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STA Parents and Families:

Welcome to St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School. You are now a part of the Crusader family! As we begin our twenty-ninth school year we look to continue a tradition of providing a high quality, Catholic education to prepare students for success in our 21st century economy. We encourage each of you to strive for personal, academic and spiritual excellence as you explore and meet new challenges each day. Take full advantage of your education through a cooperative effort between you and the school to meet the high standards of excellence at St. Thomas Aquinas School.

The handbook is a resource for students and parents of the St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School community. The following rules, policies, and regulations are created to assist in maintaining a positive learning environment to ensure that every child will receive the best that St. Thomas Aquinas School has to offer.

We invite parents and families to join us in the journey of educating your children academically and spiritually. Your role in supporting our policies and procedures is vital to our school and we appreciate the partnership in this. Our staff will always work to do what is best for all students and ensure to take an active role in this partnership with communication of any issues necessary to maintain a successful educational experience.

The Diocese of Orlando asks that you please read this Parent-Student Handbook in its entirety so that rules and regulations are clearly understood. All students and families are bound by the contents of this handbook. We ask that you please return the signed agreement form to the school within the first week of school. I am excited for the opportunity to support you and your student for the upcoming school year, Go Crusaders!

Yours in Christ,

Nick Pavgouzas
Principal
St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School
Vision Statement
The vision of St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School is to teach as Jesus taught by striving to personify reverence for God and creation, respect for all people, and responsibility for our actions. STA will provide academic preparation through a challenging curriculum. We will inspire spiritual development through participation in the sacramental life and service mission of the Catholic Church. This education of the whole child will support the growth of the next generation of Christian leaders. STA students will strive to meet their full potential in a life of learning and productive service to society. By utilizing their God given talents and the education provided, they will become the best versions of themselves, contributing to a bright future. This is the hope Christ has for all children and we share it.

Mission Statement
St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School promotes a reverent, respectful, responsible community of believers who are empowered to know, celebrate, and share God’s love through academic excellence, spiritual development, and service to others.

The History of Saint Thomas Aquinas Catholic School
In 1987, the parish community of Saint Thomas Aquinas, under the direction of the Pastor Reverent Fabian Gimeno, approached the Diocese of Orlando with a desire and plan to build the first parochial school in Osceola County. Father Fabian presented a plan and study to the Diocesan Board of Education, that got him the approval to build a school on the church’s property on Brown Chapel Road.

In December of 1987, Saint Thomas Aquinas launched its fund raising campaign, quickly raising the funds to begin construction. Built as the first school in the newly formed Diocese of Orlando, Saint Thomas Aquinas Catholic School opened on August 21, 1989 under the devoted leadership of the Ursuline Sisters of Cleveland. Presiding over the school as principal, Sister Linda Martin, along with Assistant Principal Sister Ann Whitley, welcomed the first one hundred and twenty-three pre-kindergarten to second grade students.

As years passed, Saint Thomas has steadily increased its enrollment figures. Twenty-five plus years of quality Catholic education, along with the vision of the current school community, have provided a solid foundation to children and families in the St. Cloud area. As a Catholic school, St. Thomas Aquinas School views the spirituality of its children as one of its highest priorities. The school day must revolve around the faith, both in teaching and in living. Our Catholic identity is lived and celebrated every day at St. Thomas Aquinas School.

School Accreditation and Teacher Certification
St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School pre-kindergarten through eighth grade is fully accredited by the Florida Catholic Conference, which is recognized by the Department of
Education of the State of Florida. The school is also approved by the Department of Education of the State of Florida. St. Thomas Aquinas successfully completed its re-accreditation process in spring of 2010. All classroom teachers are degreed and certified by the Florida State Department of Education. Both certification for all teachers and accreditation for the school are required by policy of the Office of Schools of the Diocese of Orlando and the Florida Catholic Conference. Periodic accreditation reviews for the school are done one year and three years after it is accredited by the FCC. Teacher certification must be maintained through regular, on-going in-service education and professional workshops and conferences.

