretion of the administration.

Custody Documentation / Access to Records: I/we understand that I am/we are responsible for providing St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School with a current and complete

copy of any court order affecting the student's enrollment in school, or the right of a parent or conservator of the student to make educational decisions for the student, communicate with St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School, or access the student's educational records. I/we understand that it is not St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School's responsibility to mediate or resolve disputes regarding custody of the student and related matters, and that involving St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School in custody and similar disputes requires the school to expend unbudgeted time and other resources. I/we have read and agree to the provisions of the school family handbook regarding St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School's right to recover attorneys' fees incurred as a result of Student or family misconduct and custody and related legal matters.

Special Education / Medical Authorization: I/we have informed St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School of all relevant information regarding any special educational or medical needs of the student and agree to advise the school if the student's educational or medical needs change during the school year. I/we agree that St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School may contact any person who signs this agreement or whose name is provided to the school as an emergency contact regarding any emergency involving the student and may disclose to those individuals' information regarding the student's education, behavior, and/or medical conditions as needed.

Financial Obligation: I/we have been provided with and understand all necessary information regarding tuition, fees, and costs associated with the student's enrollment at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School for the coming school year and am/are satisfied that I/we will be able to pay all such tuition, fees, and costs subject to any applicable tuition assistance awarded. I/we understand that the school's budget for the school year anticipates full payment of all amounts due on behalf of all enrolled students. Accordingly, I/we understand that failure to pay all tuition, fees, and costs in full and on time may, in School's sole discretion, result in the student's separation from St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School without any refund of amounts already paid.

3.4 Financial Requirements

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School expects all families who have a child or children enrolled in the school to pay tuition and fees promptly when due. Failure to pay tuition and fees when due impairs the ability of the school to provide quality education for all students. The tuition rate set at the time of registration continues throughout the school year and does not change if a non-Catholic becomes a Catholic during the year, or if a non-parishioner becomes a parishioner during the year. Tuition status is determined by the Pastor.

3.5 Order of Evaluating Applications

In cases where spots are limited, applications are prioritized. A prioritized application does not guarantee acceptance. The following criteria will determine admission for applicants once all academic and behavioral standards are met:

1. Contributing parishioners* with children currently enrolled at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School
2. Contributing parishioners* with new students applying to St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School
3. Non-contributing parishioners with children currently enrolled at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School
4. Non-contributing parishioners with new students applying to St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School
5. Parishioners of other Catholic parishes

6. Non-Catholics with children currently enrolled at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School
7. Non-Catholics with children applying to St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School for the first time

Please note: Siblings of currently enrolled students are not guaranteed enrollment.

*To be considered an Active Participating Parishioner in our church and therefore qualify for the tuition rate corresponding to that status, the following criteria must be met:

1. At least one parent must be Catholic and registered with St. Thomas Aquinas Parish for a minimum of one year.

2. Children attending St. Thomas Aquinas School must be receiving or preparing to receive all sacraments, appropriate for their age, up to the point of entry into the school.

3. An active, participating parish family in good standing is one who is actively involved in parish life as manifested by traceable stewardship of time, talent, and treasure. Families must have an established contribution record at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church for one calendar year prior to application and must have given the minimum $900 to the church offertory to qualify for the active parishioner tuition rate. If transferring from another Catholic parish, families must provide documentation for/or proof of giving to their previous church.

Contributions to the Parish Offertory must be made on a consistent basis through Faith Direct - at least monthly. Families who miss one or more months of contributions are expected to meet the minimum threshold by December 31st.

3.6 Re-enrollment

Re-enrollment of existing students at all grade levels begins in January. A non-refundable registration fee is required at that time. Re-enrollment at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School is not automatically extended to every student.

Catholic families of current students receiving Parishioner rate re-enrolling for the next school year must reach a minimum threshold of $1,400 in the previous calendar year by giving to the following funds:

St. Thomas Aquinas Parish Offertory – **minimum of $900.00**

Monsignor John T. Gulczynski Endowment Fund – **minimum of $300.00**

Annual GAP Drive – **minimum of $200.00**

3.7 Title IX Non-Discrimination Policy

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School admit students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. They do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in administration of educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, athletic and other school-administered programs.

3.8 Wait List

The Admissions Office maintains a waitlist of currently accepted students for that school year

only. If a spot becomes available, the unranked waitlist will be reviewed, and an offer will be extended.

3.9 Withdrawal Procedures

Parents and guardians must notify the Registrar in writing to withdraw a student. The Registrar will notify school administration and teachers.

Section Four: Attendance and Absences

4.1 Absences

Repeated absences may be grounds for suspension, retention, or dismissal. Students are expected to be present and on time every school day. Parents must notify the school of any absence by 8:00 AM. See the Back-to-School Guide for information on how to report an absence.

Parents are asked to schedule vacations during regular school breaks only (see official school calendar). Teachers will not give assignments in advanced of a vacation.

4.2 Arrival and Dismissal Schedules

Lower School (PK – 2nd)	
Student Drop-Off	7:30 AM – 7:50 AM
School Day	7:55 AM – 3:00 PM
Half Day	7:55 AM – 12:00 PM
Extended Day	From Dismissal – 6:00 PM
Extended Day Half Day	From Dismissal – 4:00 PM
Upper School (3rd – 8th)	
Student Drop-Off	7:30 AM – 7:45 AM
School Day	7:50 AM – 3:10 PM
Half Day	7:55 AM – 12:10 PM
Extended Day	From Dismissal – 6:00 PM
Extended Day Half Day	From Dismissal – 4:00 PM

Neither campus opens for students until 7:30 AM. Children must never be unattended outside the school building prior to 7:30 AM.

4.3 Attendance

Attendance: The Texas Compulsory Attendance Law requires that each school offer 180 days of instruction. A student may not be given credit for a class or the school year if he or she has been absent more than 10% (18 days) of the year, which is 19 or more absences of the required 180 days. Parents will be contacted by administration when excessive absences or tardies occur. The school shares attendance information with parents regularly.

Regular attendance is essential to the academic success of a student. Repeated absences may be grounds for retention or dismissal. Students are expected to be present and on time every school day. Student absences must be reported through the app or by email to Cheryl Neeley (cneeley@staschool.org) for Lower School or to Lisa Meara (lmeara@staschool.org) for Upper School by 9:00 AM. Upon the return of the child to school, a note is to be sent to the office with the exact date of absence. If a child is absent for more than five consecutive days, a doctor's

release will be required. It is the responsibility of the student to make up missed schoolwork and/or tests as soon as possible following his/her return to school.

4.4 Extended Day

Extended Day care is provided on both campuses for students enrolled in the program immediately after dismissal time until 6:00 PM on full school days and 4:00 PM on early dismissal days. Extended Day registration opens during the enrollment process. Drop-ins cannot be accommodated.

Extended Day is closed on the following days:

August 11, 2026
August 12, 2026
November 20, 2026
December 15, 2026
December 18, 2026
May 27, 2027

4.5 Make-up work

Students are required to make up all work missed due to absence. Students have one school day to make up work for each day they are absent. Teachers will determine how and when the student will make up missed schoolwork. It is the student's responsibility to obtain and complete make-up work.

Upper School students should check FACTS Family Portal, Google Classroom, or the Student Planner for agendas and homework. Any parent who wants to pick up books and assignments must contact the teacher before 11:00 AM via email. Lower School parents may request makeup classwork and homework by emailing the teacher by 8:30 AM.

4.6 Procedures for Releasing from School

Verification of all medical appointments is required. Submit this written verification **(doctor's note)** to the front desk upon the student's return to school.

Release of Students During School Hours

Students are to remain in class until they are called to the office for release. Students will be released to their parent/legal guardian through the school office. Students will not be released to persons other than a custodial parent/guardian unless notification is received in writing from the parent/guardian prior to dismissal. A log is kept, which includes the name of child, time of release/time of return, and the name of the person picking up. Children will not be released **after 2:30 PM** to avoid interruptions of the dismissal process unless it is absolutely unavoidable. Lunch and recess are considered an integral part of the day; students are not released during this time to leave for lunch.

Students will not be allowed to leave class to attend siblings' school related activities except for the following: Veterans Day, Baccalaureate Mass, Kindergarten Graduation, and 8th Grade Graduation.

4.7 School Office Hours

Monday – Friday, 7:30 AM - 3:30 PM during school days
Half Day: 7:30 AM - 12:00 PM

4.8 School Participation – Day of Absence

Students who are absent may not participate in athletic or other extra-curricular activities until they have returned to school. Students must follow the school illness return policy. (See health services section of handbook.)

4.9 Tardy Policy

Prompt arrival at school is expected of all students. Late arrivals disrupt class and cause loss of valuable learning time.

Lower School students are considered tardy if not in their homerooms by 7:55 AM. Tardy students must sign in at the front desk with a parent/guardian.

Upper School students are considered tardy at 7:50 AM, Tardy students must check in at the front desk with a parent. Parents will be notified when tardiness becomes excessive.

Section Five: Athletics and Extra Curriculars

5.1 Absence from School

Students who are absent may not participate in athletic or other extra-curricular activities until they have returned to school. Students must follow the school illness return policy. (See health services section of handbook.)

5.2 Athletic Facilities Use Policy

All STA facilities are for the sole use of STA School, Dallas Parochial League (DPL) teams, and approved parish organizations only. Any use of the athletic facilities is at all times subject to compliance with the Diocesan Safe Environment policy. All facilities are subject to close at the discretion of STA School and Church.

5.3 Coaching

The sport coordinators, in conjunction with the Athletic Director (AD), select coaches for their respective sport. The final decision for placement and selection of all coaches will be approved by the St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School administration. Coaches have discretion to appoint an assistant(s) with the approval of the AD. Coaches and assistant coaches of the team may be suspended, removed or not allowed to coach for failure to comply with Dallas Parochial League, school, and church policies. Such actions will be the decision of the Principal, based on recommendations and input from the AD and the Athletic Committee.

Upon assignment, each coach is charged with his/her responsibilities as described:

- Coaches are required to set a good Christian example at all times. The coach will lead student-athletes in prayer at games and practices.
- Coaches are to encourage sportsmanship by student-athletes and to create an environment in which students-athletes can learn meaningful life values.
- Coaches are to demonstrate good sportsmanship at all times and will refrain from protesting calls by game officials to the point where the team or the school are shown in a poor light.
- Coaches are never to lead a practice or game if he/she has been drinking alcoholic beverages. Profanity and abusive language by coaches will not be tolerated. DPL rules prohibit “…the use of tobacco in any athletic forum.”

DPL reserves the right to fine schools for violations of its rules. Coaches must be aware that such fines levied against the school will be passed on to the person(s) whose behavior or actions resulted in the fine.

At no time will disciplinary action take the form of excessive physical punishment or harassment. Coaches should seek alternative methods of discipline. Disciplinary measures, when necessary, should be fair, equitable, and used in moderation.

At no time will disciplinary action take the form of physical punishment or harassment. Disciplinary measures, when necessary, should be fair, equitable, and used in moderation.

In addition to the education and training of student-athletes, coaches are responsible for the safety and security of both student-athletes and school property entrusted to them.

All coaches, assistant coaches, team managers, and other representatives are required to have completed a background check as part of the Safe Environment Program prior to coaching.

All coaches, assistant coaches, team managers and other representatives are required to attend the DPL's mandatory workshop "Play Like a Champion" prior to coaching in the league. Workshop schedules are available on the DPL Website. Volunteers must be in attendance for the entire workshop to be able to coach in the league.

Coaches are to remain on the premises at practices and games until all student-athletes have been picked up by a parent or other designated individual. If the coach is unable to fulfill this responsibility, he/she is required to arrange for another cleared adult to stay with the student-athlete. Coaches should keep to scheduled practice times, and report in writing all habitual tardiness in picking up student- athletes with the offending parent, sport coordinator, and AD.

Coaches should have a first aid kit available at all practices and games. In the event an accident does occur, the coach is to contact the athletic director immediately by email.

All coaches, assistant coaches, team managers, and other representatives must annually attend the "Blood Borne Pathogens" and first aid training session provided each year by the school as required by the Dallas Diocese. In the case of a sprain or bruise, apply ice as soon as possible and elevate the injured area. In the event of a serious injury including, but not limited to, severe bleeding, broken bone, possible concussion or unconsciousness, have a coach, team manager, other team representative, parent, or student-athlete call 911 immediately.

Proper procedure should be adhered to as follows:

1. Have an adult supervise the injured student-athlete at all times.
2. Do not move the injured student-athlete until professional help arrives.
3. In the case of severe bleeding, make sure protective gloves are worn and apply pressure to the injured area.
4. All waste must be disposed of properly.
5. Notify the AD as soon as possible.

Coaches are also responsible for the safe and secure use of school property. Use of school property (equipment and facilities) is arranged through the appropriate sport coordinator and AD. The use of school facilities including but not limited to the field, gymnasiums, and meeting rooms is a privilege that may be revoked for failure to take care of the facilities. It is the coach's responsibility to ensure that playing surfaces and other conditions provide a safe environment for the student-athletes. This includes being aware of the presence of unauthorized individuals and other risks to the student- athletes. When using the gymnasiums, exterior doors must never

be propped opened. Unsafe conditions with respect to that school's facilities should be reported promptly to the sport coordinator and AD. Coaches are responsible for ensuring that the school's facilities are properly cared for while under their control.

The field may be closed occasionally due to maintenance, inclement weather, etc. Coaches should call the AD to determine the status of the field during inclement weather. The field will be immediately closed without further notice if lightning and/or thunder are evident.

5.4 Dallas Parochial League

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School students in grades 5-8 may participate in a variety of sports within the Dallas Parochial League (DPL) athletic program. The governing organization for St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School athletics is the Dallas Parochial League. Information regarding the DPL can be found on the DPL website www.dallasparochialleague.com.The St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School Athletic Director (AD) oversees our students and coaches. Visit the DPL website for more information about individual sports.

5.5 Division/Formation of Teams

In grades 5-6, teams will be formed in accordance with DPL rules. Student athletes may be grouped by position and assigned to a team, or by other similar selection processes defined by the AD.

In grades 7-8, teams will be formed in accordance with DPL rules. Tryouts for teams will be conducted under the supervision of the AD. Student athletes will be grouped by position and assigned to a team, or by other similar selection processes defined by the AD. Outside judges will be utilized when needed.

Regarding athletic evaluations, (volleyball, flag football, basketball, futsal, soccer and baseball) for the purposes of team placement, all decisions are final. All evaluation scores are confidential and will not be shared with parents.

