

August 2023

Dear Parents,

Welcome to St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School. We ask that you read through this handbook and share the important policies and procedures with your children.

The faculty, staff, and administration of this school are grateful for the blessings bestowed upon our school by the supporting parents and Parishes of St. Thomas the Apostle and St. Elizabeth Ann Seton of Crystal Lake, St. Mary of Huntley and Resurrection of Woodstock. Our focus will continue to be Faith Formation, Catholic Doctrine, Academic Excellence, Community Service and Christian Values. We are grateful for the sacrifice and hard work of all those involved in helping our school to provide a quality Catholic Education. May the Holy Spirit continue to guide us to new levels.

“How does school help you to grow? It helps you not only in the development of your intelligence but by an integral formation of all of the components of your personality. The principal element of education is to learn to be generous. Saint Ignatius taught us that magnanimity is the virtue of the great and of the small – Non coarctari maximo contineri minimo, divinum est.

It is the desire to do great things to respond to that which God asks of us. However, generosity is truly shown in doing well the simple things – the daily chores and responsibilities, and the ordinary encounters with people. It is doing small things every day with a big heart open to God and to others. So we tend to a human formation aimed at generosity. School not only expands your intellectual dimension, but also the human heart.

Pope Francis

Gina Houston, Principal

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MISSION & VISION

A commitment to a Quality Catholic Education,

By Living and Sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Students will grow in wisdom and knowledge with their faith inspiring them in all subjects.

Teachers will prepare their students for this world, always with a faithful eye on the next.

Parents will embrace the promises they made for their children at Baptism,

(to be the first and best teachers in the ways of the faith of Jesus Christ).

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

We at St. Thomas the Apostle School commit ourselves to educating the whole child by providing an excellent education rooted in Gospel values. Students are encouraged to dream and envision the future, with all the possibilities and challenges allowed to them to make a difference.

Each child will be respected as a unique person with special gifts and talents. We will strive to provide opportunities for each child to deepen his/her respect for each person. We will create a climate within the school that will enable children to build on their life experiences and to become problem solvers who witness their faith in an ever-changing world. We will enable students to use their gifts to make socially just, responsible, creative, and moral decisions that can impact their environment now and in the future. We will stress the importance of living a life nurtured by prayer. We will promote activities that foster Catholic leadership and services for our students.

SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

St. Thomas the Apostle School is accredited by the Illinois State Board of Education and is run under the auspices of the St. Thomas the Apostle Church and the Diocese of Rockford. It is financially supported by the parishes of St. Thomas the Apostle, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, St. Mary in Huntley, and Resurrection in Woodstock. Final authority for the school rests with the pastor of St. Thomas Parish through the school principal. In addition, the pastor of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, who is an ex-officio member of the Education Commission, works very closely with both the pastor of St. Thomas and the school principal along with the Education Commission, in formulating and supporting the Catholic philosophy of the school.

St. Thomas the Apostle Education Commission is a consultative body working directly with the pastors and principal for the purpose of providing our families and students with the best and most authentic Catholic education possible. The Commission is comprised of members from members of the school and parish communities. The primary responsibility of the Commission is making recommendations and monitoring the long-term strategic direction of the school and its organizations.

It should be remembered that legally, as a parochial school, St. Thomas the Apostle School is subject only to the regulations and policies that are approved by the pastor of the parish and the Diocese of Rockford and is not bound by some of the practices, regulations, and laws that affect the public sector.

ADMISSION/TUITION

Illinois State Guidelines recommend that a child be five years of age on or before September 1st to enter kindergarten. To enter PK 3, a child must be at least three years of age on or before September 1st. To enter PK 4/5, a child must be at least four years of age on or before September 1st. All students must have physical/health records on file with the school nurse before registration is considered complete. This includes a physical examination and all needed immunizations before entering preschool, kindergarten and sixth grade and dental exams before entering kindergarten, second, and sixth grades. A vision exam is also required prior to entering kindergarten. Students in all grades coming from out of state will also need an updated physical and immunization record. All health records are due before the first day of school.

K-8 Tuition is based on the cost to educate a single student. Practicing members of one of the participating parishes will receive a parish discount. Likewise, the second and third child in the K-8 program will receive sibling discounts. The fourth child will be free. These discounts are subsidized by the participating parishes. Financial Assistance may be requested through a third party, FACTs Grant Applications. FACTs will make the recommendation to the parish and each parish will determine then the amount of assistance based on FACTs recommendations and each Parish's ability to assist.

Tuition is paid through the FACTs Tuition Management portal. Families will create an account and select a payment plan. Each plan has a management fee which is different than the school registration fee. School registration fees go toward consumable book replacements, and the technology fee assists with Internet access monthly fees in our school as well as maintenance and minor repairs on the devices. Major repairs to student devices are the responsibility of the student.

Our school functions effectively with the assistance and teamwork of our staff and our active, involved parents. Each family is required to contribute volunteer hours to our school which will be tracked through FACTs sign-ups.

Any student in K-8 who is transferring from another school must be in good academic, behavioral and financial standing at their former school before we will consider enrolling them at St. Thomas. Junior High students will be interviewed, and acceptance/admission will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Transferring students will be accepted on a first term probationary status.

* **“Practicing”** shall mean families who regularly attend Sunday Mass and participate in the parish by giving of their time, talent, and treasure. Determination shall be made by known involvement in parish activities or programs, regular use of Sunday envelope and for families new to either parish, a former pastor or parish staff member’s recommendation.

NON-DISCRIMINATORY POLICY FOR ADMISSION

All Catholic schools in the Rockford Diocese shall admit students of any race, gender, color, national or ethnic origin in administration of their educational policies, scholarship and loan program, and athletic and other school administered programs. In some situations, at the principal’s discretion, a student may be refused admission when he/she has academic, social, or behavioral problems for which the school does not have adequate resources. Exceptions may be considered by the principal and/or the pastor.

ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY FOR INTERNET / NETWORK

The Diocesan Acceptable Usage Policy is available through the FACTs Student Information System portal. Please refer to the links for technology.

ATHLETIC PROGRAM

The athletic program in our school is administered by the Athletic Association Board under the authority of the Pastor and the school administrators. Presently, programs for boys and for girls are offered to students in grades 5 through 8. Parents with questions about the program or who wish to volunteer their help may contact the Athletic Directors: Katie Wolf and Colleen Nieckula. Parents of students who participate in our athletic programs are required to volunteer as coaches, assistants to the coach and/or in the concession stands. Parents of students who are non-athletes are also encouraged to volunteer with the athletic programs. Student eligibility rules are included in the Athletic Handbook.

ATTENDANCE, STUDENT SICKNESS / INJURY

School attendance is compulsory under state law until a student reaches his/her 17th birthday. Students at St. Thomas must attend all classes as assigned by the principal. Students may not leave school grounds without direct **written** permission of parents and notifying the school office personnel. Students absent for more than one-half the school day or who are sent home ill will be ineligible to participate in extracurricular, after school, or evening events, including practices and all sports activities.

Student absences must be reported to the school office (815/459-0496) before 7:30 a.m. Parents will be contacted if no notification is received. A report may be left on the school's voice mail system **but please do not use e-mail for reporting absences or dismissal procedures.** All contagious illnesses must be reported to the school as soon as possible. If a student is absent more than three straight days, a doctor's excuse must be sent to school before the child may attend classes again. While regular attendance is closely related to academic success, **parents are urged not to send students to school when they are ill.** *The presence of sick students in school is detrimental to the health of other students and staff and is not at all beneficial to the sick child.* Parents or the persons identified on each child's emergency procedures and contacts that should be kept updated in FACTs, will be notified at once when it is determined that a child is ill or injured.