ADMISSION/REGISTRATION

St. Thomas Aquinas School welcomes and does not discriminate against qualified students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin in respect to admissions, and all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded are made available to every student at the school. A variety of criteria will be considered in decisions to admit a student to St. Thomas Aquinas School; the main consideration will always be the proper fit of the child and school for one another, as well as the family's willingness to accept all policies and goals of the school. Before acceptance, students most current report card and any IEP/504 documentation must be reviewed by the principal.

Registration

The normal registration time for the next school year will begin in January-February. Priority of acceptance into the school will be determined by the following criteria:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Currently enrolled families who are registered, supporting parishioners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Currently enrolled non-parishioners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>New families who are registered, supporting parishioners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>New families who are non-parishioners.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If classroom space remains available after the initial in-house registration period, priority of acceptance will be determined on a first come, first served basis. If the maximum classroom or school enrollment is attained, a formal waiting list will be established at the school office, and classroom vacancies will be filled according to the above criteria.

Returning Students, who are re-registering students, are required to submit a completed registration form annually. Family accounts must be current, or the application will not be processed or accepted until such accounts are current. New Students entering kindergarten must be five (5) years old on or before September 1st of the new school year. This is the law in the State of Florida and must be followed by the school. Children entering first grade must be six years old on or before September 1st and have successfully completed kindergarten.
Prospective new students for grades 6-8 and their parents must be interviewed by the Principal. Placement testing may be required for any student. New students, once accepted, are required to submit:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Copy of latest interim or report card from the current school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>HRS Form 680 Immunization Record.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>HRS Form 3040 Physical Examination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Certified copy of a birth certificate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Registration form and nonrefundable fee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Copy of the child’s baptismal certificate is also required for Catholic students.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE:** Students coming from other Catholic or private schools must have cleared their accounts at the former school before beginning school at St. Thomas Aquinas.

**TUITION AND FEES**

Tuition rates are determined annually by the pastor and principal and approved by the school board. Supply fees and registration fees are not included in the tuition. Tuition and special fees are determined through information gathered in developing the annual budget for the school year. Tuition, fees and fundraising are the major sources of revenue for meeting the expenses of running the school. Generally, tuition and fees account for approximately three-quarters of the actual cost of educating a child at STA school; the balance must be met through fundraising and other special sources.

St. Thomas Aquinas School employs the FACTS Tuition Management Service to handle its tuition collection. **Parents are required to maintain an active FACTS account at all times.** In order to facilitate the collection of tuition and to assist parents in their monthly, personal budgeting, several payment options are available.

The payment plans include:
- A single annual payment before the start of school with a 2% discount
- 10 or 11 monthly, weekly, and bi-weekly installments through FACTS Management, Inc. These automatic payments are drafted from your checking account or credit card, a “set-up fee” is charged for this service.

**The annual payment is due to the school by August 1st.**

All families pay a registration fee for each child annually. If the student is voluntarily withdrawn by the family for any reason, this registration payment is not refundable.

Tuition terms are specified in the registration packet and available through the school office. Any questions should be directed to the Principal.
Scholarships
We accept Step Up for Students, AAA, McKay, and Gardiner Scholarships. If your family is awarded any of these scholarships, it is the responsibility of the parent to come in to the front office within three (3) weeks after being notified the checks are ready to be signed. After the three (3) week deadline, your FACTS account will be charged the amount of the check if it has not been signed.

Application for Tuition Assistance
Tuition assistance may be available to parishioners who demonstrate true financial need. The amount of funds available varies and is dependent upon the amount donated to the scholarship fund. This fund is designated for use by those who have applied for and been granted assistance. It will not be used to bring past due accounts current. STA uses the agency recommended by the Diocese, FACTS Tuition assistance analysis, to determine family eligibility for tuition assistance, and all information submitted for review is strictly confidential. Neither the school nor the parish alone shall determine which families receive aid. Unless tuition assistance is applied for and approved, the school assumes that full tuition will be paid. Tuition assistance granted for one year does not guarantee that it will be granted every year, and by Diocesan policy families must reapply each year for such assistance.