5.6 Extracurricular Activities

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School offers a wide range of extracurricular activities. Students represent St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School whether these activities occur on or off campus. Participation in any extracurricular activity, including athletics, is a privilege, not a right, and should not interfere with academic responsibilities. Students must follow the same behavioral expectations and guidelines that are in place during the school day. Students' academics and conduct will be monitored by the school, and a student may be removed from participation in such activities at the sole discretion of administration. If there is a fee associated with a particular STA school sponsored extracurricular activity, it will be billed through FACTS incidental billing.

> Parents agree to the following Diocesan policy on extracurricular activities:
> Subject to the Release and Indemnification terms (see section 416)
>
> I/we consent to Student's participation in school-sponsored extracurricular activities, including on-campus and off-campus extracurricular activities.
>
> I/we have read and discussed with Student the conduct expectations set forth in the Handbook and understand that Student's continued participation in extracurricular activities is conditioned upon his/her compliance with all applicable polices and rules of conduct when engaged in any School-sponsored activity, whether academic, extracurricular, or otherwise.

Transportation to/from Extracurricular Activities: Subject to the Release and Indemnification terms (see section 416)

I/we consent to Student's use of School-sponsored transportation to and from any and all School-sponsored extracurricular activities described above. I/we have read and discussed with Student the conduct expectations set forth in the Handbook and understand that Student's continued use of School transportation is conditioned upon his/her compliance with all applicable policies and rules of conduct.

5.7 Logo Usage

All logos, names, and images associated with St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School and its associated entities are for the sole use of the school. The logos, insignia, and images may not be reproduced, duplicated, or altered without written consent from the school administration. This includes any and all St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School-related logos as well as images from the school website. Independent use of any of these logos, names, and images for sports teams, uniforms, paper goods, clothing, decals, monogrammed or imprinted items, etc. is prohibited.

Particularly in grades PK - 4th, but also applying to any teams formed outside DPL, teams may not register under the "St. Thomas Aquinas" name. Team uniforms may not bear the name St. Thomas Aquinas, STA, any school logo, or STA Athletic insignia.

Youth Sports Participation

STA does not coordinate teams for students in PK - 4th grade. Any and all teams formed outside of DPL/STA must be in compliance with the rules and regulations of the association/league in which the team plays. Individuals should contact local sport leagues for registration deadlines and other pertinent information.

Team practices are coordinated by each association/league and may not be held at an STA athletic facility.

Practices

For the purpose of this policy, *athletic event* is defined as a contest, practice, or other scheduled meeting of team members.

In grades 5-6, no more than two (2) athletic events per sport are allowed during the school week (Monday through Thursday). Exceptions to these guidelines may be granted by the AD with the approval of administration.

In grades 7-8, no more than three (3) athletic events per sport are allowed during the school week (Monday through Thursday). Exceptions to these guidelines may be granted by the AD with the approval of the administration.

As long as a student remains in good academic standing, the number of extracurricular activities in which the student participates and the time commitment required for these activities, rests with the student-athlete's parents.

Contests

St. Thomas Aquinas strives for each student-athlete to have a minimum playing time of 25% per contest.

Exceptions to this rule are as follows:

1. Enlarged roster sizes may affect the minimum playing time policy. Efforts to limit squad sizes will be addressed by the formation of additional teams (if facilities, coaches, etc. are available).
2. A coach may recommend that a student-athlete be held out of a contest/practice for disciplinary reasons associated with misconduct (disrespect, insubordination, etc.). The coach must inform the student-athlete, parents, coordinator, and AD in writing and/or verbally regarding his/her recommendation. The AD and coordinator will have the final decision.
3. Student-athletes may also be withheld from contests/practices due to habitual tardiness, failure to attend practices/games provided such situations are not the result of illness or other reason beyond the student-athlete's control, and academic ineligibility. Presence at school is required to participate in an athletic event that day.
4. A student-athlete may be held out of a contest at the discretion of school administration, the coach, the coordinator, and/or AD when safety of the student-athletes is of concern.
5. On the varsity level only, if a regular season game is crucial to a playoff position or potential championship, the coach may ask the AD to modify this requirement.
6. Post-season contests are exempt from the minimum playing time requirement.
7. Student-athletes may be dismissed from a team with the approval of school administration and the AD. No registration fees will be refunded.

St. Thomas Aquinas Athletic Covenant

To ensure the athletic experience at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School is a positive experience for our student-athletes as well as parent and volunteer coaches, and to ensure a Christ-like environment, we ask parents to commit to the following:

1. Encourage athletes on all teams.
2. Keep all comments positive whether on the field or in the stands.
3. Only players and coaches are permitted on field/court, unless prior approval by the athletic director has been given.
4. To ensure consistency and strategy of the game as well as specific rules, please respect the coach's ability to direct the student-athlete during games and practices.
5. Criticizing or using abusive language toward officials, coaches, and opponents will not be tolerated.
6. Parents of student-athletes are responsible for all family members and friends attending the games. Please do not leave children unattended.
7. Parents and students may not challenge final team placement in any sports needing student-athlete evaluations.
8. Student-athlete should first speak to their coach with any team/playing concerns. After doing this, if more discussion is needed, the parents and the student-athlete may meet with the coach together. Please remember it is best to observe the 24-hour cool-off period.

Governance

The Athletic Director, appointed by the President and Principal, supervises and directs the extracurricular athletic program in a manner consistent with the policies of the school and the DPL. The AD also oversees the scheduling and maintenance of the field and gymnasiums. The Athletic Committee, chaired by the AD, assists in the coordination of the athletic program and serves in an advisory capacity. Committee members include coordinators for each sport, the Booster Club president, and a recording secretary. The coordinators and recording secretary are appointed by the AD with approval of the Principal. The AD may appoint additional members

as appropriate. Coordinators' responsibilities may include registration, tryouts, practice schedules, assigning coaches, and uniform/equipment distribution and return.

Parents agree to the following Diocesan policies on athletics:

Subject to the Release and Indemnification terms (see section 416)
I/we consent to Student's participation in School-sponsored athletic activities, including without limitation athletics-related training and exercise programs, practices, School-sponsored pre- and post-game activities, games, competitions, and tournaments. I/we have read, discussed with Student, and understand the Student conduct expectations set forth in the Handbook and understand that Student's continued participation in athletics is conditioned upon his/her compliance with all applicable policies and rules of conduct when engaged in any School-related activity, whether academic, athletic, or otherwise.

Consent and Medical Authorization
I hereby consent and authorize my child (children) to participate in the St. Thomas Aquinas (STA) Athletic Program. I certify that said student-athlete is insured, that a physician has examined said student-athlete for this school year and that the physician has stated that the student-athlete is physically able to participate in supervised athletic activities.

In the case of a medical emergency, I authorize the coach and/or other STA team representatives to seek medical attention for the student-athlete for injuries that may occur as a result of the student-athlete's participation in athletic activities.

It is understood, and I hereby waive and release St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School, STA administrators, sport coordinators, coaches, other STA team representatives and St. Thomas Aquinas Parish of and from any liability in the event of an accident or injury that may occur as a result of the student-athlete's participation in athletic activities.

5.8 Parental Support and Sportsmanship

Just as the school has certain expectations for student-athletes and coaches, expectations also exist with respect to parents and other spectators. These include the following guidelines:

- Know and demonstrate the fundamentals of good sportsmanship at all times.
- Do not applaud errors by opponents or penalties assessed against them.
- Do not heckle, jeer, or distract the opposing team or their coaches.
- Do not criticize student-athletes on any team.
- Avoid profane language and obnoxious behavior that is contrary to good Christian values and sportsmanship.
- Censure fellow spectators whose behavior is inconsistent with the mission and philosophy described in this handbook.
- Respect the judgment and strategy of the coaches.
- Parents and spectators should not challenge coaches during games or practices. If you have a grievance, it should be addressed outside the game/practice environment. Unresolved issues should be reported to the sport coordinator and the AD.
- Parents and spectators may not protest calls of game officials and score keepers. Direct dialogue with a referee during a game in progress can result in expulsion or suspension from future games.

- The DPL reserves the right to levy fines against schools whose parents/spectators fail to comply with DPL rules. Any such fines levied against STA will be passed on to the offending spectator or appropriate parent. Other sanctions may be imposed by the school, with or without DPL action, against parents/spectators who fail to comply with these rules.
- Parents are responsible for picking up trash and disposing of it in area receptacles. Parents should clean up school facilities and areas used by teams after each event. In addition to complying with the rules above, parents are required to support the athletic program in various ways.
- Parents should ensure their student-athlete arrives at the appointed time for practices/games ready to participate. Parents should promptly pick up their child at the end of practices/games. Parents should notify coaches as early as possible if their child will miss a practice/game.
- Parents of student athletes are required to work a shift(s) in the concession stand as well as serve as a gym monitor. Shifts will be assigned to parents at the beginning of the season. Parents may trade shifts with another parent but must ensure that the assigned shift is worked. Parents who coach their child in the specified sport are exempt from this requirement.

5.9 Student Responsibilities and Expectations

All STA student-athletes in grades 5-8 who are in good conduct and academic standing may participate in STA sports. Students are ineligible to participate in STA athletics and/or extracurricular events when their grade in any class is below a 70 and/or their conduct reflects a “U” (Unsatisfactory).

Non-STA student-athletes may participate on STA teams under the following conditions when it does not interfere with the opportunities for STA student-athletes to participate. Non-STA student-athletes must be students of other Catholic schools within the Dallas Diocese who would not otherwise have the opportunity to participate in the sport.

Following are expectations for STA student-athletes:

- Know and demonstrate the fundamentals of good sportsmanship at all times.
- Do not applaud errors by opponents or penalties assessed against them.
- Do not heckle, jeer, or distract the opposing team or its coaches.
- Do not criticize any student-athletes on any team.
- Do not use profane language and obnoxious behavior that is contrary to good Christian values and sportsmanship.
- Censure fellow teammates whose behavior is inconsistent with the mission and philosophy described in this handbook.
- Respect the judgment and strategy of the coaches.
- Refrain from protesting calls of game officials to the point where the team or the school is shown in a poor light.
- Be responsible for cleaning the sporting areas prior to leaving the area.

Probation Policies

Students who do not meet academic and/or conduct requirements may be placed on either academic or conduct probation at the discretion of the administration. Probation status and eligibility will be monitored by the administration, the Athletic Director, and any sponsor of extracurricular activities.

Section Six: Discipline

6.1 Bullying / Cyberbullying

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School actively seeks to provide a supportive, caring environment, safe for all people and free from all forms of intimidation, including bullying. Bullying is a form of harassment. It involves behavior through deliberate action, with intent to hurt, threaten, frighten, or humiliate someone. This behavior will not be tolerated in any form at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School or school-sponsored programs and activities. St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School prohibits both active and passive support for acts of harassment or bullying. Bystander support of harassment or bullying will not be tolerated. All incidents of bullying must be reported when witnessed.

A plan and procedure for addressing bullying or intimidation is in place through the school counselors and the administration.

STA complies with "David's Law", (Senate Bill 179) a Texas state law that aims to combat cyberbullying and protect minors. For full version of David's Law see https://txssc.txstate.edu/videos/bullying-and-the-law/.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is considered abuse. Bullying involves physical, verbal, non-verbal, emotional, technological (cyber-bullying), psychological attacks or intimidation to another person or persons to intentionally hurt the other person, whether that hurt be physical, emotional, and/or psychological. Depending on the severity of the bullying incident(s), the administration reserves the right to impose the most appropriate consequence, regardless of the number of incidents. All decisions of the school are final.

Anti-Bullying Procedures:

- All members of the school have a responsibility to recognize bullying and to act when they are aware of it.
- St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School will continue to communicate anti-bullying messages to students through the school's guidance program.
- All faculty and staff will treat any report of bullying seriously and act.
- Teachers will review the reporting and investigation procedures, prevention strategies, and disciplinary approaches as part of their ongoing training each year.
- Students who report bullying will be assured that they acted correctly in reporting bullying.
- Administration will thoroughly investigate allegations of bullying. This may include interviews with students, parents, and staff members as well as review of school records. The victim, accused student, and any witnesses shall be interviewed separately to establish an accurate account of events.
- Emphasis must be placed on changing the behavior of the bully, while providing care and support for the person who has been bullied.
- Any student who retaliates against another for reporting bullying behavior will face disciplinary action.

Anonymous Reporting

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School utilizes the Say Something Anonymous Reporting System (SS-ARS), which teaches youth and adults how to recognize warning signs and signals,

especially within social media, of individuals who may be a threat to themselves or others and Say Something, using the anonymous reporting system, BEFORE it is too late.

Anonymous Tip Management System

- Developed and managed by industry experts with 30+ years of experience in anonymous reporting
- State-of-the-art security with certified SOC-2 compliance
- Supports tip submission via telephone, website, and mobile app, available for iOS (Apple Store) and Android (Google Play)

National Crisis Center

- Operates 24/7/365 – 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year
- Solely responding to messages (aka tips) received by the *Say Something* Anonymous Reporting System
- Dedicated team of highly skilled and trained Crisis Counselors
- Fluent in multiple languages with translation support for over 600 languages
- Trained in suicide prevention, crisis management, and mental health support
- Submit a tip at https://www.sandyhookpromise.org/say-something-tips/.

6.2 Conduct

The highest standards of conduct and respect are expected of students and parents at all times. Any student who does not abide by the school behavioral expectations, or whose conduct is such that the learning process or welfare of other students is adversely affected, will be subject to disciplinary action.

Parents are expected to partner with the school regarding student discipline. Appropriate communication between parents and the school is expected at all times. Non-partnership is grounds for school-initiated withdrawal.

Most discipline will be handled by the classroom or special area teacher; however, any serious or persistent problems will be referred to an administrator. Both teachers and administrators may interview any student regarding discipline problems without prior notice to the parent(s).

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School students are expected to:

- witness Christ to others
- be respectful of persons in authority and the rights of others
- always behave and speak courteously
- follow the school behavioral expectations
- follow the school's attendance policy
- follow the dress code
- respect school property and personal property of others
- exercise proper care in the use of materials and equipment
- be reverent in church
- follow the Honor Code

6.3 Corporal Punishment

Corporal punishment is not permitted in the Catholic schools of the Diocese of Dallas.

6.4 Disciplinary Procedures and Consequences / Student Discipline Plan

The teachers at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School have established a set of core beliefs about working with children which govern our interactions with them.