Should a student become ill the following guidelines should be followed when deciding when a child can return to school. All students that are called in due to illness with fever and or severe coughing will be required to remain home for a minimum of 24 hours to monitor symptoms. If symptoms do not improve within 48 hours, it is strongly recommended that the child see a doctor for evaluation. If a child has seen a doctor due to illness, a doctor's note is required to return.

Symptom	Detail	When to Return
<i>Fever</i>	<i>100.0 or more – a sign of illness that may be contagious ---please monitor the situation for at least 24 hours. Seek medical advice if no improvement</i>	<i>Fever free <u>without medication</u> for 24 hours</i>
<i>Vomiting</i>	<i>More than one episode – not induced my cough of reflux</i>	<i>Able to maintain a normal diet</i>
<i>Diarrhea</i>	<i>May lead to dehydration or may be infectious</i>	<i>Diarrhea free</i>
<i>Frequent persistent cough</i>	<i>May indicate secondary infection – sinusitis/pneumonia/asthma</i>	<i>Minimal coughing or treatment begun</i>
<i>Infectious illness – strep throat/pink eye/ chickenpox/flu etc.</i>	<i>Is contagious to staff and other students</i>	<i>On antibiotics or treatment for 24 hours or until your doctor releases your child to come to school</i>
<i>Rash</i>	<i>Cause unknown or unexplained</i>	<i>Cause determined non-infectious</i>
<i>Persistent Pain</i>	<i>Cause needs evaluation</i>	<i>Pain free</i>

The school nurse (or in her absence, the secretaries or administration) will determine what is just cause for a student to be sent home from school. We ask that you respect our decision as we have the best interest of all the students in mind.

Students absent from school can check **Google Classroom** for missed homework assignments. Needed textbooks and homework papers will be available (upon request) at the end of the school day, if the request is given to the teacher by 10:30 a.m. that day via voicemail or email. For students in grades 6-7-8 who are absent and want to get their make-up work, they are asked to give their combination and locker number to their parents who may come in to gather their books between 2:20-3:00 pm.

MISSING CHILD POLICY

The safety of our pupils is our priority while they are in our care at school. This policy sets out our procedures for dealing with the unlikely event of a child going missing.

RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the principal's responsibility to ensure that all relevant staff are aware of this policy, what is expected, the procedures to follow and to ensure that the policy is reviewed on a timely basis. It is the responsibility of all staff to read the policy and act at all times according to its guidance.

Teachers are responsible for completing the Daily Attendance Report. They must be completed accurately and promptly according to guidelines. Completed attendance reports must be recorded in FACTs by 8:00 am. If a member of the staff takes a pupil, group or class out of the school they are responsible for informing parents and staff at the school office.

It is the responsibility of the parents to ensure they provide correct and updated contact information on a timely basis and know the procedures for handover of their child at the beginning and end of each school day. If a parent takes a pupil out of school during the day, they must sign them out at the office.

BAND

Band will be offered by Mrs. Holland at the end of the day beginning at 1:45 pm. 4th/5th grade and 6-7-8 grade band will alternate weeks.

CODE OF CONDUCT

The code of conduct for St. Thomas School is based on our philosophy of providing a quality education in the framework of our Catholic tradition. In every aspect of our school community, coinciding with our families, is dedicated to the well-being of the children, their development in our faith and academic excellence.

School discipline should not be viewed as a form of punishment but as a method of moral guidance. Discipline will be used as a means of teaching the child to assume his/her responsibilities for their actions resulting in self-competence and maturity. Discipline promotes genuine character building.

EXPECTED CONDUCT

“Stay Safe, Take Responsibility & Show Respect.”

STS- St. Thomas School Positive Behavior Intervention & Support (PBIS) Program

Be honest, courteous, attentive and respectful with fellow students, teachers, school personnel and visitors.

Observe all rules for health and personal safety.

Maintain regular attendance. Be punctual and prepared for school.

Behave when visiting the bathroom or drinking fountains.

Observe dress code for all occasions.

Be responsible for the care of books and respect all school property.

Keep the campus clean.

PBIS will be reviewed at the start of school and conducted all year.

UNACCEPTABLE CONDUCT

Unacceptable conduct may result in parent notification/conference, removal from the classroom, detention, suspension or expulsion.

1. Excessive absence or tardiness
2. Failure to do assigned work
3. Inattentiveness in class
4. Failure to follow the uniform/dress code
5. Lack of cooperation
6. Repeated disobedience
7. Continued disruption of class
8. Disrespect towards others
9. Fighting or encouraging others to fight
10. Misuse or unauthorized usage of any property, equipment, electronics, etc. of St. Thomas School
11. Unauthorized use of cell phones or other electronics during school hours (7:30 a.m. – 2:15 pm)
12. Vandalism or theft

13. Possession, use, or distribution of any drug (or look-alike substance), including but not limited to, over-the counter and prescription medications, vitamins, alcohol, smoking materials-including vaping, etc.
14. Possession or use of a “weapon” or to use any item as a weapon.
15. Any other inappropriate behavior or school project content (as determined by the teachers or administrators).

The administration has the authority to prohibit participation in school and related activities, to suspend, and to recommend to the pastor the expulsion of students.

Consequences for misbehavior may include, but are not limited to, verbal correction, notification to parents, parent-teacher (and/or administrator) conferences, suspension, expulsion, or other, as deemed appropriate by the school administration. Parents will be notified as to any assigned consequence in a timely matter.

The following policies for drugs & weapons refer to students as well as parents, guardians or other adults on school property

DRUGS

Students are prohibited from using or being under the influence of alcohol or drugs while at school or at any school-related function. Included within the prohibitions set forth in this policy are the following: use, possession, manufacture, distribution, dispensation, or sale of drugs, drug paraphernalia, or alcohol on school premises or with respect to school-related activities; storing in a locker, desk, automobile, or other repository on school premises or in connection with any school related activity, any drugs, drug paraphernalia, or alcohol; being under the influence of drugs or alcohol on school premises or in connection with any school related activities.

A) The school reserves the right to require a student to undergo testing for the use of alcohol and/ or drugs when a reasonable suspicion of such use exists. A "reasonable suspicion" of drug and/or alcohol use may be based upon the observation of the student's behavior, information received regarding alleged alcohol or drug use and/or other indications giving rise to a suspicion of a violation of this policy. A student's failure to cooperate in testing required by the policy or other violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the school.

B) Students bringing these materials to school will be subject to suspension or expulsion. Students attempting to sell or share these materials or facsimiles will be subject to suspension/expulsion along with police notification.

WEAPONS

It is a violation of the school's policies for a student to possess a weapon on school premises or at any time in connection with school-related activities. Included within the prohibitions of this policy are the possession, sale, distribution, manufacture, receipt, seeking the sale or trade or use of any firearms, knife, martial arts method or other object which, at the school's discretion, may reasonably be considered to constitute a weapon. Violations of this policy may result, at the school's discretion, in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the school.

**Threats to cause harm with a weapon of any kind or bodily harm will be investigated and reported to the police within 24 hours-regardless of the student age. Likewise, threats by parents or staff members will be investigated and reported to the police within 24 hours.*

BICYCLES

Students may ride bicycles or scooters to and from school but **MUST WEAR A HELMET**. They are to be “walked” on school property and must be locked in one of the racks provided.