Tuition Adjustments
All tuition adjustments, due to late entry to or withdrawal from school, will be determined on a daily-prorated basis, based upon 181 school days. No tuition refunds will be made for students withdrawn after February 15th.

Parishioner Tuition Rate
Registered members who regularly attend Mass on Saturdays or Sundays, and Holy days. Parish envelopes must be used to account for mass attendance. Families are required to contribute a minimum of four (4) service hours during the St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church Parish Fall Festival. The church office will check families participation in this program, and families not attending mass will be charged the non-parishioner rate for tuition.

Default payments
If bank accounts or credit cards from parents are found to have insufficient funds through FACTS, then FACTS will levy a charge $30.00 per transaction for insufficient funds.

Withdrawal
If it is necessary to withdraw a student during the school year, parents should advise the school as early as possible of the anticipated date of withdrawal. Parents must complete a Diocesan Withdrawal Form and settle all accounts before student records may be transferred. No official records are ever handed to parents. The school must have at least five (5) days advance notice to insure the timely processing of records and accounts. All
original records will be transferred directly to the child’s new school upon the request of that school.

**Academic Policies**

**Homework**
Homework is an extension of the learning process begun at school. Its purpose is to:

- Promote independent study
- Encourage individual initiative
- Reinforce skills and information introduced during the school day
- Provide extra practice needed to perfect fundamental skills
- Make use of resources outside the school
- Recognize individual differences
- Enrich learning

The amount of time needed to complete assignments will vary according to the child’s study habits and abilities, as well as the type of assignment being done. Long-range assignments are given to the upper grades to develop skills in research and organization. Regular homework is generally assigned every day. Homework involves all assigned work, not just written work. A general guideline for the amount of time to be spent on homework assignments each evening is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Estimated Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary Grades</td>
<td>20-30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate Grades</td>
<td>40-60 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle School</td>
<td>60-80 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Study or reading assignments (not written) are often given to the students and are considered "homework." Check your child's comprehension by listening to him/her read and asking him/her questions pertaining to the material read. Whenever a child’s written assignment is completed, check to see if it is legible, neat, complete and prepared to be handed in. Please do not correct a child’s homework, as it is intended to show the teacher the areas in which a child may need additional assistance or where a student or class needs to review a concept. A definite time and a quiet place should be set aside for home study.

**Middle School Homework Policy**
Homework in grades 6-8 is a critical part of a student’s academic experience. It is the responsibility of the student and it is expected that homework will be completed neatly, properly and on time.

The following policy is established in this regard by the middle school faculty:
1) Homework should be turned in on the due date and during the class for which the homework was assigned.

2) If homework is not turned in on a regular basis the student will be required to sit out and complete work during recess. These consequences will continue to be assigned until the assignments are completed and turned in to the teacher.

3) There may be exceptions to this policy, which will be at the discretion of the Teacher, and announced by him or her to the students in advance.

**Grading System**
The following are letter and numerical equivalents used in student assessment reports:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Numerical Equivalent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>90-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>89-80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>79-70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>69-60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>below 60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lower grades use a different system or assessment which is explained on the report cards.

**Honor Roll - Grades 3-8**
“A” Honor Roll - all A’s in each subject area
“A- B” Honor Roll– no grades below a B in each subject area
Honorable Mention- A’s, B’s and no more than one C on report card.

A published report card will be given three times during the academic year. This card is to be signed and returned within one week. In addition, midway through each grading period parents are required to sign a letter of acknowledgement that they have seen their child’s grade on the parent portal.