Core Beliefs on Discipline
Our Promise to Parents and Students

1. We believe that every attempt should be made to maintain the dignity of both the student and adult.
2. We believe that students should be guided and expected to solve the problems they create without making problems for anyone else.
3. We believe that misbehavior should be handled with natural consequences whenever possible.
4. We believe that students should have the opportunity to tell their side of the story.
5. We believe that misbehavior should be viewed as an opportunity for individual problem solving and preparation for the real world and viewed objectively by staff as opposed to a personal attack on the school or staff.

PK-2 Discipline

All children are different; effective discipline happens when situations are dealt with as they arise with the focus on enabling the child to grow and learn from his or her actions. Teachers will guide students toward personal responsibility and the decision-making skills they will need to function in the real world. Teachers will attempt to arrange consequences for problem situations in such a way that the child will not be humiliated or demeaned. In cases of serious or repeated misconduct, parents will be contacted. Consequences for serious or repeated misconduct can include but are not limited to: loss of privileges, suspension from school, or school-initiated withdrawal.

Upper School Consequences for Disciplinary Infractions

For students who do not adhere to St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School guidelines, whether on or off campus, teachers and administration may apply any of, or combination of, the following consequences (listed in no particular order):

- Verbal reminder
- Intervention
- Silent lunch/recess time
- Alternative Learning Environment (ALE)
- Detention
- Immediate removal from class
- Student/parent conference with administration/teacher
- Grade of zero for academic violation
- Disciplinary probation (the loss of extracurricular activities and technology privileges including any and all school functions, clubs, athletics, and organizations)
- In-school suspension
- Repose period (In accordance with Diocesan policy, St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School may remove a student from school until a disciplinary action is decided upon that is in the best interest of the school, the student, and the family.)
- Suspension
- Expulsion (The procedure for expulsion will follow Diocesan guidelines.)

6.5 Drugs, Alcohol, Tobacco, Weapons

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School does not allow the possession, use, transmitting, or being under the influence of any controlled substances by any student while on school premises or at any school sponsored activity. Violation of this policy may result in suspension or expulsion.
Controlled Substances are defined as:

1. Any drug listed in the current Federal Controlled Substances Act
2. Alcohol or any alcoholic beverage
3. Any chemical substance for inhalation
4. Any other intoxicants or mood-altering or behavior-altering drugs
5. Drug paraphernalia

Drugs authorized by a licensed physician through a prescription specifically for that student and properly administered through the clinic are not in violation of this policy.

Tobacco products and their use by a student are not permitted on campus or at any activity in which the school is represented away from the property.

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School is a gun/weapon-free zone. It is the Church's prerogative to maintain the place of worship as a gun-free zone. No person, with the exception of our licensed security personnel hired by the school, may possess a weapon at any facility owned, leased, or operated by the Diocese of Dallas or St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School, or at any activity or function organized or sponsored by the Diocese or St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School, even if that person holds a license to carry a weapon, concealed or not.

6.6 Expulsion / Probation

Probation

Students not meeting academic and/or conduct requirements may be placed on either academic or conduct probation at the discretion of the administration. Probation status and eligibility will be monitored by the administration, the Athletic Director, and any sponsor of extracurricular activities.

Expulsion (Diocesan Policy)

Orderly school administration is essential to fulfilling the core mission of Catholic schools. Even a single failure by a member of the school community to uphold the standards of behavior to which all community members agree when a student is enrolled can cause irreparable harm. Thus, while in many cases expulsion is reserved for very serious or persistent misconduct, a school may properly determine that a single instance of on- or off-campus misconduct requires separation of a student from the school community. Misconduct committed by a member of the school community other than a student (including parents or other family members) can also significantly hinder a school's ability to perform its essential task of educating students. As a result, misconduct committed by a person connected to the school through a student (including parents or other family members) may result in the expulsion of the student from the school when, in his or her sole discretion, the chief administrator determines that such action is appropriate. Provided that any applicable school and diocesan policies have been substantially followed, the decision to expel a student rest in the sole discretion of the chief administrator of a school.

1. Procedure for Expulsion

   Circumstances giving rise to expulsion can arise and unfold quickly. The chief administrator's primary duty in such situations is to protect the school community. No student or family has any right to the application of a particular procedure before or in connection with the expulsion of a student. Nevertheless, the following process can serve as a general guideline when, in the chief administrator's discretion, circumstances warrant:

   • When practical, the pastor of a parochial elementary school and the chief administrator of a diocesan school should be apprised of the circumstances of a potential expulsion before the decision to expel is implemented;

• When circumstances permit, before the decision to expel is implemented, the student's parents should be advised of the potential for expulsion and a summary of the grounds for expulsion.
• The student and his or her parents should be invited to a conference with the school's chief administrator. In parish schools, the local pastor should be advised of the scheduled conference. In diocesan schools, the chief administrator should be advised of the scheduled conference. At the chief administrator's discretion, this conference may be held before or after the decision to expel is implemented.
• The final decision to expel a student rests with the school's chief administrator and will not be reviewed except to ensure compliance with any applicable pre-expulsion procedures. In parochial elementary schools, the pastor should be consulted. In diocesan schools, the chief administrator should be consulted.

2. General Grounds for Expulsion

Any instance or course of misconduct may, at the sole discretion of the school's chief administrator, be sufficient grounds for expulsion. In many cases, it is appropriate to attempt to correct the problem behavior through less severe disciplinary measures. In other cases, however, the school's chief administrator may determine that expulsion is the appropriate sanction for misconduct that has not previously resulted in probation, suspension, or other discipline.

Examples of such severe misconduct include but are not limited to:

a) Actions gravely detrimental to the moral and spiritual welfare of other students;
b) Incorrigible or disruptive behavior which impedes the progress of the rest of the class;
c) Assault, battery, or any threat of force or violence—whether intended in jest or not—directed toward any school personnel, students, member of the school community, or other person on school property or during school-related activities;
d) Habitual or persistent violation of school regulations;
e) Possessing, selling, giving away, using, or being under the influence of alcohol and drugs and/or hazardous substances on campus, at school functions, or at a time and place that directly involves the school or the welfare of members of the school community;
f) The on-campus use, sale, distribution, or possession of a substance intended or commonly used to mimic a narcotic, controlled substance, or alcoholic beverage;
g) Use or possession of firearms or other potentially harmful objects or weapons;
h) Gang-related conduct or activity including but not limited to, symbols, graffiti, apparel, colors, hazing/initiations, and hand signals commonly associated with gangs;
i) Theft, extortion, arson;
j) Habitual truancy;
k) Malicious damage or destruction of real or personal property at school;
l) Hazing;
m) Serious bullying and/or harassment;
n) Conduct which may damage the reputation of the school or parish;
o) Transmission of nude or otherwise inappropriate images of any student or person who appears to be a minor child; and
p) Use of social media in such a manner as constitutes bullying or online harassment or which causes another student or member of the school community to fear for the safety of any member of the school community.

Additionally, off-campus misconduct may result in expulsion, especially when it is related in some way to the school community because it is directed towards a member of the school

community, directly or indirectly involves multiple members of the school community or may negatively impact the school's reputation in the community.

3. Grounds for Expulsion Related to Alcohol and Drug Abuse
   The promotion and the safeguarding of student health (physically, mentally, and emotionally) are a concern to our schools. The use, misuse, and/or abuse of alcohol, drugs, and hazardous substances cause grave problems in the areas of student health and student stability. Many incidents of scholastic failure, school dropout, violence, tension, and suicide can be traced to alcohol and drug abuse.

   Therefore, the following general school policy is set forth:
   a) Possessing, selling, giving away, using, or being under the influence of alcohol and drugs and/or hazardous substances on campus, at school functions, or at a time and place that directly involves the school or the welfare of members of the school community constitute grounds for expulsion.
   b) When the school's chief administrator, in consultation with appropriate school or other personnel, believes it is appropriate, students who are involved in the use or abuse of alcohol or controlled substances should be provided with information regarding available substance abuse counseling and treatment resources. Additionally, the chief administrator or appropriate school personnel should, when practical, notify a student's parents or other guardian or conservator when use or abuse of alcohol and/or other controlled substances is reasonably suspected. The school should, when possible, refer the student and his/her parents, guardian, or conservator to resources known to the school for medical and/or psychiatric care, mental health and substance abuse counseling, and/or substance abuse recovery programs.

4. Procedure for Appeal and Review of Expulsion

Parish school expulsions may only be appealed to the Pastor, whose decision on the matter shall be final and unappealable. The Pastor may define the appeals process as he wishes, and he does not have an affirmative responsibility to meet with the family or student in said process. Diocesan school and private school expulsions are governed by the school's respective policies and procedures. In general, the chief administrator's decision shall be final and binding without right of further appeal.

5. Tuition and Fees

Prepaid tuition and fees are not refunded if a student is expelled. If a student is expelled before tuition or fees would ordinarily come due, the family of an expelled student shall be excused from further payment.

6.7 Grievance Policy for Parents

Parent Concerns or Complaints: The Diocese generally supports a collaborative approach to resolving parental concerns or complaints regarding school employees. Accordingly, such concerns or complaints should generally be addressed to the relevant employee first to allow an opportunity for open communication and direct problem-solving. If the concern or complaint cannot be resolved directly with the relevant employee, it should be presented to the employee's supervisor, preferably in writing. If the complaint or concern is escalated to the supervisor or chief administrator, the relevant employee will be notified of the concern or complaint and provided an opportunity to provide explanation and additional information. In parochial schools, the decision of the chief administrator as to resolution of the concern or complaint—acting in concert with the pastor when necessary—shall be final. In diocesan governed schools and private schools, the decision of the chief administrator as to resolution of the concern or complaint shall be final.

Principle of Subsidiarity
Parents/guardians and teachers are expected to address a situation at the level at which the situation occurs. Parents/guardians having a concern with another individual should go directly to that person; problems should be solved at the lowest level whenever possible. If there is a concern with a teacher, the concern needs to be explored with the teacher first. A member of the administration may be involved after the situation has been addressed at the level at which the concern exists.

6.8 Gum, Consumption of Food and Drink

Gum chewing is not permitted on the school premises at any time, including before and after school. For students in PK through 5th grade, the consumption of food and beverages is limited to the cafeteria or designated classroom snack areas during approved snack times. Middle school students (6th–8th grade) do not have scheduled snack times and should not consume food or drink outside of designated meal periods. Students are also not permitted to chew gum and/or consume food/candy during dismissal. Students in violation of this policy will receive the appropriate disciplinary action.

6.9 Harassment

Harassment of employees or students is strictly prohibited at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School. All allegations of harassment/intimidation will be taken seriously and promptly investigated. Harassment includes, but is not limited to, the following behaviors:

- Verbal conduct such as epithets, derogatory jokes or comments, slurs or unwanted advances, imitations, or comments.
- Visual contact such as derogatory and/or sexually oriented posters, photography, cartoons, drawings, or gestures.
- Physical contact such as assault, unwanted touching, blocking normal movements, or interfering with work, study, or play.
- Threats and demands to submit to inappropriate requests to avoid some other loss, or to offer benefits in return for inappropriate favors as a condition of continued enrollment.
- Retaliation for having reported or threatened to report harassment.

Any student and/or parent who believes he or she has been the subject of harassment shall report the alleged harassment to the campus Principal. The school will follow due process, and the Principal will take whatever actions deemed necessary to investigate the complaint, including but not limited to interviewing the accused person, the accusing person, and any witnesses. Law enforcement will be involved when necessary.

6.10 Off-Campus Conduct: Sports/Extracurricular/Field Trips

Students who demonstrate inappropriate behavior during school-sponsored events and non-school activities outside of the school day that reflect negatively upon the school may receive disciplinary action at the discretion of the administration.

6.11 Severe Infractions

Severe Infractions listed below may result in the immediate suspension and/or automatic termination of enrollment:

- Sale of a controlled substance on campus
- Possession or use of weapons of any kind on campus regardless of intent
- Vandalism

- Consuming, having possession of, or being under the influence of any controlled substance on campus or at any school-sponsored activity. Controlled substances include but are not limited to alcohol, tobacco, vape, marijuana, narcotics, hypnotics, sedatives, or any chemical depressant or stimulant as defined under the Penal Code of the State of Texas not prescribed by a physician.
- Injury to self or others
- Terroristic threats regardless of intent
- Bullying
- Cyberbullying
- Serious infractions of our social media policy
- Non-partnership by parents and/or students
- Any infraction involving the honor code
- Any infraction deemed severe by the administration

6.12 School Property

Damage and Destruction

Anyone who intentionally or accidentally destroys or damages school property, or the personal property of another, must pay the cost to repair or replace the property. Disciplinary actions, including fines, will be assessed as deemed appropriate by the administration. All costs will be billed through FACTS incidental billing.

Lockers/Storage Spaces

Each student is provided with a locker or storage space. Any property, money, and other valuables left in a locker or storage space is the responsibility of the student to whom the locker or storage space is assigned. Teachers will provide guidelines for students regarding lockers and storage spaces. The exterior of the locker must remain clear and clean. The locker or storage space is the property of St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School and is subject to inspection by authorized personnel. Based on the St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School Honor Code, no locks are necessary or allowed. Fifth – Eighth grade students are required to use a locker shelf.

Search and Seizure

The Principal or administrative delegate will conduct search and seizure without prior notification to students or parents if there is cause deemed reasonable by the administrator in charge. The administration reserves the right to conduct searches or inspections of personal effects, baggage, vehicles, and/or other student property for the purpose of determining if any individual on the premises of St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School is in possession of any illegal or unauthorized items. These searches may be conducted from time to time without prior announcement. The school will cooperate with law enforcement. Law enforcement and school administration may question students without parents being present or notified.

6.13 Suspension

Suspension is determined by the administration and may occur in or out of school. Efforts will be made to notify a parent before a student is suspended. However, parents may not be notified of the decision to remove a student from class before removal occurs if the administration deems the action to be immediately necessary. Students are responsible for all work during suspension period. The student is ineligible to participate in any school activity during a suspension period, unless authorized by the school administration. A student may be suspended without any prior behavioral issues or consequences.

Section Seven: Emergency Crisis Procedures

7.1 Crisis Plan

The safety of the faculty, staff, and students of St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School is a priority. Each campus has an onsite crisis coordinator, a crisis team, and a crisis management program for site specific procedures. All faculty and staff are trained in the Standard Response Protocol (SRP) procedure. The five components of the SRP provide actions to be taken in an emergency. Students and faculty are trained and participate in practice drills on the following:

- **HOLD** – In your room or area. Clear the halls.
- **SECURE** – Get inside. Lock outside doors.
- **LOCKDOWN** – Locks, lights, out of sight.
- **EVACUATE** – A location may be specified.
- **SHELTER** – Hazard and safety strategy.