BIRTHDAYS AND CLASSROOM PARTIES

Due to many student allergies and disruptions to our already limited class time, we do not allow students to bring birthday treats to school, including, but not limited to food, snacks, toys, pencils, etc. We also ask that flowers, balloons, decorations, etc. NOT be brought or sent to school. We will not accept delivery of those items. Birthdays are recognized each day during opening announcements (please be sure all birth dates are entered into your children’s FACTs profiles) and the birthday students will receive special birthday wishes throughout the day. We ask that the “big celebrations” take place at home so that we can use our limited school hours to their fullest academic potential.

Classroom parties are limited to those listed below and must be coordinated with the homeroom teacher, in consultation with the school administration. Room parents typically plan the parties with the homeroom teacher and are asked to make sure any food that is brought in is store bought and packaged. Due to student allergies, **NO HOMEMADE FOOD WILL BE ALLOWED AT THESE PARTIES.**

Fall Fest/All Saints Day: October 31

Jesus’ Birthday Party: December 21

St. Valentine Day: February 13

Invitations to private, out of school parties may not be brought to school. We ask that you mail/email the invitations and the thank you notes directly to the children’s homes.

Any action, word or behavior which harasses, intimidates or causes physical, emotional or psychological harm to another student or students is strictly prohibited. This prohibited conduct also extends to the use of technology (Cyber bullying) as a tool to harass or cause harm.

Bullying is prohibited during any school-sponsored education program or activity; while in school, on school property, on school buses or other school vehicles, at designated school bus stops waiting for the school bus, or at school-sponsored or school –sanctioned events or activities; or through the transmission of information from a school computer, a school computer network, or other similar premises of the Diocesan school.

“Bullying” means any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communication made in writing or electronically (cyber bullying), directed toward a student or students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:

1. Placing the student or students in reasonable fear of harm to the student’s or students; person or property;
2. Causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student’s or students’ physical or mental health;
3. Substantially interfering with the student’s or students’ academic performance;
4. Substantially interfering with the student’s or students’ ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

Bullying may take various forms, including without limitation one or more of the following:

- Harassment
- Threats
- Intimidation
- Stalking
- Physical violence
- Sexual harassment
- Sexual violence
- Theft
- Public humiliation
- Destruction of property
- Retaliation for asserting or alleging an act of bullying

Examples of cyber-bullying include but are not limited to the use of email, web sites, text messaging, electronic photos & any social media used to harass or intimidate. These lists are meant to be illustrative and non-exhaustive.

Students who violate this policy will be subject to the discipline policy of the student’s school.

**Threats to cause harm with a weapon of any kind or bodily harm will be investigated and reported to the police within 24 hours-regardless of the student age. Likewise, threats by parents or staff members will be investigated and reported to the police within 24 hours.*

ST. THOMAS SCHOOL ADDENDUM TO ROCKFORD DIOCESAN BULLY POLICY:

Once the school has been made aware of a bully-type behavior (as describe in the diocesan policy above) a staff member will investigate and will bring the misbehaviors described above to the attention of the accused and his/her parents. If those misbehaviors continue, the school will handle it as a bully situation and will take proper action and issue appropriate consequence.

In order for us to help stop bullying situations, they must be brought directly to our attention, and we must be able to address the students and parents involved. We will need to contact all students and their parents before a resolution can be made which can take days, if not weeks, to resolve. Possible consequences for bullying may include: detention, suspension, expulsion, and police involvement.

HARASSMENT-SEXUAL & OTHER

St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School will provide an educational environment free from all kinds of harassment, and bullying including but not limited to harassment based on appearance, race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or disability. Such harassment demeans the dignity and privacy of the recipient, is disruptive of the educational environment, and may violate federal and state law. It is a violation of this policy for anyone to harass a student or to retaliate against anyone who in good faith complains of harassment or participates in any proceeding to investigate and resolve such complaints. It is also a violation of this policy for anyone to knowingly make a false accusation of harassment. Definition of Harassment includes any unwelcome verbal or physical conduct or communication based on, but not limited to, appearance, race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age or disability that has the purpose or effect of creating or contributing to an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment or that unreasonably interferes with the recipient's educational performance. Examples of actions that may constitute harassment include any unwelcome touching, epithets, slurs, or negative stereotyping and written materials showing hostility toward individuals because of, but not limited to, their appearance, race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age or disability.

BUS REGULATIONS

Transportation is provided free to students who live in District 47 by District 47 buses. *Students may only ride their assigned routes.* Use of the bus service may be denied for repeated violation of the following rules.

- Students must be on time at the designated bus pickup area.
- Students must be seated at all times while on the bus.
- If assigned seats are given by the driver, students may not change seats.
- Students must avoid loud or boisterous conduct, teasing, fighting, eating/drinking or gum chewing.

Drivers will write up students who cause problems on a “Bus Referral Form” which will be given to the administration and then sent home to parents. Repeated transgressions of the bus rules may lead to school discipline measures being used and/or suspension from and/or denial of bus riding privileges.

Due to the space limitations, insurance and safety, students will not be allowed to ride any bus other than the one to which they are assigned unless there is an emergency situation that is approved by the bus garage and school administration. Please contact the office as early as possible if there is an emergency and your child is not able to ride his/her regular bus home.

CALENDAR/ DAILY SCHEDULE

While our school follows the basic District 47 school calendar, exceptions will include our own staff in-service days and certain holidays. Parents will be notified in advance of “no bus” days.

The school day begins with arrival between 7:30 and 7:40 a.m.

Staff supervision of students begins at 7:30 a.m. (at drop-off) and ends at 2:20 p.m. Students should not be at school before 7:30 a.m. and must be picked up by 2:20 p.m. In the event of an unforeseen circumstance where a parent may be running late, the office should be contacted immediately so his/her child can wait at the school office.

MORNING DROP OFF/AFTERNOON PICK UP

Families driving their children to school will drop off & pick up on King St. near the courtyard. Please do not drop off on Lake St as this is where the buses will be pulling up to drop off.

CHILD ABUSE

According to the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act (1982), school principals, teachers, and volunteers are mandated (Sec. 4) to report suspicion of abuse or neglect to the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). This law is followed by staff and volunteers at St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School.

COMMUNICATION

FACTS GENERAL COMMUNICATIONS

- Please update your FACTs profile with any changes to phone numbers or emergency contacts as soon as possible. It is crucial that we are able to reach you or another emergency contact during the school day, between 7:30 – 2:20 pm, Monday through Friday.
- The school office number is 815/459-0496. Please do not call teachers or other staff members at home, unless they request the call. We ask that you respect their privacy and time with their families.
- Students will not be called out of class to accept phone calls. In the case of an emergency, please ask for the principal or if appropriate, explain the situation to the office staff.
- Students are not to use personal cell phones or other electronic devices during school hours, between 7:30 – 2:20 p.m. without the permission of a staff member. Cell phones for students should be kept in a backpack only and turned off.
 - If they are seen or heard by a staff member during the school day, they will be confiscated for the remainder of the day.
 - For the second offense, parents will need to retrieve the phone from the office and a detention will be issued.
- Weekly communication is sent through FACTs each Friday. Please make it a point to promptly read all school communication as it is the primary means of communication of important school information. If you have something you want included in the Friday family communication, it must first be approved by the principal. All enclosures for the weekly Family Communications need to be emailed to Ms. Michelle Boppart at mboppart@stthomascl.org by 9:00 a.m. on the Thursday morning preceding the Friday you want it included. All correspondence needs to go to the school office and be posted/distributed through the weekly Family Communication.

GENERAL COMMUNICATION

- If there are questions/concerns for/about a specific teacher, that teacher should be contacted as soon as possible. Normally, the principal would only become involved in a discussion about a problem after the matter has been discussed with the teacher first. If necessary, conferences about student progress or other concerns may be asked for by the parent, teacher, or principal at any time during the school year.
- The principal is available for parent or student questions at varying times during the school day. Because of time in classrooms, meetings, and other responsibilities, however, it is suggested that parents call ahead to make an appointment to discuss important issues.