### PROMOTION AND RETENTION

Promotion is the assignment/advancement of a student to the next grade level after the successful completion of all current grade level requirements. "Administrative Placement" or "Probationary Promotion" is the assignment to the next grade level of a student who has failed to fully and properly complete grade level requirements. This is done in consultation with the principal. Retention is the assignment of a student to repeat the same grade level for the next school year. School Administration and students teacher will make the determination to recommend promotion or retention based on the student's’ performance.

If a parent requests a probationary promotion, this **may be done one time**. If a similar situation presents itself the following year, the child then must be retained or seek admission to another school. Final decision on retention is at the discretion of the principal. Parents will be notified after the end of the third grading period if retention or administrative placement is being considered for the following school year. Final decisions are made at the end of the school year.
Graduation
Students, who have successfully completed the course of studies prescribed for them by the Office of Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Orlando, are eligible to receive a diploma certifying the successful completion of the program of studies. The diploma further signifies that the student is eligible to move on to studies on the secondary school level. The official documents needed for such advancement, however, is the student’s transcript, which the school retains, and not a copy of the diploma. Transcripts will be sent to the secondary school upon its request to STA.

Modified Curriculum – Special Learning Needs
If the academic curriculum is modified to accommodate the specific needs of a child with some learning differences, a brief explanation will appear on that student’s report card, denoting the modification(s) or accommodation(s) of the curriculum in those subject areas.

Although, by Diocesan policy, a student does not need an IEP (this term is not used in Catholic Schools), these are often very helpful for classroom teachers to demonstrate ways in which the child can receive the most optimum assistance. Teachers are able to provide accommodations for students in need of academic accommodations and interventions in most cases. The school does not guarantee that all accommodations for students with disabilities can be met.

Assessment
St. Thomas Aquinas School students in grades 2-8 participates in the Terra Nova Assessment Program. Testing is administered in the spring. The results of these standardized tests are published and shared with the parents when received back from the Data Recognition Corporation.

Students in 5th and 8th grades are also required to take the Assessment of Catholic Religious Education (ACRE) test in February of each year. These results are used to assess the quality of the religious education program in the school to assist in improving it and insuring that no gaps exist in the spiritual formation of the students.

Standardized Testing in the Diocese of Orlando
All schools in the Diocese of Orlando are required to administer standardized testing as an integral part of the total instructional program. This testing, however, is not “high-stakes” – the results are not used to determine teacher efficacy, nor are they used solely to determine a child’s promotion or retention. Test results/scores are simply one measure of the total composite of a child’s individual academic progress; thus, the information is used to assist teachers in meeting the specific and targeted learning expectations for a child’s appropriate developmental level. This information is critical in helping our teachers provide the best educational opportunities for our students.
Given the number of benefits derived from the standardized testing, the Diocese of Orlando does not allow a parent or a student the choice of “opt-out” of testing. Students who are absent for any reason, including medical absences, during the school’s designated testing window will be rescheduled for testing upon his/her return to school at the discretion of the school’s administration. Students will not be exempted from taking standardized tests.

Accommodations or modifications will be offered as required to meet the qualified child’s learning needs. This means accommodations or modifications are allowed only when specifically indicated through testing via a professional evaluation completed as part of the IDEA Child Find process by the public school District, or through a private psychological-educational evaluation approved by the Office of Catholic Schools.

In addition, Catholic schools in the Diocese of Orlando do not write 504 Student Disability plans. Accommodations or modifications are offered at the sole discretion of the school staff and must be based on an evaluation of the documentation provided and other factors deemed relevant by the school staff.

Parent Conferences
Parent/teacher conferences will be scheduled once a year in the fall. This meeting provides an opportunity for teachers and parents to discuss the student's progress. It is required attendance for the 1st conference. Teachers or parents may request a conference at any time during the school year to discuss behavior, academics or any other concerns.