7.2 Safety and Emergency Procedures and Drills

Standard Response Protocol (SRP) is used on both campuses. You can find the SRP under the Parent tab on the school website. Emergency drills are held in accordance with the State of Texas, City of Dallas fire codes, and Diocesan policy. Absolute cooperation in abiding by the rules set forth by faculty and staff is expected. Faculty and staff will give direction to students and visitors in the school buildings. Maps and directions for emergency drills are posted throughout campus.

In the event of a serious incident requiring relocation to an alternate site, the school would employ the Standard Reunification Method.

Fire Drills, Tornado Drills, and Lockdown Drills are conducted throughout the year.

7.3 Inclement Weather

In case of inclement weather, parents will be notified about school delays or closing through the FACTS parent alert system. Children will not be sent home during a tornado warning. They may, however, be released to parents. Students are to be signed out at the office. A child will not be released to an adult unless the adult is listed on the child's emergency list.

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School requires an alternative dismissal plan when there is inclement weather. A text alert will be sent to parents' cell phones when the school requires indoor dismissal due to inclement weather; this includes walkers/cyclists. A text alert will also be used when the Lower School will not dismiss via the walk-up gate due to inclement weather. It is the parents' responsibility to update the school with any changes to phone numbers.

Section Eight: Field Trips

8.1 Field Trips / School Sponsored Activities

A field trip is recognized as a valuable extension of the classroom experience and serves an educational purpose. Students may be denied participation if they fail to meet academic requirements and behavioral expectations or if the proper signed permission form is not returned.

Field trip participation is considered a privilege. Participation is subject to the discretion of St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School. Students' conduct will be monitored by St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School staff, and a student may be removed from participation at the sole discretion of

the administration/faculty/staff. All students must return to school for dismissal. All field trip fees will be billed through FACTS incidental billing.

Parent chaperones for field trips must have a current Safe Environment ID badge and understand that they must supervise students at all times. For liability purposes, siblings are not allowed to accompany chaperones. Middle school field trips are chaperoned by administration/faculty/staff only.

8.2 Permission Slips

An official permission slip, in hard copy, signed by a parent, is required before a child will be permitted to attend a field trip activity. Verbal permission cannot be accepted. Permission slips are due forty-eight hours after receipt of the permission slip. A telephone call will not be accepted in lieu of the proper field trip permission slip.

Section Nine: Financial Policies

9.1 Annual or Monthly Tuition Payments

Families may elect to pay tuition for a school year in one installment due in June, in two installments due in June and December, or in up to 11 monthly installments commencing in June for the school year beginning in August. Tuition payments will only be accepted through FACTS tuition management and billing services. Enrollment will not be official until an active FACTS agreement has been created.

Enrollment for students whose tuition is delinquent in May of the current school year may be cancelled for the next school year at the discretion of the school. In no event will a student be permitted to attend class at the beginning of the next school year unless the delinquency from the current school year is cured in full. Credit card convenience fees or bank charges are charged to the user's account by FACTS. In addition to bank or credit card fees for declined payments, FACTS will also assess a fee. FACTS will re-attempt to draw the payment on the next FACTS billing date.

9.2 Delinquent Tuition and Fees

If at any time tuition or fees become delinquent, it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to partner with the school Business Manager and school administration to make financial arrangements. A student's continued enrollment is contingent upon parents' compliance with any financial agreements made. If tuition and fees are split between two responsible parties, both accounts must be current. Both parties will be made aware of any delinquencies.

9.3 Eighth Grade Financial Requirements

Per the Diocese of Dallas, in order to fully participate in graduation activities, all debts for 8th grade students must be cleared by the first Monday of May.

9.4 Emergency Tuition Assistance

We recognize that there may be exceptional cases of a family experiencing temporary financial difficulty due to loss of employment, illness, or other factors beyond the family's control. In such cases, it is the responsibility of the family to contact the Business Manager promptly and work out suitable arrangements or apply for emergency tuition assistance as may be available. Failure to communicate promptly with the Business Manager on this issue may adversely impact the student's continued enrollment.

9.5 Fees

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School expects all families who have a child or children enrolled in the school to pay tuition and fees promptly when due. Failure to pay tuition and fees when due impairs the ability of the school to provide quality education for all students. All fees must remain current for your child to remain a student in good standing.

9.6 Financial Aid

Financial aid is available on a limited basis. To qualify, a family must be registered, contributing members of the parish for at least one year. Financial aid forms and further information are available through FACTS. Applications for financial aid must be renewed each school year.

9.7 Incidental Billing

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School uses FACTS for incidental billing/fees. These fees can include book/technology fees, supply fees, fees for field trips, graduation fees, along with fees for any damaged or misplaced school items incurred by student. Each family is required to enroll in the auto pay system through FACTS. The incidental fees are automatically deducted either through a credit card charge or automatic bank draft. Families will receive a reminder of the draft two weeks prior to deduction. Checks for incidental bills will not be accepted by St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School.

Section Ten: Health

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School health clinics are staffed by full-time nurses. The clinic is open daily from 8:00 AM until student dismissal. Both campuses are equipped with life-saving devices including AED's, stop the bleed kits, generic epi-pens, Narcan, and LifeVac for choking emergencies.

10.1 Allergy Policy

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School will maintain a school-wide procedure for addressing life threatening allergic reactions. The nurses maintain an emergency action plan for any student whose parent/guardian and physicians have informed the school in writing that the student has a potentially life-threatening allergy. Parents are required to provide an EpiPen for students with severe allergies.

In order to minimize the incidence of life-threatening allergic reactions, St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School will provide training and education for all STA faculty and staff including:

- A description/definition of severe allergies
- Explanations of the most common food, medication, latex, and insect bite allergies
- The signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis
- The correct use of epinephrine (EpiPen) and Avui-Q auto-injectors
- The specific steps to follow in the event of an anaphylactic emergency
- The activation of emergency medical response – 911
- The location of emergency medications, including the school's stock EpiPen

The parent/guardian will be responsible for notifying classroom teachers and clinical staff about the nature and severity of the allergic reaction faced by the student. This notification will include an explanation of the severity of the health threat, a description of signs and symptoms, and what allergens to avoid.

In the event that a student has a severe allergic reaction (where there is no known anaphylactic history), the school's stock EpiPen will be administered, and emergency services will be called immediately.

The school's protocol for field trips ensures that the nurse will send with the teacher the student's emergency action plan and the EpiPen as ordered by the student's physician.

10.2 Asthma Policy

The school encourages children with asthma to achieve their full potential in all aspects of school life by providing a clear policy that is understood by faculty and staff. All faculty and staff who come in contact with children with asthma are provided with training from the school nurse.

Asthma Medication

Immediate access to the student's rescue inhaler is vital to keeping the student's asthma under control during school hours. Parents are asked to complete the in-school medication form and provide the clinic with a rescue inhaler labeled with the student's name, medication, and name of prescribing doctor. The nurse will keep the student's inhaler in the clinic for easy access.

10.3 AUTHORIZATION OF CONSENT TO TREAT MINOR

I/We, the Parents/Guardians listed below, are the ___ parent(s) / ___ guardians of the Student listed below, and as such do hereby authorize the School named below and its employees, contractors, and adult volunteers as our agent(s) (collectively, "School") to consent to any x-ray examination, anesthetic, medical, dental, or surgical diagnosis or treatment or hospital care which is deemed advisable by, and is to be rendered under the general or specific supervision of, any physician or surgeon licensed under the laws of the jurisdiction where such diagnosis or treatment may be given, whether such diagnosis or treatment is rendered at the office of said physician, at a hospital, or at any other location.

I/we understand that this authorization is given in advance of any specific treatment or diagnosis, but is given to provide authority and power of treatment or hospital care which the aforementioned physician in the exercise of best judgment may deem advisable. This authorization is given pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 32 of the Texas Family Code. This authorization shall remain effective for up to one year from the date of completion of this form, unless sooner revoked in writing delivered to said agent(s). In consideration of acceptance of this authorization, but without any time limitation and without any future right of revocation, I/we hereby release and agree to fully and unconditionally protect, indemnify, and defend School, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Dallas, and their respective officers, agents, and employees, (collectively, "Indemnitees") and hold each Indemnitee harmless from and against any and all costs, expenses, attorney's fees, claims damages, demands, suits, judgments, losses, or liability for injuries to property, injuries to persons (including Student) and from any other costs, expenses, attorney fees, claims, suits judgments, losses, or liabilities of any and every nature whatsoever arising in any manner, directly or indirectly, out of, in connection with, in the course of, or incidental to such treatment, treatment decisions, diagnosis, or hospital care relating to Student, REGARDLESS OF CAUSE OR OF THE JOINT, COMPARATIVE OR CONCURRENT NEGLIGENCE OF THE INDEMNITEES.

10.4 Head Lice Policy

Head lice (Pediculosis) can spread rapidly. Students found to have head lice must be removed from school immediately. The school follows a "nit free" policy for readmittance. The school nurse will recheck the student upon his/her return to campus to ensure he/she is nit free before readmittance to class.

10.5 Health-Related Restrictions

We ask that the parent/guardian of any child with a health-related restriction communicate the specific restriction to the classroom teacher and the school nurse. Some common restrictions include no PE due to an injury or no outdoor recess due to respiratory conditions. The school will provide an alternative environment for students with documented restrictions.

10.6 Health Screenings

The school has yearly hearing and vision screening for students in grades K-3, 5, and 7. Scoliosis screening is conducted for girls in grades 5 and 7, and boys in grade 8. Acanthosis Nigricans screening is conducted for students in grades 1, 3, 5, and 7. A doctor's note will be accepted in lieu of any of the screenings.

10.7 Illness Stay at Home Policy

If your child is not feeling well, keep your child home from school and extracurricular activities. It is the parent's responsibility to partner with the school any time the health clinic requires the student to go home due to illness or accident. Children must stay home when they have had fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, swollen glands, vomiting, diarrhea, eye infections, unusual skin eruptions, or suspected communicable diseases. Also:

- If your child has been experiencing a temperature of 100 degrees or more, the child must stay home until they are fever free for 24 hours without the aid of a fever reducer.
- If your child has vomited or has diarrhea, either at school or home, the child must stay at home for 24 hours after the last vomiting or diarrhea event.
- If your child requires medications during school to prevent them from exhibiting signs of illness, such as coughing, wheezing, or copious drainage, it would be in their best interest and their classmates' best interest to stay home until the symptoms have abated.
- Parents of students out for an extended period of time may be required to meet with the teacher, administration, and student support team before their child returns to school in order to ensure a smooth transition.

10.8 Immunizations

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School follows the Texas Department of Health rules covering immunizations. The Texas Education Code requires students in elementary and secondary school to provide proof of required immunizations. Students must remain current with immunizations at all times while enrolled at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School. If for any reason, the student is not current with immunizations, the student will be removed from school.

** An Immunization Information Chart is located at the end of the handbook in the Appendix. **

10.9 Medical Emergencies

All student accidents and injuries on school premises and at school-sponsored events should be reported to the school office immediately. St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School follows the Schools Concussion Protocol after a concussion diagnosis.

10.10 Medical Notifications and Documentation

To ensure the health and safety of all students, it is essential that the school nurse be informed of any medical conditions that may impact a student's participation in school activities. This includes, but is not limited to, the use of casts, braces, crutches, slings, or other medical devices, as well as any physical restrictions resulting from injury, health condition, or surgery.

Important: Any doctor's notes related to medical conditions, physical limitations, or absences due to illness or injury must be submitted to the school nurse in addition to the main office. This allows the nurse to monitor the student's condition appropriately, support any necessary accommodations, and ensure a safe environment during their recovery.

The doctor's note should include:

- •The nature of the injury or condition
- •Any physical restrictions or activity limitations
- •The expected duration of those restrictions (e.g., how long the student will need to wear a cast, brace, etc.)

Prompt and clear communication with the school nurse helps us provide the best care for your child and ensures compliance with school safety protocols. Notification from the school will be sent to inform parents when there is a risk of a communicable disease spreading in the school.

10.11 Medication

Only medication which is necessary for a child to remain in school will be given by authorized school staff during school hours. A signed permission form from the parent/legal guardian must accompany all over the counter and prescription medications. Prescription medication must be prescribed by a licensed physician. Over-the-counter medication may be distributed by the school nurse or by authorized school staff if accompanied by the signed form. These forms are located on the Parent page of the school website. Each medication must be in its original, properly labeled container and include the following information:

- Student name
- Physician/dentist name
- Date
- Name of medication
- Dosage
- Directions for administration
- Duration medication is to be given

All medications, over the counter or prescription, should be delivered to the front desk by the parent. Students may never self-medicate or be in possession of any type of prescription or over-the-counter medications. Parents are required to inform the school nurse of any changes in medication that may occur during the school year.

10.12 Returning to School After Medical Event

Any major injury occurring not on campus or a school-related event requiring assistance or accommodation during the school day, must be reported to the school nurse and front office prior to returning to campus. For any students returning to school after an accident, injury or illness, who require any accommodation as a result of the accident, injury or illness, a meeting with an Administrator, Learning Specialist, School Nurse, and Counselor will be required before returning to school.

10.13 Student Accident Insurance

As a part of tuition, St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School provides each student with student accident insurance. This coverage will be the secondary coverage and health coverage under another insurance plan will be primary. This insurance covers accidental injuries to students during school hours and at all school-sponsored functions including sports, both on and off campus. This coverage is not health insurance. When an accident is reported, the school will provide the necessary paperwork. All claims are handled directly by the insurance carrier.

Section Eleven: Lunch

11.1 Cafeteria Service

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School provides lunch through a third-party caterer on both campuses. Lunches may be purchased from our catering service or brought from home.

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School does not have a free or reduced lunch program.

Lunches brought from home may be warmed in a microwave (food must be in a microwave safe container, covered, and limited to one minute warming). Lower School student food will be warmed by cafeteria supervisors. Glass containers and/or cans with pull tabs are not permitted. Rules of the cafeteria must be followed on both campuses.

No outside food is allowed to be delivered to students at any time. The contract with the cafeteria service provider does not permit class parties to replace lunch, and special arrangements for lunch or other treats from parents or outside vendors for groups of students are not allowed during lunch. For security purposes, students on both campuses are not allowed to have visitors during lunch.