CONCUSSION POLICY

The State of Illinois enacted a law effective July 1, 2011, requiring IHSA member schools to adopt a policy regarding student-athlete concussions and head injuries that is in compliance with the protocols, policies, and by-laws of the IHSA. The school and its coaches shall continue to adhere to the IHSA Protocol for Implementation of NFHS Sports Playing Rule for Concussions and the IHSA Return to Play Policy, as they are now and may hereafter be amended. This Diocesan Policy applies to elementary schools and high schools.

Definition

A concussion is caused by a blow or motion to the head or body that causes the brain to move rapidly inside the skull. The risk of catastrophic injuries or death is significant when a concussion or head injury is not properly evaluated and managed.

Concussions are a type of brain injury that can range from mild to severe and can disrupt the way the brain normally works. Concussions can occur in any organized or unorganized sport or recreational activity and can result from a fall or from players colliding with each other, the ground, or with obstacles. Concussions occur with or without loss of consciousness, but the vast majority of concussions occur without loss of consciousness.

Removal from Practice and Game if Suspected Injury

When a student exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion or other head injury, such as a loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion, or balance problems, or when a coach otherwise suspects a student has suffered a concussion or other head injury, the student shall be removed at that time from participation in a practice or game or other competition.

No Return to the Practice or Game without Physician Clearance

A student who has been removed from an interscholastic contest for a possible concussion or head injury shall not be permitted to return to that contest unless cleared to do so by a physician licensed to practice medicine in all its branches in Illinois or a certified athletic trainer.

Application of this Policy

This policy and the attached appendices are to be made a part of the any agreement, contract, code, or other written instrument the School requires a student and his or her parents or guardian to sign before participating in practice or interscholastic competition.

PROCEDURE:

The School shall educate its coaches in recognizing the signs and symptoms of and properly managing head injuries. The School shall distribute to every coach a copy of the attached, three-page “A Fact Sheet for Coaches,” which can be found at http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/pdf/coaches_Engl.pdf; and the CDC Guide for Coaches which can be found at http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/pdf/Coach_Guide-a.pdf.

The School shall distribute to every parent whose student is in a youth sport the Fact Sheet for Athletes, found at http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/pdf/Athletes_Fact_Sheet-a.pdf (English) and http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/pdf/Athletes_Fact_Sheet_Spanish-a.pdf (Spanish); and the Fact Sheet for Parents, found at http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/pdf/Parents_Fact_Sheet-a.pdf (English) and http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/pdf/Parents_Fact_Sheet_Spanish-a.pdf (Spanish); and the attached 2-page Concussion Information and Release Form which must be signed and returned to the School by the parents or guardian and the student.

Every locker room in the School shall display the two attached posters, which can be found at http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/pdf/Signs_Symptoms_Poster-a.pdf and http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/pdf/Main_Message_Poster-a.pdf.

Effective: 1 October 2011

CONCUSSION INFORMATION AND RELEASE FORM

A concussion is a brain injury and all brain injuries are serious. They are caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head, or by a blow to another part of the body with the force transmitted to the head. They can range from mild to severe and can disrupt the way the brain normally works. Even though most concussions are mild, **all concussions are potentially serious and may result in complications including prolonged brain damage and death if not recognized and managed properly.** In other words, even a “ding” or a bump on the head can be serious. You can’t see a concussion and most sports concussions occur without loss of consciousness. Signs and symptoms of concussion may show up right after the injury or can take hours or days to fully appear. If your child reports any symptoms of concussion, or if you notice the symptoms or signs of concussion yourself, seek medical attention right away.

SYMPTOMS MAY INCLUDE ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING:

Headaches	Amnesia
“Pressure in head”	“Don’t feel right”
Nausea or vomiting	Fatigue or low energy
Neck pain	Sadness
Balance problems or dizziness	Nervousness or anxiety
Blurred, double, or fuzzy vision	Irritability
Sensitivity to light or noise	More emotional
Feeling sluggish or slowed down	Confusion
Feeling foggy or groggy	Concentration or memory problems (forgetting game plays)
Drowsiness	Repeating the same question/comment
Change in sleep patterns	

Signs observed by teammates, parents and coaches include:

Appears dazed
Vacant facial expression
Confused about assignment
Forgets plays
Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
Moves clumsily or displays incoordination
Answers questions slowly
Slurred speech
Shows behavior or personality changes
Can't recall events prior to hit
Can't recall events after hit
Seizures or convulsions
Any change in typical behavior or personality
Loses consciousness

What can happen if my child keeps on playing with a concussion or returns too soon?

Athletes with the signs and symptoms of concussion should be removed from play immediately. Continuing to play with the signs and symptoms of a concussion leaves the young athlete especially vulnerable to greater injury. There is an increased risk of significant damage from a concussion for a period of time after that concussion occurs, particularly if the athlete suffers another concussion before completely recovering from the first one. This can lead to prolonged recovery, or even to severe brain swelling (second impact syndrome) with devastating and even fatal consequences. It is well known that adolescent or teenage athletes will often fail to report symptoms of injuries. Concussions are no different. As a result, education of administrators, coaches, parents and students is the key to student-athlete's safety.

If you think your child has suffered a concussion-

Any athlete even suspected of suffering a concussion should be removed from the game or practice immediately. No athlete may return to activity after an apparent head injury or concussion, regardless of how mild it seems or how quickly symptoms clear, without medical clearance. Close observation of the athlete should continue for several hours. IHSA Policy requires athletes to provide their school with written clearance from either a physician licensed to practice medicine in all its branches or a certified athletic trainer working in conjunction with a physician licensed to practice medicine in all its branches prior to returning to play or practice following a concussion or after being removed from an interscholastic contest due to a possible head injury or concussion and not cleared to return to that same contest. In accordance with state law, all IHSA member schools are required to follow this policy.

You should also inform your child's coach if you think that your child may have a concussion. Remember it's better to miss one game than miss the whole season. And when in doubt, the athlete sits out.

For current and up-to-date information on concussions you can go to:
<http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/youth.html>

See athletic forms for acknowledgment page.

Effective 10/1/2011

EXTRA-CURRICULAR AND CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

These activities are events that occur under the school's sponsorship outside of the regular school day. These events include all athletic contests/practices, PTO social events, school designated class outings, retreat experiences, intramurals, club events, and Music Concerts.

Unless otherwise specified by the administration, all school policies apply to these extra activities. Participation in any of these activities is subject to parent permission and student eligibility as determined by the appropriate school personnel. (See page 23 for more information on ineligibility.)

FINES

Fines may be assessed to students and their parents for various reasons throughout the school year. These can include library fines for late or lost books, damage to school property (textbooks, lockers, desks, electronics, etc.) late pick-up/no-show fines, etc.

GRADES AND HONOR ROLL

GRADES AND HONOR ROLL

The Grading Scale for Grades 4-8

A (93-100%) = Exceptional Achievement

A+ = 100

A- = 93

B (86 – 92%) = Above Average Achievement

B+ = 92

B- = 86

C (75 - 85%) = Average Achievement

C+ = 85

C- = 75

D (70 – 74%) = Below Average Achievement

D+ = 74

D- = 70

F (69 – 0%) = Failure

TRIMESTER HONOR ROLL FOR GRADES 6-8

High Honor Roll: 93 – 100%

Honor Roll: 86 – 92%

The following core subjects are included when calculating the honor roll: religion, math, science, reading, social studies, and English.