Library/Media Center
In addition to assigned library periods in the student schedule for all grade levels, other opportunities are provided for students to make use of the school library. We ask students and parents alike to make sure that all books and materials are returned to the library on or before the due date. Any loss of or damage to books or materials must be reimbursed prior to the end of the school year.

Text Books
All textbooks must be covered and well cared for by the student. The full cost of hardcover books is not met by our General Fees. Elementary school textbooks cost as much as $60-80 each today. The books are merely rented by the students each year and must be treated with care in order for others to use them in subsequent years. Subject area textbook rotation involves the replacement of texts with updated editions every five years. Students may not write in books (other than consumable books) or mark in them in any way. STA school may charge the full replacement fee for damaged hardcover books, which the teacher judges to be severe, making the book unusable by the next student.
ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

The speed limit in the parking lot is 5 mph. Please follow this speed for the safety of all our children.

Parents are asked to please refrain from walking their children to class after the first day of school. The school assigns faculty members and safety patrol students to assist the children in entering and leaving the school safely. Following the arrival/dismissal procedures will help move traffic in and out of the school parking lot quickly and insure a safer environment for all personnel.

Arrival

Preschool:
The pre-school gate opens at 7:40 a.m., and parents of Pre-K students only may park in the back lot and walk the Pre K students to their classroom. No child is to simply be allowed to leave the car on his or her own and must be accompanied by a parent. Pre-K students must be signed into their classrooms on a daily basis. Older siblings or “carpoolers,” who arrive with preschoolers may also use that gate to enter school. All non-Pre-K students are to proceed to the classroom.

Grades K-8:
Students in these grades are to be brought through the front drive-up line each morning. The gates are not unlocked before 7:40 a.m. Students may be dropped off at the gates on either side of the front office starting at 7:40 a.m. Students dropped off prior to 7:35 a.m. must go to Before Care which by the gymnasium. All students are to proceed to their classrooms beginning at 7:40 a.m.

All gates are locked at 7:55 am. Any student arriving after that time must enter through the main school entrance (office area) to sign in and receive a tardy slip.

Dismissal

Preschool Eleven O’clock or Noon Dismissal
For eleven o’clock or noon time dismissal, parents are to park in the back parking lot and walk to the classroom to pick up your child and sign them out. You are asked to please avoid coming through the office unless the gate is already closed. The gate closes at 11:10 am and 12:10 pm for safety reasons.

Regular Dismissal
Carpool riders: The older children/siblings should assemble at the dismissal area of the youngest in the car pool.
Identification
To help identify your car, you will receive a car hanger with your family name. Please place the hanger on your rear view mirror, so the faculty can identify your car during dismissal. It is especially important to do so during rainy day dismissals.

Preschool Classes
Preschool students are dismissed at the preschool classrooms. Parents must park and sign out your children even if there is a rainy day dismissal.

Kindergarten, First Grade, Second Grade
Please enter the drive-up line through the Staples/ Aldi parking lot, or Chevron Station lane, making a circle around the front entrance of the church. Please do not enter the drive-up line through the church parking lot. An aide or teacher will escort your child to your vehicle. No one is to walk up to the building through the drive-up line to pick up his or her child. Your cooperation with this procedure is appreciated as it may put students, as well as drivers, at risk. Double lanes will be available for the dismissal procedure. Please observe the cones and directions from the assigned faculty.

Third, Fourth and Fifth Grade Students
All students in grades 3-5 are released through the gate at the front drive-up. Parents are to enter through the church lot entrance (the first driveway on Brown Chapel Rd. closest to Rt. 192 - near the flagpole) and make a complete circle around the pickup area. Do not enter through the Church Office Driveway. Students will be called as you approach the building.

Middle School Dismissal
Middle School students are dismissed at the circle in front of the church social hall (on the 192 side). Cars may line up in that area and the children will be dismissed from the sidewalk.