Section Twelve: Miscellaneous

12.1 Asbestos Certification

In 1986, Congress passed the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA). This law requires all schools, kindergarten through twelfth grade, to be inspected to identify any asbestos-containing building materials. The law further requires the development of a management plan, based upon the findings of the inspection, which outlines our intent in controlling the potential for exposure to asbestos fibers, if they exist in our school. Any building built before the late 1970's contains at least some asbestos in pipe insulation and structural fireproofing.

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School was re-inspected in 2025. Some asbestos-containing materials remain in locations including floor tiles and pipe insulation but are not readily accessible to building occupants or students and are in good condition. The primary concern arises when the materials become friable, begin to deteriorate, or become damaged. The asbestos found in St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School is monitored on a regular basis to ensure its containment as required by law. A copy of our management plan and re-inspection report is on file in the Facilities Director's office. These reports are available for review during business hours on school days.

12.2 Birthdays, Parties, and Special Occasions

Dates for all classroom parties are listed in the school calendar and are planned by administration and teachers. Teachers coordinate activities with the help of STA Parents' Association representatives (homeroom parents) when needed. Equity across all grade levels regarding treats, games, and party favors is required. Information about parties will be communicated by the teachers and/or the homeroom parent. The contract with the cafeteria service does not permit class parties to replace lunch. No special deliveries for any reason or occasion are allowed. Party invitations may not be passed out at school unless everyone in the class is invited to the party.

Lower School Birthdays
Parents are allowed to drop off birthday treats at the front desk. Teachers will provide guidelines.

Upper School Birthdays
The Upper School student birthdays are celebrated internally. Students are not permitted to bring food or treats to the classroom or lunch.

12.3 Carpool

Carpool rules for both campuses are as follows:

- All parents are required to use the PikMyKid program in cooperation with the school's safe dismissal procedures. Parents must ensure that anyone authorized to pick up has access to and understands how to use PikMyKid.
- Anyone authorized to pick up in PikMyKid must also be listed as an authorized pick-up in FACTS.
- St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School does not permit drivers to use cell phones in carpool other than to announce on PikMyKid.
- Parents should follow all school guidelines provided in the Back-to-School Guide at the beginning school year.
- Drivers must remain in their vehicles during carpool.
- No left turns allowed in or out of school property except leaving the Kenwood parking lot at dismissal.
- Always grant the Pastor and school staff the right of way.
- Students will only be released to parents or the individuals listed as authorized pick-up in PikMyKid without permission from parents.
- Carpools with more than one child are to follow the procedure for their youngest child on that campus.
- Do not block crosswalks, driveways, and alleys.
- Drivers must follow traffic flow patterns.
- School-issued carpool tags must be properly displayed in car window in order to pick up any student.

Arrival and Pick-Up
The arrival and dismissal guidelines will be provided in the Back-to-School Guide and must be followed.

12.4 Child Protective Services

Texas has both civil and criminal laws to protect children from abuse and neglect. If you suspect that a child is being abused or neglected, the law requires that you report it to the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services (PRS) or a law enforcement agency. Child Protective Services (CPS), a division of PRS, is responsible for conducting civil investigations of alleged abuse and neglect that occur in the child's family or home. Failure to report suspected child abuse and neglect is against the law. Individuals who make reports in good faith are protected by law from liability, as are those who provide information during a CPS investigation. Contact the agency's local office or call the 24-hour toll free Child Abuse Hotline (800) 252-5400. Parents can also file a report online at https://www.txabusehotline.org/Login/Default.aspx

12.5 Class Placement

All student homeroom placements for the upcoming school year will be made by the school building Principal, Assistant Principal, and current homeroom teachers. The school does not accept requests from parents for placement with a specific teacher or friend. Placement will be announced prior to the first day of school in August. Placement decisions are taken very seriously and are made with the absolute best interest of ALL students as well as based on the dynamics of the grade level. Administration and faculty make their decision after much thought, effort, and consideration. The balance of academic, social, and emotional needs of all students is considered, as well as a balanced ratio of boys and girls when possible. Beginning in kindergarten, siblings (including twins) will be placed in separate classrooms to support individual growth and development. Classroom placement decisions are made by the administration and are final.

12.6 Communications

The weekly newsletter, Week at a Glance (WAAG), is the primary source of information for parents and is emailed every Friday at 1:00 PM. Parents are expected to read the WAAG weekly. Resource information, calendars, and forms can be found on the Parents page of the website. FACTS Family Portal and My STA App are also methods of communication between parents and the school.

12.7 Facility Usage

Facilities are reserved for use by the School and Church only. Any request for use of the facilities must go through the Church office, not the school office. If a facility use is approved by the church, a required signed Facilitates Use Agreement must be on file with both the parish and school offices.

12.8 Forgotten Items / Deliveries

Families bringing lunches, homework, books, etc., should deliver them to the front office labeled with the child's name and grade/homeroom. The office staff will see that lunch, homework, books, etc., are delivered. Items brought to the Upper School **after 9:00 AM** for students will not be delivered to the students; this includes lunches.

12.9 Fundraising

All community service events, and fundraising opportunities are approved by the administration in advance of the school year.

Students may not solicit funds or items for any reason using the school as the drop off or collection point. Due to liability issues, school facilities, including parking lots, cafeterias, and drama rooms, cannot be used to organize group fundraising efforts. This includes solicitation for personal gain, or for St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School-sponsored or non-St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School-sponsored organizations, clubs, or groups.

Parents are asked not to solicit funds from other parents for individual teacher gifts. Teacher appreciation gifts are coordinated through the STAPA Angel Fund and Thank You Fund.

12.10 Lost and Found

The school is not responsible for lost or stolen articles. Lost and found bins are located on both campuses. All uniform items and possessions should be clearly labeled with student's first and last name. Expensive items should not be brought to school. Students should bring found

articles to the office immediately. Unclaimed articles will be donated to charities on a regular basis. Cleared parents can visit the Lost and Found on both campuses from 3:45pm – 5:30pm.

12.11 Recording

The enrollment packet includes a Video/Image Release that is completed by each family. Due to the enormous volume of student images captured throughout the year and our sizeable student body, St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School cannot guarantee a student's image will not be captured.

Events during the school day may be photographed by approved class/activity photographers only. Taking photos or videos during the school day or on field trips without parental approval of all parties included is prohibited.

12.12 Reports to and Cooperation with Law Enforcement

Reporting to Law Enforcement

a) Texas law requires the principal of a private school, or his or her designee, to notify law enforcement if the principal/designee has reasonable grounds to believe that certain crimes listed in section 37.015 of the Texas Education Code have been committed. The notice provided to the police must include the name and address of each student the person believes may have participated in the activity and must also be provided to each employee of the school who has regular contact with a student whose conduct is the subject of the notice. It is the policy of the Diocese of Dallas and its schools to comply with this statutory requirement.

Cooperating with Law Enforcement and Child Abuse Investigations

b) Cooperation with Law Enforcement Texas law requires schools to make students available for interviews by child protective workers in connection with an investigation into suspected child abuse. The child protective worker may or may not allow a school representative to witness the interview. Diocese of Dallas schools will cooperate with such interview requests.

From time to time, law enforcement officers also seek to interview students while at school in connection with an allegation or suspicion that the student has committed a crime. When faced with such a request, school personnel will refer the requesting officer to the school's chief administrator or his or her designee. The chief administrator or designee will request additional information regarding the nature of the interview requested and the allegations or suspicions relating to the student. The chief administrator or designee will, if the crime is not serious and contemporaneous or imminent, also request that the interview be delayed until the student's parent or other legally responsible adult is present. School personnel will then notify the student's parent, other legally responsible adult, or emergency contact as soon as possible.

If the officer refuses to delay the interview until the student's parent or other legally responsible adult arrives, the chief administrator or designee will request to be present during the interview. However, if the officer refuses to allow the chief administrator to be present and refuses to delay the interview, school personnel will not physically prevent the officer from conducting the interview, and the parent or other legally responsible adult signing below agrees that the school is under no duty to do so.

12.13 School Business and Contracts

No contractual agreements may be made on behalf of St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School by parents. The Pastor, Business Manager, and School President are the only people who can enter into contractual agreements.

12.14 School Directory

The St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School online directory includes parent and student names, parent email addresses, and home, mobile, and work numbers. This directory is password protected and intended for use by St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School families only. The information in the directory may not be sold, used for mailing lists, or for solicitation purposes of advertising personal businesses or promoting outside businesses. Email distribution lists given out from the school are also included in the policy.

12.15 School Logo

All logos, names, and images associated with St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School and its associated entities are for the sole use of the school. The logos, insignia, and images may not be reproduced, duplicated, or altered without written consent from the school administration. This includes any and all St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School-related logos as well as images from the school website. Independent use of any of these logos, names, and images for sports teams, uniforms, paper goods, clothing, decals, monogrammed or imprinted items, etc. is prohibited.

12.16 Textbooks and Computers

Textbooks, laptops (6th-8th grade), and consumable workbooks are issued to students at the beginning of the school year. Textbooks and laptops should be protected at all times. Damaged or lost textbooks and laptops are the student's responsibility; replacement and repair fees will be assessed by school administration.

12.17 Water Bottles

Water bottles brought by students to school must contain only water and be able to be fully sealed so as not to spill when knocked over. Stanley cups with straws are not permitted.

Section Thirteen: Parents

13.1 Custody and Family Law Issues

Diocesan Policy

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School understands that families within the school community may be affected by custody and other related legal disputes. The school works to balance sensitivity to difficult family situations and the interests of safety and orderly school administration. Involving school personnel in family and custody issues diverts finite school resources from the school's primary function. Parents' inability to partner with each other and the school may result in the family being asked to withdraw their child/children from the school. It is important that families within the school community who are affected by custody and other related legal disputes read and understand the following:

Generally, a child's biological or adoptive parents have equal rights to custody of and visitation with the child unless and until a court orders otherwise. When this arrangement has been changed by court order, it is the responsibility of the affected student's family to provide the school with a current signed copy of the relevant court order and to point out to the school any relevant portions of the court order. Unless and until a student's family does so, the school may assume that both of a child's biological or adoptive parents have equal rights to custody of and visitation with the student.

It is the responsibility of the parents, not the school, to ensure that the school is promptly provided with any relevant original or amended custody orders. The school will take reasonably practical steps to facilitate compliance with relevant family court orders. However, it is the responsibility of the family, and not the school, to enforce family court orders regarding a student. School personnel are not family law attorneys and are not responsible for interpreting or enforcing custody or other family court orders.

Attorneys representing parents in custody disputes should not contact school personnel directly, including to request the production of documents and execution of supporting affidavits for use in litigation. Parents may obtain contact information for Diocesan legal counsel from the school and should provide this information to the parents' attorneys if school involvement in a custody dispute is requested. If the school is required to engage counsel to interpret or otherwise advise the school regarding a custody or other family court order or dispute, the parents of the affected student are jointly and severally liable to the school for all costs and attorneys' fees associated therewith. As an exception to this general rule, upon request by either parent, the school will generally, at the chief administrator's sole discretion, provide one copy of a student's central file (e.g., attendance records, report cards, enrollment documents) with a supporting business records affidavit to both parents or their attorneys free of charge.

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School is private property and not open to the public. Additionally, it is detrimental to the well-being of the affected students and to the school community as a whole when family disputes are brought onto school property. Parents are expected to do everything possible to avoid parental confrontations or arguments on school grounds. The administration has discretion to exclude any person from the school when, in his or her sole discretion, doing so is necessary or appropriate. School personnel may contact law enforcement for assistance when doing so is necessary to enforce this discretion. If a parent who is prohibited by court order from coming to or near the school attempts to enter the school, the school may call the police or seek other appropriate recourse. If administration believes that the behavior of a parent or other legally responsible adult presents an imminent threat of harm to a student, the school may refuse to release the student to the parent or other legally responsible adult or take such other steps including, but not limited to, contacting law enforcement or the student's emergency contact, as the school deems necessary.

13.2 Household Demographic Changes

Parents and guardians are requested to notify the school through the Registrar's office in writing of any change of address, telephone numbers, e-mail addresses, or emergency contacts or parents should complete the address change form on the school website at staschool.org/parents. This will guarantee that office records are accurate, complete, and up to date.

13.3 Parental Cooperation and Behavior

Parental cooperation is required for continued enrollment. Parents are expected to partner in good faith with the implementation and enforcement of all St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School policies and procedures as stated in this Handbook and requested by the administration.

Negative parental behavior or failure to partner with the school shall be grounds for removal of any student from the school. Parents are expected to communicate and act in a Christian, positive manner. This includes verbal and electronic communication. Disrespectful behavior, vulgar language, or verbal abuse may result in a family being required to withdraw their child from the school, or a family may not be invited to return the following year.

Diocesan Policy
All members of the school community, including parents and family members, are expected to comply with all school rules and policies while on campus and in communications with the school, be respectful, cooperate with the school with respect to all decisions affecting the student, and avoid behavior which disrupts the orderly administration of the school. A community member's failure to meet these expectations jeopardizes school administration, requires the school to expend limited resources to address inappropriate and unnecessary behavior, and detracts from the school's core mission and, as a result, may jeopardize a student's continued participation in the school community. At the school's sole discretion, the failure of a student's parents or other family members to comply with these expectations, separate and apart from the student's conduct, may result in suspension or expulsion of the student.

13.4 Parent/Teacher Communication

Parents are reminded to avoid contacting teachers during school hours, except through email, to ensure minimal disruptions to the classroom. Parents are not allowed to use teachers' personal phone numbers or email addresses for school-related matters. Teachers are not obligated to respond outside of work hours, including evenings and weekends. They will do their best to reply to emails and calls within 24 hours during the school week.

13.5 Parent / Teacher Conferences

Conferences are an important means of communication between parents and teacher. Conferences other than the one on the calendar are by appointment. If you wish to schedule an appointment with your child's teacher, you may email the teacher directly to set up a time for the meeting. Please do not attempt to conference with your child's teacher in the school hallway, cafeteria, carpool line, or school office before or after classes. Teachers are not at liberty to conference with a parent/guardian when they are responsible for the supervision of other children, especially during homeroom or morning/afternoon supervision, lunchtime, or at recess.

13.6 Reimbursement for School Costs and Attorney's Fees

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School recognizes the financial sacrifice many of its families make to participate in the school community. Out of respect for this sacrifice and in recognition of the school's responsibility to wisely steward financial resources for the benefit of all members of the school community, St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School has implemented the following policy.