NOTE: Students with one F or two D's in ANY subjects (including spelling, technology, art, gym, music, p.e., and Spanish) will automatically be disqualified from Honor Roll status.

HEALTH

Illinois State law requires the following health records to be submitted to school BEFORE THE FIRST DAY OF ATTENDANCE.

- Kindergarten: physical exam, dental exam and vision exam
- 2nd grade: dental exam
- 6th grade: physical exam and dental exam

Illinois State law also requires all students transferring from out of state or from home schooling are to submit an Illinois physical exam, dental exam and vision exam BEFORE THE FIRST DAY OF ATTENDANCE.

Students with incomplete health records may be excluded from entry into school or may have grades withheld.

All students participating in sports must have a yearly physical, a signed concussion form and a copy of their medical insurance card on file with the school office before the first day of practice.

HOMework

Homework is an important part of the school program. Not only does it provide parents with an opportunity to monitor student progress, but it is also an integral part of the learning experience. Homework can be comprised of written assignments, projects, studying, reading, or oral work. Just because there might not be a written assignment, does not mean there is no homework. It should be remembered that homework is for the child to do. Parents are asked to look over completed assignments or to help with understanding of directions, etc. Students should have a quiet place to study, good lighting and materials, and be free of distractions (TV, telephone, computers, video games, etc.).

There can be a BIG difference between how much time a student spends *doing* homework and how much time it *should take* to do their homework. If a child regularly spends excessive amounts of time on homework, please contact the teacher for more information and to discuss options/suggestions for your child.

In the event an emergency prevents completion of a homework assignment, a note of explanation should be written by a parent/guardian explaining the problem. This does not mean that a student is necessarily excused for that late assignment. That decision is left up to the teacher.

INELIGIBILITY OF EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

In order to actively participate in extra-curricular activities, students must meet the requirements in all subject areas including art, music, physical education and technology. **A letter grade of an F or 2 D's in any subject area makes a child ineligible to participate in any school related extra-curricular activities including athletics, etc. Conduct and effort ineligibility are determined by the principal in consultation with the teachers. Parents are encouraged to monitor student grades FACTs progress reports.**

Parents will be notified weekly if their child is ineligible. The ineligibility becomes effective the following Monday (which means she/he may participate that first weekend) and continues until Sunday unless the grade is brought up to a C-. The parents and coaches will be notified if this change occurs. Questions regarding ineligibility should be directed to the teacher of the subject, making the child ineligible.

The purpose of our entire eligibility program is to instill in our students the importance of doing their best academically, which should be their primary focus while at St. Thomas School. It is not intended to embarrass or punish students but to give them more time to stay at home and work on their studies, rather than attend extra-curricular events.

INSURANCE

The Rockford Diocese does not offer student insurance. All students involved in extracurricular events (practices, games, etc.) must provide proof of their own insurance.

LITURGICAL CELEBRATIONS

Weekly Mass is at 10:45 am on Wednesdays. Parents are welcome to join us. Please enter the church by 10:45 as the church doors will be locked for safety once the Mass begins.

LOCKERS AND DESKS

As with all school property, students are responsible for keeping their assigned locker neat, clean, and free from damage. **NO TAPE OR OTHER ADHESIVES ARE ALLOWED INSIDE OR OUTSIDE THE LOCKERS. The inside and outside of lockers and desks should never be decorated for birthdays, etc.**

Only 7th & 8th grade lockers will have locks and locks must be purchased directly from school. For obvious security reasons, students should not share their locker combination with anyone else. Tampering with one's own locker or the locker of someone else is cause for disciplinary action. The administration holds a master key to all lockers and reserves the right to inspect any student locker for any reason and without prior notification.

LOST AND FOUND

PLEASE mark all belongings including each article of clothing with your child's name. The Lost and Found is located in the cafeteria. Periodically, we ask students to check for lost items. Unclaimed items will be forwarded to Little Christopher Resale Shoppe for resale after a week or so.

LUNCH AND PLAYGROUND

Hot Lunch is provided by Papa Saverio's. Please see link on FACTs or the website for ordering and payment.

Bag lunches should be marked with the child's complete first and last name and homeroom. If you have to drop off a lunch for your child, please do so before their lunch period begins to ensure your child receives it. We ask that gum and candy NOT BE BROUGHT TO SCHOOL, even in lunches! Please make healthy food choices for your child. *Please do not send lunch surprises for a group of children in the cafeteria.* We ask that parents send their child with a lunch in the morning and do not simply order a lunch and have it delivered from an outside vendor.

At this time, milk is not available through the cafeteria. Please send a healthy beverage.

Adult staff members supervise students at lunchtime. Students are expected to obey and show respect to all of these supervisors. Students who do not, may be asked by a supervisor to sit out for the remainder of the recess and may be sent to the administration for further disciplining.

We are in need of parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles . . .adult volunteers to supervise the recess areas during the lunch time. In the event of no volunteers for recess, the class may not be able to have recess.

LUNCHROOM GUIDELINES

STUDENTS

While you are inside

1. Stay seated at your table, no table hopping.
2. Walk, do not run.
3. Do not throw food, cartons, wrappers, napkins, etc.
4. If you make a mess, clean it up.
5. Get permission before getting up.
 - a. If you need to get up for the restroom, spoon/fork, napkin, etc. raise your hand and ask for permission first.
6. Do not shout or scream, and do not use inappropriate language.
7. Remain seated at your table until you are dismissed.

While you are outside

1. Walk on the sidewalk to and from your assigned play area.
2. Never enter the street without permission from an adult.
3. Play safely and kindly-
 - a. No name-calling or teasing.
 - b. No pushing, shoving, tackling, running up the slides, etc.
4. Do not interfere with other people's games; if you want to join in, please ask, as all students are to be included if they want to play; Motto: No one shall be excluded.
5. Leave nature alone. No picking up or throwing snow, no climbing trees, no playing with sticks, digging holes, etc.
6. Respond immediately to the bell. Line up promptly once the bell has rung signaling the end of the recess.
7. Return all play equipment to the lunchroom.

Students who do not follow the rules and display unacceptable behaviors could result in a verbal warning, penalty, detention or suspension.

Students should dress appropriately for the weather. We will go outside unless it is raining or unless the temperature or wind-chill is too extreme.

MATERIALS (SCHOOL BOOKS, SUPPLIES. ETC.)

It is the responsibility of each student to have all homework, books, etc. they need for each school day. We will not be able to accept those items at the office and will not interrupt class time to call students down or deliver them. Students will not be allowed to call home for missing assignments, gym clothes, etc.

- All student textbooks must be covered (no "stick-on" book covers) and should be carried to and from school in a book bag or backpack. All cloth book covers must be **jumbo** size so as not to damage the binding/corners of the textbooks. In some cases where the textbooks are too large even for jumbo covers to fit, teachers may inform students that only paper book covers are allowed in order to preserve the bindings on our textbooks.
- Replacement of lost or defaced school property will be charged to the child/parent.

MEDICATIONS

All medications and over the counter drugs must be held in the nurse's office and have the appropriate permission forms (provided upon request by the school nurse) on file. State law and Diocesan regulation provides us with guidelines for the giving of medication. Non-prescribed medication should not be brought to school, including cough drops, Tylenol, etc. Students are prohibited from carrying any kind of drug or medication in school unless other arrangements have been approved by the administration. Students are prohibited from giving to another child any kind of drug or medication in or around school, or during school-related activities.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Children are excused from gym or recess only with a doctor's note. If a child has a minor physical problem that does not merit a visit to the doctor, but which might limit his/her ability in gym, please send a note apprising the teacher of the problem and the student's participation in that day's class will be limited accordingly. Also, **students excused from P.E. for a medical reason on a given day are ineligible to participate in any athletic program activity (game or practice) or recess activities on that day.** If a child's participation is limited for more than one week, then a doctor's note is required.