Safety Reminders
● Remain inside your vehicle at all times. Do not leave your vehicle.
● No cell phone use is allowed in drive up line
● Do not allow your child to exit from the left or driver’s side.
● Please do not walk your child into the classroom.
● If you must come into the building for business, please park your car and enter before the dismissal procedure in the afternoon or in the morning before the start of the drop off starts. Do not park in front of the door this is a fire lane.
● You are asked to always maintain a positive, Christian attitude as you model this behavior for your children, regardless of any unforeseen delays or complications.
• Road Rage has no place in our Catholic School parking lot. Be courteous and kind at all times.

Rainy Day Dismissal Procedure
Rainy Day Dismissal decisions will be made by 2:45 pm. In some cases it is difficult to make such decisions. Rainy Day Dismissals will be communicated through RenWeb email and phone messaging. In a heavy rain or lightning we will conduct the normal rainy day dismissal procedure. All kindergarten - 8th grade will be dismissed from the cafeteria. Parents are to be sure their family/carpool names are visible in the front windshield of the vehicles. Teachers will be strategically assigned to read off the names, so children may be ready to board your vehicle. Teachers will escort the students to the vehicle.

Vans from Day Care Centers
Outside Day Care Center vans which pick up students at our school at the end of the day must proceed through the regular dismissal line procedures. They are not to get out of line to pick up children nor to try and go around the traffic. Such drivers will be informed of this policy.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is a basic requirement for academic success, and the State of Florida Department of Education has established attendance policies, which must be followed by all schools. Naturally, any student absence detracts from this requirement and prevents the student from fulfilling an essential condition for earning scholastic credit. The school strongly discourages parents from removing students from class for vacations outside the assigned vacation periods. Perfect attendance is recognized for students who have never missed school during the school year and who have been tardy on a few occasions (less than five per semester).

School Hours
School starts at 7:55 am and ends at 3:10 pm except on Wednesday, which ends at 2:00 pm. The daily schedule for the start and end of the school day is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:00 am</td>
<td>Before School Care begins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:40 am</td>
<td>First bell – Students report to classrooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:55 am</td>
<td>Start of classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:10 pm</td>
<td>Dismissal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:00 pm</td>
<td>Dismissal on Wednesday – 2:20 pm. students taken to After School Care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:25 pm</td>
<td>Supervised dismissal ends; students not picked up go to After School Care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:00 pm</td>
<td>After School Care ends – Extra charge for pick-up after 6:00 pm.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Before and After School Care
Students arriving before 7:35 am must go to Before School Care. Before Care is located in the classroom in the gym. The fee for before school care is $1 per family per day. FACTS accounts will be charged at the end of each week. Regular classes end each day at 3:10 p.m. (2:00 p.m. on Wednesdays) The dismissal period lasts fifteen minutes. Students not picked up by the end of the dismissal period will be placed in the After School Care Program. The After-Care gym doors will remain locked until 3:30 pm on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, or 2:30 pm on Wednesday. No students will be released prior to the beginning of aftercare. This policy is put in place for the safety of all students in the parking lot areas. The After School Care room is located in the classroom in the Gym.

After Care fees are as follows:

Price Per Day: $10.00  Price Per Week: $45.00 all aftercare fees will be charged to FACTS at the end of the week.
**A $1.00 per minute charge will be applied to any students picked up after 6:00 pm

Leaving School Before Regular Dismissal Times
No student will be permitted to leave school grounds during the school day without permission of his/her parents and in the company of an appropriate, supervising adult. The approval of the Principal or school office member is required in each instance. Leaving the campus without permission is a serious offense and may result in serious disciplinary action.

Medical appointments are discouraged during school hours, as valuable learning time is lost. Of course, there are times when this cannot be helped. When medical appointments are necessary during the school day, the student is to present a note from the parent to the teacher the day before the actual appointment. Students must be picked up in the school office by the parent or an authorized person.