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School is sometimes required to retain outside legal counsel to respond to parent requests or demands, requests or subpoenas for testimony or documents in legal proceedings to which the school is not a party, or to address other issues affecting or involving only one or a few students or families. In such situations, the school is typically required to expend finite financial resources to address an issue which otherwise affects only a very small portion of the school community. To ensure that the school community at large is not adversely impacted in such situations, at the sole discretion of administration, the school will require the family or families involved to reimburse the school for attorney's fees, costs of court, and other expenses incurred (including, without limitation, the cost to secure substitute staff when school personnel are subpoenaed to testify in court proceedings).

Accordingly, each person who acknowledges his or her agreement to the contents of this Handbook by electronic signature, agrees that, in the School's absolute and sole discretion, he or she shall indemnify and reimburse the School, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Dallas, and their respective officers, employees, agents, and representatives ("Indemnitees") on demand

from and for any and all attorney's fees and related costs including without limitation the cost of responding to requests for documents or other records or information arising from, in connection with, or related to 1) a violation of any provision of this Handbook, 2) any request or demand made upon the School which pertains to a legal proceeding to which the School is not a party, 3) threatening or harassing communications directed to any Indemnitee, or 4) threatened or actual litigation against any Indemnitee which does not result in a final and appealable judgment adverse to the Indemnitee.

13.7 Safe Environment Requirements

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School ensures that all adults working directly with students have completed the Safe Environment program. All persons (employees or volunteers) working with St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School students must undergo a security clearance check before the employee/volunteer begins their assignment. Procedures for obtaining a Safe Environment clearance and ID badge are located on the school website. Safe Environment cleared volunteers must wear their ID badges while on campus.

13.8 School Management Software (FACTS SIS)

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School utilizes the FACTS SIS program to manage school data, including grades, progress/report cards, and other school information. Parents may access FACTS SIS at www.FACTSMGT.com, type in the district code (STAQ-TX) and their password, then view their child's/children's academic/conduct information. Homework assignments will be available on FACTS SIS; however, Upper School students will still be required to write their homework assignments in their specified student planner.

13.9 Support Organizations

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School has several support organizations led by parents that work to support and enhance the educational ministry of the school. Fundraising, parent education, and building community are the goals of these organizations. All support organizations must have bylaws and approved by the Pastor and President.

All events, fundraisers, and activities must be approved by the President. School administration and support organization boards work together on calendar events. All items needing to be purchased must have prior approval from the board, President, and Principal. It is not permitted to use the St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School name and/or logo without administrative approval.

13.10 Visitors and Volunteers

Volunteers and Visitors Conduct

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School parents volunteer on campus in a variety of ways. Parents will have opportunities to sign up as volunteers through STAPA and must be Safe Environment cleared. Only parents may volunteer on campus during the school day.

All visitors and volunteers (including any student's parent, guardian, or other relatives) entering the school must first report to the school office for clearance. No one may proceed directly to any part of the campus without reporting to the front desk. Visiting is a privilege, and St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School reserves the right to refuse any visitor. The school uses RAPTOR, an integrated school safety software, and all volunteers and visitors must be prepared to provide their driver's license upon arrival.

We appreciate our parent volunteers and our parent-school partnerships. Parents are welcome on campus when signed up to volunteer or when they have a meeting scheduled with staff. While on campus, parents should not enter classrooms unless it is part of their volunteer responsibilities (for example: indoor recess, art room volunteer, science lab volunteer, etc.). Volunteers must sign out and leave the campus immediately after their shift.

Volunteer Service Hours
The goal of the volunteer service hours policy is to increase parent participation in the parish and the school. All returning families must complete a minimum of 20 adult volunteer service hours each calendar year. New families must volunteer a minimum of 8 hours between August and December. Volunteers must be cleared by the Safe Environment officer, and volunteer hours must be logged in FACTS by the end of the calendar year.

Section Fourteen: Technology

14.1 Acceptable Use Policy

An Acceptable Use Policy is a set of guidelines for student use of the internet as a tool for learning. St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School offers all students access to our school's computer networks and the internet for student research and communication. Access to these network services is given to students who agree to act in a considerate and responsible manner. This access is a privilege, not a right. Students are responsible for appropriate behavior on school computer networks.
The following are not permitted:

- The use of any device accessing the internet not supplied by the school during the school day or at school sponsored events including, but not limited to, smart watches or similar devices that have the capability to read/send text messages, take pictures, or communicate with people or other devices.
    - This rule applies whether the device is activated, and whether it is placed in sleep mode, airplane mode, or similar modes, or does not have a pairing device to connect to as a source.
    - All such items must be turned off and kept in a locker when on school/church property. This includes, but is not limited to, arrival, and dismissal times. A student must have specific permission from St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School staff to use such a device when on School or Church property.
- The use or possession of an external storage device
- The use of any unapproved web browsers.
- The installation or use of any operating system to bypass St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School cybersecurity protocols.
- Willfully damaging computers, software, computer systems, or computer networks
- Using the network or internet to plagiarize or violate copyright laws
- Employing the network for commercial purposes
- Using the network to send or display offensive and/or obscene messages or pictures
- Using computers to access materials that are profane or obscene, that advocate illegal acts or violence, or that discriminate toward other people
- Using the network or internet to harass, insult, or attack others
- Downloading software from the internet without the permission of the technology department.

- The use of cell phones or other devices to record or photograph without teacher approval.
- No recording devices (audio or video) are allowed to be used by students or parent unless authorized by the party being recorded.

Disciplinary actions will be decided by the administration.

14.2 Artificial Intelligence Usage

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School recognizes the growing presence and impact of artificial intelligence (AI) in education and in the broader world and values its potential to support learning when used appropriately. The school may incorporate approved educational tools that utilize AI to assist students in developing skills, understanding concepts, and enhancing their academic experience under teacher guidance. However, students are strictly prohibited from using AI to generate, complete, or substantially produce work for any assignments, projects, or assessments that are intended to reflect their own individual effort and understanding. Misuse of AI in this manner constitutes a violation of the school's academic integrity standards. Students are expected to demonstrate their own thinking, learning, and originality in all submitted work, and must follow all teacher and school guidance regarding acceptable use of technology.

14.3 Cell Phone Policy

At the Upper School, students are not allowed to access cell phones during the school day on campus; cell phones must be turned off and stored in student backpacks in lockers. The Lower School prohibits possession of student cell phones and smart watches. Students can never use their cell phones to take photographs or videos during school hours. The school is not responsible for lost, broken, or stolen cell phones. Students using their cell phones during the school day may have these devices confiscated. St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School reserves the right to confiscate cell phones if used during the school day or at a school-sponsored event. Parents/guardians may be requested to retrieve the confiscated cell phone from administration. A fee of $25 may be assessed at the sole discretion of the school. Disciplinary actions may be decided by the administration if necessary.

14.4 Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) Waiver

Our school uses certain web-based tools and other applications that assist your child in learning. In order for your child under age 13 to use those tools and applications, federal law requires that you provide your consent. A list of the applications and web-based services our school uses, or may choose to use are listed below. In order for your child to use these programs and services, your child must provide certain personally identifying information. Generally, this information is limited to first and last name, a username, and email address.

Privacy policies for the programs can be found on the websites of the developers of these applications. If you have questions about a particular policy or would like further information about these privacy policies, please review the applicable website or contact your child's teacher.

Under the federal Children's Online Privacy Protection Act, the operators of these educational applications and services must notify you, as your child's parent, and obtain your consent before collecting limited personal information from children under the age of 13.

The law permits schools to consent to the collection of personal information on behalf of all of its students. This form, when completed below and on file with us, will authorize our school to provide consent for your child to provide personal identifying information, consisting of first and

last name, a username, and an email address, to the operators of applications identified on the enclosed list.

If you consent to your child providing personal identifying information to use the applications and web services, check the OPT-IN box below. By checking the OPT-IN box, you expressly authorize St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School to provide your child's first name, last name, username, and email address to the operators of one or more of the applications identified on the enclosed list. You also agree to release and indemnify our school from and against any claims arising out of our providing such information to the operators of the applications and services listed on the enclosed list.

If you do not want our school to provide this information, select the OPT-OUT box below. Note that checking the OPT-OUT box will prevent your child from participating in certain educational activities, including the use of the applications on the enclosed list. While our school will generally make reasonable attempts to provide alternative assignments to your child, we reserve the right to determine that a student's consistent inability to participate in the assigned curriculum may impair the student's academic progress at our school and require that you and we explore other options.
Student Name:
Parent/Guardian Name (PRINT):
Parent/Guardian Signature:
OPT IN _____ OR OPT OUT _____ Date:

Software List for COPPA

- ARK
- BrainPop / BrainPop Jr.
- Britannica School
- Catholic Brain
- Class Creator
- ClassLink
- Code.org
- Conjugemos
- Discovery Ed
- Dropbox Accounts
- DW Spectrum
- Education Modified
- Epic!
- Explore Learning Gizmos / Reflex Math / Frax
- FACTS Family Portal
- FACTS SIS
- Follett Destiny / Destiny Discover
- Google Suite / Classroom
- Guided Readers
- Hallow
- HMH Ed
- Into Lit
- iCivics
- Writable
- Into Math
- Think Central
- Incident IQ
- IXL
- Learning Ally
- Learning A-Z
- Lightbox Learning US
- Linewize / Classwize
- McGraw Hill Wonders / Texas Science(6/26)
- Microsoft Office
- One95 Literacy Platform
- OzoBlockly
- P3 Campus Anonymous Reporting
- Pebble Go / Pebble Go Next / Capstone
- PikMyKid
- PTC Wizard
- RCA House Points
- Savvas Realize - SS for 2nd to 5th
- Starfall
- Track-It! Forward
- Typing Club
- Vidigami

14.5 Diocesan Internet School Safety Policy

A guide for students, staff, parents, and visitors to use the internet safely and responsibly.

Introduction

The internet is a powerful tool for learning, communication, and collaboration. It also poses some risks and challenges for the safety, privacy, and well-being of students, staff, and parents. This document outlines the Internet Safety Policy of our school, which aims to meet the regulatory requirements of the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) and the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA).

The Internet Safety Policy applies to all users of the school's network, devices, and online resources, whether on or off campus. The policy covers the following topics:

- Acceptable and responsible use of the internet
- Filtering and monitoring of online content
- Protection of personal information and data
- Educating and empowering students to be safe and responsible digital citizens
- Reporting and responding to cyberbullying, harassment, and inappropriate online behavior
- Enforcement and consequences of violating the policy

Acceptable and Responsible Use of the Internet

The school provides access to the internet for educational purposes only. Users are expected to use the internet in a manner that is consistent with the school's mission, values, and policies. Users are also expected to respect the rights and property of others, and to follow the laws and regulations that govern the use of the internet.

Some examples of acceptable and responsible use of the internet are:

- Using the internet to access, create, and share educational content and resources
- Using the internet to communicate and collaborate with teachers, classmates, and other learners
- Using the internet to research and explore topics related to the curriculum and personal interests
- Using the internet to develop and practice digital skills and literacy
- Using the internet to access and participate in online learning platforms and programs approved

  by the school

Some examples of unacceptable and irresponsible use of the internet are:

- Using the internet to access, create, or share content that is illegal, harmful, offensive, or

  Inappropriate
- Using the internet to engage in cyberbullying, harassment, or discrimination
- Using the internet to cheat, plagiarize, or violate academic integrity
- Using the internet to disrupt, interfere, or damage the school's network, devices, or online

  resources
- Using the internet to download, install, or run unauthorized software, programs, or files

- Using the internet to access or participate in online platforms, programs, or activities that are not

  approved by the school
- Using the internet to access a non-school issued account or accounts belonging to other people

Filtering and Monitoring of Online Content

The school uses filtering and monitoring software to block or restrict access to online content that is deemed inappropriate, harmful, or illegal for students. The filtering and monitoring software is designed to comply with the requirements of Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), which mandates that schools prevent access to visual depictions of obscenity, child pornography, or material that is harmful to minors.

The filtering and monitoring software is not infallible and may not block all inappropriate or harmful content. Users are responsible for their own online behavior and choices, and should report any content that is inappropriate, harmful, or illegal to a teacher or administrator. Users should also avoid accessing or sharing any content that violates the Acceptable and Responsible Use of the Internet section of this policy.

The school reserves the right to monitor and review any online activity or content that is accessed, created, or shared by users on the school's network, devices, or online resources. The school may also monitor and review any online activity or content that is accessed, created, or shared by users on their own devices, if they are connected to the school's network or using the school's online resources. The school may monitor and review data to ensure compliance with this policy, to investigate potential violations or incidents, or to provide feedback and guidance to users.

Protection of Personal Information and Data

The school is committed to protecting the personal information and data of users and complying with the requirements of COPPA to protect the privacy of all students. The school collects, stores, and uses personal information and data of users for educational purposes only. The school does not disclose or share personal information and data of users with third parties, unless required by law or authorized by the user or their parent or guardian. The school also does not sell or rent personal information and data of users to third parties for any reason.

The school uses encryption, passwords, and other security measures to safeguard the personal information and data of users from unauthorized access, use, or disclosure. However, the school cannot guarantee the absolute security of personal information and data of users, and users are also responsible for protecting their own personal information and data online.

Some examples of personal information and data that users should protect online are:

- Name, address, phone number, email address, or other contact information
- Birth date, age, gender, or other demographic information
- Social security number, student ID number, or other identification information
- Grades, test scores, transcripts, or other academic information
- Medical records, health conditions, or other health information
- Photos, videos, or other media that can identify the user or others
- Passwords, usernames, or other login information

Some examples of how users can protect their personal information and data online are:

- Using strong and unique passwords, and changing them regularly
- Not sharing passwords, usernames, or other login information with anyone
- Not using the same password, username, or other login information for multiple accounts or platforms
- Logging out of accounts or platforms when not in use
- Not clicking on links or opening attachments from unknown or suspicious sources
- Not responding to requests for personal information or data from unknown or suspicious sources and reporting to an adult when such request is made
- Not posting or sharing personal information or data on public or unsecured platforms or networks
- Checking the privacy settings and policies of platforms or networks before using or joining them
- Asking for permission from parents, guardians, teachers, or administrators before providing or sharing personal information or data online

Educating and Empowering Students to be Safe and Responsible Digital Citizens

The school recognizes that educating and empowering students to be safe and responsible digital citizens is essential for their success and well-being in the digital age. The school provides opportunities for students to learn and practice digital skills and literacy, such as:

- Searching, evaluating, and using online information effectively and ethically
- Creating, publishing, and sharing online content respectfully and responsibly
- Communicating and collaborating online appropriately and productively
- Managing and balancing online time and activities healthily and wisely
- Protecting and respecting online privacy and security
- Understanding and following online rules and norms
- Recognizing and reporting online risks and threats
- Resolving and preventing online conflicts and issues
- Cyberbullying awareness

The school also encourages parents and guardians to be involved and supportive of their children's online learning and activities. The school provides resources and guidance for parents and guardians to help them:

- Monitor and supervise their children's online access and use
- Discuss and establish rules and expectations for their children's online behavior and choices
- Teach and model safe and responsible online habits and practices
- Support and assist their children with online learning and challenges
- Communicate and collaborate with the school on online safety and education issues

Reporting and Responding to Cyberbullying, Harassment, and Inappropriate Online Behavior

The school does not tolerate any form of cyberbullying, harassment, or inappropriate online behavior on or off campus. Cyberbullying, harassment, and inappropriate online behavior are defined as any online actions or communications that are intended to harm, threaten,

intimidate, humiliate, or harass another person or group, or that create a hostile or offensive online environment.