P.E. UNIFORMS (TO BE PURCHASED ONLY FROM DENNIS UNIFORM COMPANY)

Grades K- 4	Grades 5-8
T-Shirt - navy / gold	T-Shirt – navy / gold
Shorts - navy / gold	Shorts – navy / gold
Gym Shoes – non scuffing	Gym Shoes – non-scuffing (Note: Special Uniform Notes Below)

NOTES:

- Gym uniforms must be from Dennis Uniform Company only.
- Students should wear gym uniforms to school on designated gym days.
- In cooler weather, we ask that they wear spirit wear or a plain blue or blue/gold sweat suit (NO YOGA PANTS/LEGGINGS) over their gym uniform.
- Gym classes on Fridays may wear a spirit wear shirt with their gym shorts.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Second grade students receive instruction for the reception of the Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion as part of their basic religion class. Students in 8th grade begin receiving instruction as part of a two-year preparation program for the sacrament of Confirmation.

SCHOOL RECORDS

Both permanent and temporary student records are kept as prescribed by State Law and Diocesan Policy.

TECHNOLOGY

The Rockford Diocese Acceptable Usage Policies are available online. All students must have a signed policy on file each year before access to the St. Thomas Network will be granted.

All students, grades K-8, are required to have all technology forms completed before St. Thomas technology access will be granted.

UNIFORMS / OUT OF UNIFORM DAYS

Uniforms will be worn on all school days unless parents are notified in writing. It is expected that routine cleaning of uniforms, etc., will take place so as to not interfere with the school days. On rare occasions, an accident could render a uniform “un-wearable” and in such cases, the parent should send a written note to the teacher.

Girls
Navy and White (Marymount) plaid jumper Navy Polo dress with logo
Navy sweater: pullover, cardigan Navy Fleece quarter zip or sweater vest
Solid white, navy or grey polo with STS logo or Peter Pan collared blouse
Solid white, navy or black socks or tights
Black, brown or navy dress shoes or gym shoes—no logo

Optional Items for Girls (K-5)
Navy or khaki twill pants with a solid blue, black or brown belt (when pants have belt loops) <i>Navy blue leggings underneath jumpers/dress only—not to be worn alone</i>
Solid white, grey or navy jersey or pique polo with logo
Solid white turtleneck with logo
Navy or khaki walking shorts with a solid, blue, black or brown belt (when pants have belt loops) <i>Navy Blue biker shorts are to be worn under uniform dress/jumper-not alone as uniform shorts</i>
St. Thomas Spirit Wear only on Spirit Days or field trips

Boys (K-5)
Navy or khaki twill pants with a black, brown or navy belt (when pants have belt loops)
Navy sweater: pullover, cardigan Navy Fleece quarter zip or sweater vest
Solid white button-down Oxford (long or short sleeves)
Solid white, grey or navy jersey or pique polo with logo
Solid white, navy or black socks
Black, brown or navy dress shoes or gym shoes—no logo

Optional Items for Boys (K-5)
Solid white, grey or navy jersey or pique polo with logo
Solid white turtleneck
Navy or khaki walking shorts with a solid blue, black or brown belt (when pants have belt loops)
St. Thomas Spirit Wear only on Spirit Days or field trips

GRADES 6-8

Boys and Girls
Navy or khaki twill pants with a solid blue, black or brown belt
Navy sweater: pullover, cardigan Navy Fleece quarter zip or sweater vest
Solid white-button down Oxford (long or short sleeves) with a navy-blue tie (ties are optional for girls; <i>clarified 11/2/22</i>)-November 1- Spring Break
Solid white, navy, black or khaki socks
Black, brown or navy dress shoes or gym shoes—no logo

Updates on school uniforms are always available on the Dennis Uniform website.

GIRLS AND BOYS K-8 SPECIAL NOTES ON UNIFORMS

- Shoes: All students must wear a black, brown, or navy dress shoe with little or no heel (no more than one inch) or solid black, brown navy blue solid gym shoe with no logos. *Platforms, clogs, soft soled shoes (such as ballerina style) moccasins, Birkenstock, strapless or high-heeled shoes **will not be allowed.*** Gym shoes for gym class must also be non-scuffing.
- Make-up may not be worn.
- NO EARRINGS (except girls may wear small **non-dangling** post-type earrings, one per earlobe). Post earrings should not dangle or hang below the earlobe but should lie flat against it.
- Cartilage and other body piercing are not permitted.
- Necklaces or bracelets, limited to one each, must be conservative in style and color. They may not be disruptive in any way.

Hairstyles must be appropriate and non-disruptive (as determined by the teacher/principal). No beaded braiding or braiding with multicolored ribbons, rubber bands, etc. is allowed. *No dyes, extreme styles (i.e. mohawks), shaved or carved areas, long sideburns, etc., or otherwise inappropriate styles will be allowed.* Boys' hair must be above the collar, above the eyebrows, and above the ears. No facial hair is permitted.

A student's appearance, including dress and hygiene, must not disrupt the educational process or compromise standards of health and safety. The school will not prohibit hairstyles historically associated with race, ethnicity, or hair texture, including, but not limited to, protective hairstyles such as braids, locks, and twists. Any student's appearance that disrupts the educational process or compromises health and safety standards must modify their appearance.

Pants and shorts must be worn at normal waist level. Shirts and blouses are to be tucked in (fully) at all times on school grounds. A belt must be worn in grades 2 – 8, whenever belt loops are on their pants.

Girls' jumpers are to be at an appropriate length as determined by the teacher and/or administration.

Non-school clothing such as sweaters, sweatshirts or jackets may not be worn during school hours.

NO slacks, sweatpants, leg warmers, etc., may be worn under the skirt/jumper during school hours.

School dress shoes and gym shoes (both non-scuffing) must be worn with socks.

Uniform sweaters are required to be worn during school hours November 1 through spring break.

Uniform shorts are only allowed from the start of school until November 1 and after spring break until the end of school.

********* Students not in compliance with all elements of the uniform code will not be permitted to attend class until they are in compliance. Repeated infractions could lead to student detention or suspension. Parents are asked to monitor their child's appearance before they arrive at school. **We will tend to have a conservative interpretation of "appropriate" so if there is doubt, don't.**

OUT OF UNIFORM DAYS

The first Friday of each month will be a charitable donation for the Crystal Lake Food Pantry. Please check the weekly communication for the monthly donation theme.

Students may wear spirit wear shirts on all remaining Fridays with their uniform slacks.

The following OUT OF UNIFORM GUIDELINES will apply:

- Clean, no rips, T-shirts, polo, dress shirt, or blouse (no improper logos, pictures and writing, etc.) No spaghetti straps, tube tops, short shirts, backless or sleeveless tops are allowed. Shirts with scoop or v-necklines should not be revealing.
- Clean, no rips, slacks, jeans, skirts or shorts are acceptable (skirts and shorts must be a proper length as determined by the administration). Again, **when in doubt, DON'T wear it!**
- All other uniform code rules (jewelry, hair, etc.) apply.
- During hot weather, sandals are allowed on no uniform days but they must have a heel strap (no flip flops).
- Leggings/yoga pants must be accompanied by a shirt that is of mid-thigh length.

PICTURE DAY

Students are asked to dress up. No shorts, no jeans, and no t-shirts are allowed. Only dress shoes (low heel) or uniform school shoes are allowed (*dress/skirt length must be of appropriate length*)

VACATIONS/ MISSED DAYS

Parents asking to take students out of school during the school year must notify the homeroom teacher and the school office in advance. Parents are urged to consider the impact any **extended** absence might have on their child's academic development and to consult with the teacher on that impact. Parents should understand that **teachers are not required to give homework in advance or to provide long-range individual plans and assignments.** Any missed homework will have to be made up upon the child's return to school with one extra day given for every school day missed.

VISITING SCHOOL

ALL VISITORS and volunteers need to sign in and out at the office and wear an I.D. badge. Parents may not go to classrooms without consent from the teacher and signing in at the office.

VOLUNTEERS

All employees and volunteers of St. Thomas the Apostle School and the Rockford Diocese are required to be trained in the "Protecting God's Children" program regarding child sexual abuse. Volunteers need to attend one of the training sessions or take the online course before they are allowed to volunteer their time at school.

Please review the Diocese memo and VIRTUS registration instructions on our school website before you begin the online course. All employees and volunteers must read the Diocesan booklet entitled Code of Conduct and then sign and return the signature page before they can volunteer in the school. All volunteers must have a background check (for a fee) completed as well. Please see the front office for the appropriate form.

All employees of St. Thomas the Apostle School are required by State of Illinois law to have a current criminal background check on file with the St. Thomas the Apostle School office. Thank you for understanding our efforts in ensuring the safety of your children. You may contact the school office secretary for background check forms and more information.

WEATHER CONCERNS

School cancellation announcements are made via Emergency Closing Center website, email and text message through FACTs. It is the parents' responsibility to make sure their contact information is updated in FACTs. We will make every effort to also list the closing on our school website. In this event all students will be in an asynchronous remote class with no days to make up at the end of the year.

USE OF SUNSCREEN

A student may possess and use a topical sunscreen product while on school property or at a school-sponsored event or activity without a physician's note or prescription if the product is approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration.

EMERGENCY DAY POLICY

CATHOLIC EDUCATION OFFICE ROCKFORD DIOCESE

ALTERNATIVE/E-LEARNING DAYS EXPECTATIONS

Alternative/E-Learning Days are defined as days that include online instruction, independent research projects, and other document-based learning, etc. Alternative/E-Learning involves online or teacher-prepared lessons that students do when away from the physical school building. By using digital devices and by making provisions for students without such devices, the Catholic Education Office recognizes that education can continue even when students and teachers are not in the same location. Along with emphasizing the values intrinsic to faith-based learning, the Alternative/E-learning day encourages student growth in the areas of self-sufficiency, adaptability and perseverance and encourages students to take responsibility for their own learning and enforces good habits geared toward high school and college digital learning expectations.

Alternative/E-Learning Day Goals:

- To minimize the disruption to academic progress caused with emergency school closures by making those out-of-school days as educationally productive and engaging as possible.

- To allow students an opportunity to practice the kind of online learning that is increasingly part of both college study and workplace training.
- To maximize the use of technology as a tool for independent study.

Students in grades PreK- Grade 2: will have some planned academic requirements on these days but may be limited in scope. Students can be expected to watch videos on educational websites, read leveled readers or complete tasks using materials that are developmentally appropriate to their grade level. Teachers will be available to answer questions via email throughout the day up until 3:00pm.

Students in grades 3-8: will complete assignments posted in Google Classroom. All assignments will be posted between 8:00 am & 10:00 am with teachers available to answer questions via email throughout the day up until 3:00pm. It is understood that students will have a wide variety of responsibilities at home during Alternative/E-Learning Days and that some may not have access to the internet. Teachers understand this and will be flexible with those situations. However, the expectation is that students will complete the work in a timely manner.

Students with disabilities will have assignments designed to be in accordance with their individualized accommodation plans.

LIMITED INTERNET ACCESS

Alternative assignments will be available for students with limited or no Internet access.

VIRTUAL LEARNING DAY POLICY

St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School in accordance with Catholic Education Office of Rockford Diocese

- Internet is required for most of the virtual snow day work, especially for grades 3 - 8. For any students who experience a prolonged power outage, or who do not have an Internet connection, they may receive additional time to complete assignments if they make arrangements with the teacher. Again, students who do not have access to the Internet need to discuss this with the teacher the following day at school (they will not be penalized).
- Teachers will assign time-appropriate work for the subject matter. Some assignments may be cross-curricular.
- Virtual snow days will look different for each student, depending on the grade level. For example, a sixth-grade assignment might require the student to do a small amount of research, whereas a Kindergarten assignment might require a worksheet be printed and filled out by hand.
- We are expecting students to take our virtual snow day seriously, as we are considering it a full day of school / learning. Assignments will carry an associated grade.

While face-to-face learning will always be the goal for our students, Virtual Snow Days will provide us with a way to ensure the educational process remains in motion.

PURPOSE

St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School has computers linked to the Internet and a school wide network. The use of these resources is for student learning. In keeping with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), every effort shall be made to provide a safe learning environment including Internet security software. However, it is impossible to fully control all information available to students. St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School has this Policy as a guide to behavior that is expected when using these resources.

This Acceptable Use Policy:

- Establishes goals for computer use
- Identifies student responsibilities
- Provides rules for acceptable use
- Informs the students of penalties for violating these guidelines

GOALS FOR COMPUTER USE

Technology helps with learning. St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School uses technology to prepare the students for life in the digital world by:

- Teaching technology skills
- Combining technology use into various subject areas
- Encouraging thinking and problem-solving skills
- Supporting evaluation and synthesis of information
- Teaching fair and just use of technology

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the student's responsibility to:

- use technology for educational purposes as directed
- respect the property of the school and others as outlined in this Policy
- report any problems noted with hardware or software to his/her teacher

POLICY TERMS

The following rules have been established by The Rockford Diocese Office of Catholic Education. This office or St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School may add additional rules and restrictions at anytime.

- All Internet and electronic resources are to be properly cited.

- Although St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School has Internet security software in place, no Internet filter is 100% secure. Access to any inappropriate site is immediately brought to the teacher, librarian, or adult supervisor's attention.
- Do not use the equipment to bully, threaten, embarrass, or annoy an individual(s).
- Do not use profane, vulgar, or rude language or material.
- Do not publish false information about another individual.
- Do not publish photos or videos of individuals without the permission of the teacher.
- Do not give out personal information such as name, address, age, phone, or personal description about yourself or others.
- Do not share your password or guess others' passwords.
- Do not attempt to access files other than your own.
- Do not install, download, delete, upload, or change any software, including preferences.
- Do not attempt to repair any hardware. Report any damage or changes to equipment to the teacher.
- Do not access sites on the Internet other than those necessary for the assignment.
- Do not attempt to access social networks, non-school supported e-mail, or live communications without permission of the teacher.
- Do not burn copies of software.

SYSTEM SECURITY AND RELIABILITY

Network security is a high priority. Users must abide by the school's Policy for using personal devices. Access will be determined by the school administration. St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School or the Rockford Diocese Office of Education has the right to monitor the use of all electronic equipment and to change or add additional rules and regulations at any time. Users must be aware that the following are not allowed:

- Unauthorized access to the network through another user's account
- Wasteful use of technology resources, such as file space and unnecessary printing
- Introduction and spreading of computer viruses
- Using the network in a way that could be disruptive to other users
- Leaving open files or network connection unattended or unsupervised

Students should not expect privacy in their use of computers and school resources. Any misuse of the school's computers and technology resources must be reported by the student to the Network Administrator or teacher immediately.

PENALTIES

The use of electronic resources is a privilege. A violation of this Policy may result in any or all of the following:

- Loss of school network and Internet use
- Disciplinary action up to and including issuance of a detention, suspension, or expulsion
- ☐ Parents will be held responsible for any monetary charges that result from student misuse of

equipment where damage was caused intentionally or recklessly.