Some examples of cyberbullying, harassment, and inappropriate online behavior are:

- Sending or posting mean, rude, or hateful messages or comments
- Spreading rumors, lies, or gossip online
- Sharing or posting embarrassing, private, or false information or images of another person or group
- Excluding, isolating, or discriminating against another person or group online
- Impersonating, hacking, or stealing another person's online identity or account
- Stalking, threatening, or blackmailing another person or group online
- Encouraging or inciting violence, self-harm, or illegal activities online

The school expects all users to report any cyberbullying, harassment, or inappropriate online behavior that they witness or experience to a teacher or administrator as soon as possible. The school also expects all users to cooperate and assist with any investigation or intervention of cyberbullying, harassment, or inappropriate online behavior.
The school will respond to any reports of cyberbullying, harassment, or inappropriate online behavior promptly and appropriately, in accordance with the school's policies and procedures. The school will take appropriate actions to stop, prevent, and address any cyberbullying, harassment, or inappropriate online behavior, such as:

- Removing or blocking access to the online content or platform involved on network or school devices
- Contacting and notifying the parents or guardians of the users involved
- Providing support and counseling to the users involved
- Applying disciplinary or legal consequences to the users involved
- Referring and/or reporting on the users involved to external agencies or authorities, especially as required by law

Enforcement and Consequences of Violating the Policy
The school will enforce this policy and monitor compliance with this policy regularly and consistently. The school will use various methods and tools to enforce and monitor compliance with this policy, such as:

- Requiring acknowledgement and acceptance of this policy annually or as needed
- Providing training and education on this policy and its expectations to users
- Reviewing and updating this policy and its expectations periodically or as needed
- Using filtering and monitoring software to block or restrict access to inappropriate or harmful online content
- Using filtering and monitoring software to monitor and review online activity and content of users
- Conducting audits and inspections of the school's network, devices, and online resources
- Investigating and responding to any reports or incidents of policy violations

The school will apply appropriate consequences to any user who violates this policy, in accordance with the school's policies and procedures. The consequences will depend on the nature, severity, and frequency of the violation, and may include:

- Warning or reprimand
- Loss or restriction of online access or privileges
- Confiscation or suspension of device or account
- Restitution or compensation for damages or losses
- Detention or suspension
- Expulsion or dismissal
- Legal action or prosecution

14.6 Social Media

It is expected that all parents, volunteers, and students using social media platforms refrain from:

- Taking and posting photos or videos of the school day or on field trips unless requested by the school
- Defaming the character of any individual within our community
- Defaming St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Parish and School or the Diocese of Dallas
- Causing embarrassment to St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School, any associated organizations, or members of the community
- Harassing any member of the St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Parish and School community
- Divulging any personal information about children in the community that would jeopardize their safety or well-being in any way
- Sharing answers on student assignments

Social media sites, such as grade-level GroupMe's, are not the appropriate forum for discussion of school concerns or school business. This harms the parent-school relationship. Any concerns related to the school should be addressed directly with the school.

Section Fifteen: Uniform Policy

15.1 Dress Code

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School recognizes the effect students' dress and grooming have upon student behavior and commitment to learning. We further recognize the role of parents in assisting their children in making appropriate choices regarding the school uniform, dress down day clothing, accessories, and grooming. Attire considered disruptive or distracting to the learning environment or that could present a health or safety issue is not appropriate.

It is expected that both the student and their parents carefully monitor hair length and hairstyle to remain in compliance with the dress code. Neither teachers nor administrators should have to repeatedly remind a student to keep their hair cut, styled, or colored properly. Frequent haircuts are encouraged so the student will meet the dress code at all times. Students and their parents are responsible for adhering to all uniform and dress down guidelines. Parents will be notified of a dress code violation and will be required to bring appropriate alternatives to school. The teachers and administration ask for parent partnership and student compliance regarding uniforms and dress down requirements.

See detailed Uniform Requirements and Options Chart below.

Lower School: PK - 2nd grade
STA Uniform and Dress Code

GIRLS

TOPS:

- Red STA Polo (short sleeved)*
- Navy STA Polo (short sleeved)*
- Red STA Polo (long sleeved)**
- White Oxford Blouse (short or long sleeved)**

  NO: Peter Pan collars, ruffles, bows, or decorative elements

BOTTOMS:

- Double Button Plaid Jumper**
- Navy Modesty Shorts**
- Navy Skort**
- Navy Shorts**
- Navy Pants**
  (Note: Jumpers, skorts, and shorts must be no shorter than 4 inches above the knee.)

OUTERWEAR:

- STA Navy Quarter-Zip Fleece*
- STA Gray Quarter-Zip Sweatshirt*
- Navy Cardigan**

SOCKS:

- STA branded socks*
- Black, navy, or white socks - Socks must be crew length or knee-high
  NO: ankle socks, no-show socks, short sock styles, ruffles, other color, or other logos besides STA

  Cold weather modification: Solid black, navy, or white stockings or ankle-length leggings may be worn under skort and jumpers. Leggings must extend to meet socks, leaving no skin exposed. Logos, patterns, and athletic-style leggings are not permitted.

SHOES (PK Only):

- Solid white VELCRO athletic tennis shoes or VELCRO Mary Janes shoes

  NO: athleisure (non-athletic), slip-on, loafer, light up, or roller skate sneakers

SHOES (Kindergarten - 2nd Grade):

- Solid white athletic tennis shoes or navy and white saddle shoes.

  NO: athleisure (non-athletic), slip-on, loafer, light up, or roller skate sneakers

BOYS

TOPS:

- Red STA Polo (short sleeved)*
- Navy STA Polo (short sleeved)*
- Red STA Polo (long sleeved)**

BOTTOMS:

- Navy Shorts**
- Navy Pants**
  (Note: Shorts must be no shorter than 4 inches above the knee.)

OUTERWEAR:

- STA Navy Quarter-Zip Fleece*
- STA Gray Quarter-Zip Sweatshirt*

BELT (1st - 2nd Grade ONLY):

- Black (flat or braided) leather belt **

SOCKS:

- STA branded socks*
- Black, navy, or white socks - Socks must be crew length or knee-high

  NO: ankle socks, no-show socks, short sock styles, other color, or other logos besides STA

SHOES (PK Only):

- Solid black VELCRO athletic tennis shoes.

  NO: athleisure (non-athletic), slip-on, loafer, light up, or roller skate sneakers

SHOES (Kindergarten - 2nd Grade):

- Solid black athletic tennis shoes.

  NO: athleisure (non-athletic), slip-on, loafer, light up, or roller skate sneakers

Wildcat Wednesday

- Lower School students may wear any STA hoodies or sweatshirts over their school uniform on Wednesdays.

* Purchase at the STA Spirit Store
** Purchase at Risse Brothers Uniform Store

Upper School: 3rd - 8th Grade
STA Uniform and Dress Code

GIRLS

TOPS:

- Red STA Polo (short sleeved)*
- Navy STA Polo (short sleeved)*
- Red STA Polo (long sleeved)**
- White Oxford Blouse **(3rd - 7th grade FORMAL)****
- Blue Oxford Blouse **(8th grade ONLY - ALL DAYS)****

NO: Peter Pan collars, ruffles, bows, or decorative elements

BOTTOMS:

- Risse Brother Plaid Skirt** **(FORMAL)**
- Navy Modesty Shorts**
- Navy Shorts**
- Navy Pants** **(FORMAL)**

(Note: Skirts and shorts must be no shorter than 4 inches above the knee.)

OUTERWEAR:

- STA Navy Quarter-Zip Fleece*
- STA Gray Quarter-Zip Sweatshirt*
- Navy Cardigan** **(FORMAL)**
- Varsity Navy Cardigan (8th grade only - FORMAL)**

SOCKS:

- STA branded socks*
- Black, navy, or white socks - Socks must be crew length or knee-high

NO: ankle socks, no-show socks, short sock styles, ruffles, other color, or other logos besides STA

Cold weather modification: Solid black, or navy, or ankle-length leggings may be worn under skirts. Leggings must extend to meet socks, leaving no skin exposed. Logos, patterns, and athletic-style leggings are not permitted.

SHOES:

- Solid white athletic tennis shoes or navy and white saddle shoes

NO: athleisure (non-athletic), slip-on, loafer, or roller skate sneakers

BOYS

TOPS:

- Red STA Polo (short sleeved)*
- Navy STA Polo (short sleeved)*
- Red STA Polo (long sleeved)**
- White Oxford Blouse **(3rd - 7th grade FORMAL)****
- Blue Oxford Blouse **(8th grade ONLY - ALL DAYS)****

BOTTOMS:

- Navy Shorts**
- Navy Pants** **(FORMAL)**

(Note: Shorts must be no shorter than 4 inches above the knee.)

OUTERWEAR:

- STA Navy Quarter-Zip Fleece*
- STA Gray Quarter-Zip Sweatshirt*

BELT:

- Black (flat or braided) leather belt **

TIE:

- Silver and Navy Striped Clip or Hand Knot Tie** **(FORMAL)**

SOCKS:

- STA branded socks*
- Black, navy, or white socks - Socks must be crew length or knee-high

NO: ankle socks, no-show socks, short sock styles, other color, or other logos besides STA

SHOES:

- Solid black athletic tennis shoes.

NO: athleisure (non-athletic), slip-on, loafer, light up, or roller skate sneakers

Wildcat Wednesday

- Upper School students may wear any STA hoodies or sweatshirts over their school uniform on Wednesdays.

* Purchase at the STA Spirit
** Purchase at Risse Brothers Uniform Store

The school uniform helps to identify the student as a member of the St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School community. Families must purchase preschool through 8th-grade uniform items through the school's contracted vendor:

Risse Brothers School Uniform
15048 Beltway
Addison, TX 75001
rissebrothers.com

Families may purchase the following items from the Spirit Store: STA monogrammed knit polo shirts, STA socks, STA monogrammed fleeces and pullovers, ties and uniform sweatshirts.

General Dress Code Guidelines:

- Shirts and blouses must be tucked in.
- Skirts and shorts must be no more than four inches above the knee.
- Shorts are required under skirts and jumpers.
- Sweaters, jackets, and sweatshirts must be worn correctly.
- Socks for boys and girls must be solid white, black, or navy and visible.
- Hats and sweatshirt hoods may not be worn during school hours.
- Hair accessories and bows must not be more than 5 inches in length or width and must match the school uniform skirt colors.
- Hair should be kept clean and neatly groomed and out of the eyes. Hair must be the student's natural color - no bleaching, tinting, or coloring. No designs may be cut into the hair.
- Tattoos (including Henna), body glitter, and body piercing are not permitted.
- Girls may wear only one pair of studded earrings. Dangling and hoop earrings (including Huggies) are prohibited. Boys may not wear earrings.
- One simple necklace is permitted. Chokers are not allowed.
- One simple bracelet may be worn.
- One ring may be worn.
- Expensive/valuable jewelry is strongly discouraged.
- Only natural fingernails are permitted (Artificial nails or fingernail polish are not allowed.)
- Make-up is not permitted through 7th grade. Eighth-grade girls may wear mascara.
- Belts must be worn by 1st-8th grade students wearing pants or shorts.
- Students may not write on their hands, legs, arms (any body part), clothing, or shoes.
- Watches, with the exception of Smart Watches, are permitted but must not distract from learning.
- The school will not assume responsibility for lost or stolen objects.
- Hats, jackets, hoodies, flannel pants, sweatpants or turtlenecks are not to be worn in the building.
- Students are required to keep shoes on their feet at all times.
- Students are not to write, mark, draw, or color on their bodies or clothing.

15.2 Upper School Formal Uniform Guidelines

Ambassador Uniforms

Students selected as ambassadors will wear their formal uniform with a navy blazer/jacket purchased at Risse Brothers Uniforms.

Mass Uniforms
On Mass days, formal uniform is required. Students will be required to wear a formal uniform to all Masses and any special event/occasion as announced by the school administration. Only approved cardigans and fleece jackets may be worn in classrooms or the church.

- Boys in 3rd - 7th grade must wear the white button-down dress shirt and the STA formal uniform necktie or bow tie (navy blue and silver). 8th grade wears blue dress shirt and tie. Boys may wear the navy fleece or gray pullover purchased from the Spirit Store.
- Girls in 3rd - 7th grade must wear the white dress shirt and navy cardigan. 8th grade wears the blue dress shirt and navy cardigan.
- Students should arrive at school in formal dress on Mass days.

Scout Uniforms
Scouts may wear their scout uniforms on days of scout meetings or other days approved by the school administration. Scout uniform shorts, jumpers, or skirts must be the length of the school uniform shorts, jumpers, or skirts.

15.3 Dress Down Guidelines

Special events, birthday dress down, and community service fundraising days are days when students may be out of the official uniform.

- Shirts must cover a student's stomach/midriff when raising arms.
- Tank tops, spaghetti straps, sleeveless shirts, see-through garments, and tight, form-fitting clothing are not permitted.
- T-shirts and all other clothing must not display or contain suggestive slang, images of alcohol/drugs, cryptic/violent images, politically distracting messages, or inappropriate language, pictures, or offensive phrases.
- Skirts and shorts must be no more than four inches above the knee.
- Shorts are required under skirts and dresses.
- Jeans, joggers, and slacks are acceptable (no leggings).
- Athletic shoes only
- Clothing may not be torn, frayed, cut, or have holes or mesh/see-through.
- Hats are not permitted.
- All other uniform guidelines regarding jewelry/make-up and nail polish always apply.

The school administration will make the final decision regarding the appropriateness of any fad or questionable article of clothing, accessory, or hairstyle. All students are expected to comply with the dress code. Students who do not meet the dress code will be asked to change into appropriate clothing to be provided by the parents promptly. For compelling reasons, the administration may, at their discretion, review an individual situation.