All students of St. Thomas the Apostle School will have access to technology. Parents and students must sign the Acceptable Usage Policy *and* a Device Amendment before a device can be issued or used.

GENERAL

- Students assigned iPad/laptop should never be left unattended. If a student device is found unattended, it will be returned to the technology lab.
- Students are not to lend/borrow their assigned device to other students.
- ☒ Student devices are to be kept in an approved case at all times. The protective cases provided for each device have a tough padding to protect it from normal treatment.
 - Students are not allowed to deface the devices with stickers, doodles, or other means of defacing.
 - Nothing should be set on top of the iPad/laptop
- The iPad/laptop screen can be damaged if subjected to rough treatment or excessive pressure.
 - Do not lean on the device.
 - Do not place extra items inside the carrying case or on top of the device
 - All locked screen images are not to be changed.
- Failure to return a device will result in a fine for a lost or stolen device equal to the cost of the *replacement*.
 - Returning a device after the end of the year collection is subject to a late fee or a fee for damages.
- The iPad/Laptop is school property and therefore all the guidelines stated in the main STS AUP for technology apply.

The iPad/laptop is intended for school use each day. Students will have Internet capabilities to gain access to websites directed by the teacher. According to the St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School Acceptable Usage Policy which is governed by the Rockford Diocese, students are not to enter chat rooms or social networks while at school. Teachers may direct students to private-invitation only classroom discussion blogs or wikis.

USING TECHNOLOGY

- The Children’s Online Protection Act (COPA) states that children under the age of 13 cannot create email accounts of their own.
 - All iPads will be associated with the school iTunes account
 - The iPads are equipped with a camera. Students should use the camera for school projects only; therefore, the camera will only be available when requested by a teacher
 - Only photos for school projects are to be stored on the iPad
 - Storage space is limited. Once the photo is used, it should be deleted
 - Devices will have enforced restrictions.
 - Students are not to download anything except files directed by the teachers
-

- All schoolwork should be saved to the student's Microsoft Office account or Google Classroom. Teachers will direct students as to when and where assignments should be shared.
- Originally installed software and Apps are not to be deleted.
- Student devices will be subject to inspection at any time.
- Software updates will become available periodically. Students should accept the updates. If the student requires assistance in downloading and installing an update, please see Mr./Mrs. Houston.

SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School will

- Provide Internet access-WiFi access is susceptible to unscheduled and unforeseen down time.
- Provide data storage through Microsoft OneDrive or Google
 - Stored data is subject to review and monitor
- Provide staff guidance to aid the students in completing assignments and research while maintaining the directions of this acceptable usage policy.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

St. Thomas Students are expected to:

- Use their iPads/Laptops in a responsible and ethical manner
- Obey general school rules concerning behavior and communication that apply to the use of technology
 - Use technological equipment appropriately to not damage school equipment. Damage includes, but is not limited to loss of data or service interruptions as a result of student negligence
- Maintaining security integrity by contacting Mr. Vraney with any suspicious security issues
- Secure iPads to protect their work and information
- Report any communications with inappropriate or abusive language to a school authority

The following actions are **prohibited** when using any device at St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School:

- Illegal installation or transmission of copyrighted materials
- Sending, accessing, downloading, uploading or distributing offensive, profane, threatening or obscene materials
- Use of chat rooms or social networks
 - Excluding classroom wiki or blog
- Use of online term paper or book report purchasing
- Use of any messaging program—examples-AIM, or iMessage
- Non-educational games. Only educational games which in no way contradict our mission and beliefs as a Catholic School may be used with the permission/approval of the teacher

- Changing iPad settings-exceptions include personal settings for accessibility.
- “jailbreaking” the iPad
- Spamming
- Any prohibitions included in the Diocesan Acceptable Usage Policy such as but not exclusive as-
 - Accessing other accounts, files, or data
 - Vandalisms
 - Tampering with filter

DEVICE CARE

Any problems or concerns should be reported to Mr. Vraney immediately.

Earbuds should be kept clean and stored in such a way to avoid entanglements.

The iPad/Laptop is a technological tool and not a toy or a weapon. Carry it securely and do not “bump” it into a locker, door, desk, or another person. At no time should a device be tossed.

- devices are inventoried by serial number. iPads should be stored in their cases at all times for protection
- Clean the screen with a soft cloth-no cleaners of any kind.
- Device damages will be repaired by the school and any associated costs will be the responsibility of the student for any damage caused by the student. Students will be held responsible for damage including but not limited to
 - Broken screens
 - Cracked plastic
 - Inoperability
 - Lost or damaged case

St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School provides insurance protection that includes:

- Catastrophic damage resulting from a natural disaster
- Onsite fire, flood etc. unforeseen catastrophes causing damage to the school

ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL STUDENT PLEDGE FOR DEVICE USE

- I will use my device in ways that are appropriate, meet St. Thomas School expectations and are educational.
- I will use appropriate language when using journals, wikis, blogs, or any other forms of communication. I will not create, or encourage others to create, discourteous or abusive content. I will not use electronic communication to spread rumors, gossip, or engage in any activity that is harmful to other persons.
- I understand that my device is subject to inspection at any time without notice and remains the property of the St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School.
- I will follow the policies outlined in the *Acceptable Use Policy, the Diocesan AUP and the STS Handbook* at all times.

- I will take good care of my assigned iPad/laptop.
- I will never leave the device unattended and I will know where it is at all times.
- I will protect my device by only carrying it appropriately.
- I will never loan out my device or give my password to other individuals.
- I will keep food and beverages away from my device since they may cause damage to the device.
- I will not disassemble any part of my device or attempt any repairs.
- I will not place decorations (such as stickers, markers, etc.) on the device or do anything to permanently alter it in anyway.
- I will not remove or deface the serial number or other identification on any device.
- I agree to report any damage or inoperability to my teacher immediately.

CONCLUSION

While every effort has been made to include in this handbook as much of the information that parents need, no handbook can be all-inclusive. From time to time, changes, additions, or deletions will need to be made and those alterations will be communicated to parents via the Weekly Parent Communication through FACTs.

Please sign and return the handbook acknowledgement to Ms. Boppart in the school office by September 1, 2023

Returns can be emailed mboppart@stthomascl.org

2023-2024 Acknowledgements

Parent Student Handbook

Yes, I have read and agree to the St. Thomas School Policies set forth in the Parent/Student Handbook

Family Name: _____

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

Photo Release

Parents: Please read select a photo policy for your family. We must have this returned for our files.

My child's photo may be published on the web, newspaper, or other publications associated with St. Thomas the Apostle School and Parish. Please note that the newspaper often requires first and last names.

My child's photo may NOT be published on the web, newspaper, or other publications associated with St. Thomas the Apostle School and Parish.

Children's Names:

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

Technology Acceptable Usage Policy

I understand that by using the St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School's network and equipment, I must follow this Policy. I must obey the rules of etiquette and courtesy. I understand the consequences for not following this Policy.

Parent or Guardian: We ask that you review this Policy with your child and sign below.

I will instruct my child to use St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School's technology in accordance with this Policy. I will emphasize the importance of personal safety and appropriate behavior.

Children's Names:

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

As the parent or guardian of the above child(ren) I have read and reviewed this Policy and release the school, Diocese of Rockford and its personnel from any claims resulting from my child's use of the School computers or Internet. I give permission for my child to use the school computers, network and Internet for learning and research in preparation for life in a digital environment.

Return hard copy or email to Ms. Boppart mboppart@stthomascl.org by Friday Sept. 1, 2023