Field Days
All students may wear athletic shorts with the Field Day t-shirts provided by the school. Students may wear athletic shoes. Crocs, sandals, and open-toed shoes are not allowed.

House Days
Upper School students may wear uniform bottoms or jeans with an STA House t-shirt on House days. Replacement house shirts may be purchased in the Spirt Store. Students may wear athletic or school shoes. On House Saint Feast Days (even on Mass days), students in that particular house may wear their house t-shirt with uniform bottoms.

Spirit Days
Students may wear uniform bottoms or jeans with an STA spirit t-shirt (no jerseys – unless told by Athletic Director) of their choosing. Students may wear athletic or school shoes.

15.4 ID badges
Students are required to wear the STA-issued ID badge containing their name and photo. The school will provide one badge, a lanyard or clip, and a plastic protector sleeve per student each school year. If your child needs a replacement, a $5.00 charge will be added to your FACTS family incidental billing account.

15.5 Personal Appearance
It is the parents' responsibility to ensure that their children adhere to the dress code and personal appearance policies. The school reserves the right to decide whether a student's grooming is in accord with school policy. Those in violation of uniform and personal appearance code may not be admitted to class. Students who repeatedly violate the uniform policy will be denied participation in the next out-of-uniform day or will serve detention.

ALL UNIFORM REGULATIONS AND GUIDELINES ARE SUBJECT TO THE DISCRETION OF THE ADMINISTRATION.

*** Uniform Image Charts are located at the end of the handbook in the Appendix. ***

Section Sixteen: Signature Pages

16.1 Signature Page Acknowledgement and Parent Agreement
For hard copy handbooks: By my signature below, I agree that I will comply and will require the student listed below to comply with the school's policies, procedures, and instructions, and understand that such compliance by me, the student, and persons connected to the school by reason of the student is a condition of the student's continued enrollment in the school. I also understand and agree that the timely payment of all tuition, fees, and costs imposed by the school is also a condition of the student's continued enrollment in the school. Furthermore, by signing below, I represent, warrant, and agree that I am authorized to sign this agreement, undertake the duties, and grant the releases set forth herein on behalf of Student.

Student Name (print): _____

Student Signature: _____

Parent Name (print): _____

Parent Signature: _____

School Name (print): _____

School year: _____ Date: _____

For online acknowledgement: By submitting this form to the school, I represent that I have read the foregoing Handbook and understand and agree to the contents thereof. I agree that I will comply and will require the student listed below to comply with the school's policies, procedures, and instructions, and understand that such compliance by me, the student, and persons connected to the school by reason of the student is a condition of the student's continued enrollment in the school. I also understand and agree that the timely payment of all tuition, fees, and costs imposed by the school is also a condition of the student's continued enrollment in the school.

16.2 Release and Indemnification

For and in consideration of admitting Student to School, allowing Student to participate in any of the activities described above, and for other good and valuable consideration, on behalf of myself, Student, and our respective heirs, assigns, survivors, estates, beneficiaries, I hereby release and agree to fully and unconditionally protect, indemnify, and defend School, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Dallas, and their respective officers, agents, and employees, (collectively, "Indemnitees") and hold each Indemnitee harmless from and against any and all costs, expenses, attorney's fees, claims damages, demands, suits, judgments, losses, or liability for injuries to property, injuries to persons (including Student) and from any other costs, expenses, attorney fees, claims, suits judgments, losses, or liabilities of any and every nature whatsoever arising in any manner, directly or indirectly, out of, in connection with, in the course of, or incidental to any activity described above in this Section 10.

16.3 Parent Consent Release Form

The School offers students the opportunity to participate in a wide range of education, extracurricular, and athletic activities, both on and off campus. The School believes that parents, students, and the School community are best-served when parents and students together determine the range of activities that are appropriate for a particular student's participation. Parents should review the opportunities listed below, determine which activities are appropriate for their student's participation, and students and parents should sign where indicated below for each activity.

Student Name:	

<u>Athletics</u>: Subject to the Release and Indemnification terms below, by my/our initials below, I/we consent to Student's participation in School-sponsored athletic activities, including without limitation athletics-related training and exercise programs, practices, School-sponsored pre and post-game activities, games, competitions, and tournaments. I/we have read, discussed with Student, and understand the Student conduct expectations set forth in the Handbook and understand that Student's continued participation in athletics is conditioned upon his/her compliance with all applicable policies and rules of conduct when engaged in any School-related activity, whether academic, athletic, or otherwise.

Parent(s) initials:	**YES**		**NO**	

<u>Extra-curricular Activities:</u> Subject to Release and Indemnification terms below, by my/our initials below, I/we consent to Student's participation in School-sponsored extracurricular activities, including on-campus and off-campus extracurricular activities. I/we have read and discussed with Student the conduct expectations set forth in the Handbook and understand that's Student's continued participation in extracurricular activities is conditioned upon his/her compliance with all applicable policies and rules of conduct when engaged in any School-sponsored activity, whether academic, extracurricular, or otherwise.

Parent(s) initials:	**YES**		**NO**	

<u>Transportation to/from Extra-curricular Activities:</u> Subject to Release and Indemnification terms below, by my/our initials below, I/we consent to Student's use of School-sponsored transportation to and from and all School-sponsored extracurricular activities described above. I/we have read and discussed with Student the conduct expectations set forth in the Handbook and understand that's Student's continued participation in extracurricular activities is conditioned upon his/her compliance with all applicable policies and rules of conduct.

Parent(s) initials:	**YES**		**NO**	

<u>Video/Image Release</u>: Subject to the Release and Consideration and Indemnification terms below, by my/our initials below, and for good and valuable consideration, I hereby grant to the School the irrevocable and unrestricted right to make, use and/or publish any and all photographs, videos, and other images of Student, or images in which Student may be included, now existing or hereafter made, in any case, with or without identifying Student for editorial, advertising, news, or any other purpose and in any manner and medium; to alter the same without restriction; and to copyright the same.

Parent(s) initials:	**YES**		**NO**	
Student: *If age 18 or over*, initial appropriate box to the right:	**YES**		**NO**	

STA UNIFORM AND DRESS CODE

Lower School Girls

The STA dress code for girls in PK–2nd grade will be enforced throughout the school year.
Purchase all uniform items from Risse Brothers, STA Spirit Store, or the STA Used Uniform Sale.

TOPS



Red STA Short Sleeved Polo
(Purchase at the STA Spirit Store)



Navy STA Short Sleeved Polo
(Purchase at the STA Spirit Store)



Red STA Long Sleeved Polo
(Purchase at Risse Brothers)



White Oxford
(Purchase at Risse Brothers)

No Peter Pan collars
No ruffles
No bows
No decorative elements

BOTTOMS



Risse Brothers Double Button Plaid Jumper
(Purchase at Risse Brothers)



Risse Brothers Navy Skort
(Purchase at Risse Brothers)



Navy Shorts
(Purchase at Risse Brothers)

Solid navy color
No logos
No emblems
No decorative elements



Modesty Under Shorts worn under jumper
(Purchase at Risse Brothers)



Navy Long Pants
(Purchase at Risse Brothers)

Solid navy color
Must be full length
No logos
No emblems
No decorative elements

OUTERWEAR



Navy Fleece
(Purchase at the STA Spirit Store)



Navy Cardigan
(Purchase at Risse Brothers)



STA Gray Half-Zip Sweatshirt
(Purchase at the STA Spirit Store)

SOCKS



STA Socks
(Purchase at the STA Spirit Store)

Black, Navy, or White Socks
Socks must be crew length or knee-high

No ankle socks
No no-show socks
No short sock styles
No ruffles
No other colors

K – 2ND GRADE SHOES



Solid white athletic tennis shoes or navy and white saddle shoes

No athleisure (non-athletic)
No slip-on
No loafer
No roller skate sneakers

PK ONLY SHOES



Solid white VELCRO athletic tennis shoes or VELCRO Mary Janes shoes

No athleisure (non-athletic)
No slip-on
No loafer
No light up shoes
No roller skate sneakers

IMPORTANT: Items must be purchased from the STA Spirit Store, Risse Brothers, or the STA Used Uniform Sale. Uniform items previously purchased at the Used Uniform Sale are still STA approved provided they are not faded and remain part of the 2026–2027 dress code. All uniform pieces must meet the approved specifications and comply with the STA uniform policy.

STA UNIFORM AND DRESS CODE
Upper School Girls

The STA dress code for girls in 3rd - 8th grade will be enforced throughout the school year.
Purchase all uniform items from Risse Brothers, STA Spirit Store, or the STA Used Uniform Sale.

TOPS



Red STA Short Sleeved Polo
(Purchase at the STA Spirit Store)



Navy STA Short Sleeved Polo
(Purchase at the STA Spirit Store)



Red STA Long Sleeved Polo
(Purchase at Risse Brothers)

Grades 3rd - 7th: Daily *(except on formal days)*



White Oxford Blouse
(Purchase at Risse Brothers)
3rd-7th Formal



Blue Oxford Blouse
(Purchase at Risse Brothers)
8th Grade - Daily

BOTTOMS



Risse Brothers Skirt
(Purchase at Risse Brothers)

Skirt length must be no more than 4" above the knee

3rd-8th Formal



Navy Shorts
(Purchase at Risse Brothers)

Solid navy color
No logos
No emblems
No decorative elements



Navy Long Pants
(Purchase at Risse Brothers)

Solid navy color
Must be full length
No logos
No emblems
No decorative elements

3rd-8th Formal (Optional)



Modesty Under Shorts worn under skirt
(Purchase at Risse Brothers)

OUTERWEAR



Navy Fleece
(Purchase at the STA Spirit Store)



STA Gray Half-Zip Sweatshirt
(Purchase at the STA Spirit Store)



Navy Cardigan
(Purchase at Risse Brothers)
3rd-8th Formal



Varsity Navy Cardigan
(Purchase at Risse Brothers)
8th Grade Only

SOCKS



STA Socks
(Purchase at the STA Spirit Store)

Black, Navy, or White Socks
Socks must be crew length or knee-high

No ankle socks
No no-show socks
No short sock styles
No ruffles
No other colors



SHOES

Solid white athletic tennis shoes or navy and white saddle shoes

No athleisure (non-athletic)
No slip-on
No loafer
No roller skate sneakers

IMPORTANT: Items must be purchased from the STA Spirit Store, Risse Brothers, or the STA Used Uniform Sale. Uniform items previously purchased at the Used Uniform Sale are still STA approved provided they are not faded and remain part of the 2026–2027 dress code. All uniform pieces must meet the approved specifications and comply with the STA uniform policy.

STA UNIFORM AND DRESS CODE

Lower School Boys

The STA dress code for boys in PK–2nd grade will be enforced throughout the school year. Purchase all uniform items from Risse Brothers, STA Spirit Store, or the STA Used Uniform Sale.

TOPS



Red STA Short Sleeved Polo
(Purchase at the STA Spirit Store)



Navy STA Short Sleeved Polo
(Purchase at the STA Spirit Store)



Red STA Long Sleeved Polo
(Purchase at Risse Brothers)

BOTTOMS



Navy Long Pants
(Purchase at Risse Brothers)

Solid navy color
Must be full length
No logos
No emblems
No decorative elements



Navy Shorts
(Purchase at Risse Brothers)

Solid navy color
No logos
No emblems
No decorative elements

OUTERWEAR



Navy Fleece
(Purchase at the STA Spirit Store)



STA Gray Half-Zip Sweatshirt
(Purchase at the STA Spirit Store)

SOCKS



STA Socks
(Purchase at the STA Spirit Store)

Black, Navy, or White Socks
Socks must be crew length

No ankle socks
No no-show socks
No short sock styles
No other colors

BELT



Black Leather Belt
Leather may be flat or braided

(Purchase at Risse Brothers)

1st–2nd Grade Only

K – 2ND GRADE SHOES



Solid Black Athletic Tennis Shoes

No athleisure (non-athletic)
No slip-on
No loafer
No roller skate sneakers

PK ONLY SHOES



Solid Black VELCRO Athletic Tennis Shoes

No athleisure (non-athletic)
No slip-on
No loafer
No light up shoes
No roller skate sneakers

IMPORTANT: Items must be purchased from the STA Spirit Store, Risse Brothers, or the STA Used Uniform Sale. Uniform items previously purchased at the Used Uniform Sale are still STA approved provided they are not faded and remain part of the 2026–2027 dress code. All uniform pieces must meet the approved specifications and comply with the STA uniform policy.

STA UNIFORM AND DRESS CODE
Upper School Boys

The STA dress code for boys in 3rd - 8th grade will be enforced throughout the school year. Purchase all uniform items from Risse Brothers, STA Spirit Store, or the STA Used Uniform Sale.

TOPS



Red STA Short Sleeved Polo
(Purchase at the STA Spirit Store)



Navy STA Short Sleeved Polo
(Purchase at the STA Spirit Store)



Red STA Long Sleeved Polo
(Available at Risse Brothers)

Grades 3rd - 7th: Daily *(except on formal days)*



White Oxford Blouse
(Purchase at Risse Brothers)
3rd-7th Formal



Blue Oxford Blouse
(Purchase at Risse Brothers)
8th Grade - Daily

BOTTOMS



Navy Long Pants
(Purchase at Risse Brothers)

Solid navy color
Must be full length
No logos
No emblems
No decorative elements

3rd-8th Formal



Navy Shorts
(Purchase at Risse Brothers)

Solid navy color
No logos
No emblems
No decorative elements

BELT



Black Leather Belt
Leather may be flat or braided
(Purchase at Risse Brothers)

OUTERWEAR



Navy Fleece
(Purchase at the STA Spirit Store)



STA Gray Half-Zip Sweatshirt
(Purchase at the STA Spirit Store)

TIE



Navy Clip or Hand Knot
(Purchase at the STA Spirit Store or Risse Brothers)
3rd-8th Formal

SOCKS



STA Socks
(Purchase at the STA Spirit Store)

Black, Navy, or White Socks
Socks must be crew length

No ankle socks
No no-show socks
No short sock styles
No other colors

SHOES



Solid Black Athletic Tennis Shoes

No athleisure (non-athletic)
No slip-on
No loafer
No roller skate sneakers

IMPORTANT: Items must be purchased from the STA Spirit Store, Risse Brothers, or the STA Used Uniform Sale. Uniform items previously purchased at the Used Uniform Sale are still STA approved provided they are not faded and remain part of the 2026-2027 dress code. All uniform pieces must meet the approved specifications and comply with the STA uniform policy.