Due to the disruption it causes to other students learning, students may not be checked out of school 30 minutes prior to dismissal. Students coming to school late or being check out early will need to present a doctor’s note or appointment card in order for their absence to be excused. An absence from class must be excused in order to make up missed assignments.

Absences
Parents are responsible for the regular attendance of their child(ren) at school. If a student is absent, a parent must personally call the School Office before 10 a.m. or the student’s absence will be considered unexcused. In accordance with Florida State Statutes, a student in K-5 with more than 15 absences (whether excused or unexcused) in a 90 day period is considered truant for lack of attendance unless medical evidence of illness
or injury is presented in writing from a competent medical authority. **For grades 6-8 a student with more than 10 absences in a 90 day period is considered truant under the same circumstances/ conditions.** All educational requirements must be met before a passing grade will be assigned. The principal will have the final judgment on this issue. Absences shall be excused for the following reason only:

| 1 | Illness or injury of the student. |
| 2 | Illness, injury or death in the immediate family. |
| 3 | Extensive medical procedures. |
| 4 | Other major family emergencies. |

Absences are unexcused when taken for vacations, personal activities, and any other event not covered by the excused absence definition.

In situations where the student exceeds 30 days (excused or unexcused) without an approved academic progress plan, the school is obligated to report the attendance issue to the appropriate scholarship organization. This may result in the loss of annual scholarship and/or a request that the student be withdrawn from the school.

As noted above, parents are expected to contact the school prior to 10 am. each day a student is absent to avoid unexcused absences. Students arriving at school after 11:00 am or leaving prior to 11:00 am may be marked absent ½ day. Upon returning to school after an extended absence period (three days or more), the student, who has been absent, is also required to present a written excuse stating the date, the reason for absence, and the signature of the parent. **Only** the principal may authorize an absence for any special circumstances. Prior permission is normally required for such absences, except in case of an emergency. Family vacations during school time are strongly discouraged and will not be considered excused absences. Students will follow the make-up guidelines for an unexcused absence. Advance notice must be given prior to such an absence.

**If a student is absent from school on a given day, he/she cannot participate in any extracurricular/sports activities on the day of the absence. A student must attend at least a half day of school in order to participate in extracurricular/sports activities that day.**

A record of attendance and tardiness is maintained for every student. State law requires that the student's attendance records be retained as part of his/her permanent record at the school. This is a legal document for all educational institutions.

**Make Up Work for Absences**

In the event of pre-arranged absences, it is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements with teachers to receive the necessary assignments and materials. The student is also responsible for the completion of all homework assignments and tests which
are expected to be turned in upon returning to school. Students failing to complete such assignments will be graded accordingly.

Teachers will NOT be responsible for re-teaching material covered, if the student is absent due to a family vacation or other absence considered to be unexcused. Any work missed during an unexcused absence will not be allowed to be made up and all tests will be taken immediately the day of the student’s return at lunch/recess time.

A student has one day for each day of an excused absence to make up missed work. If the missed work is not turned in when it is due, the student will receive no credit and will be graded accordingly. After a prolonged, excused absence, special arrangements may be made with the teachers to make up the work.

Tardiness and Daily Arrival and Dismissal
As elementary school children cannot drive themselves to school, it is the parent’s responsibility to get their children to school on time. Please make every effort to have your child at school by 7:55 am daily. A student who comes late to school, not only misses important announcements and instructions, but also may feel isolated because of creating undue attention on their arrival.

If a student is not in their classroom by the 7:55 am bell, he/she is officially tardy. Any student late for school must obtain a tardy pass and have a responsible adult sign them in at the office. If your child is tardy due to a medical appointment, he or she should have a note from the physician on an Rx pad stating the child’s name, date and time of the appointment. This is considered an excused tardy and will not count toward the “three times tardy” rule.

PARENTAL PARTICIPATION
Parental participation is a very important aspect of our school’s mission and life. We encourage our parents and parishioners to participate in the great work of Catholic education. Parents also make a very important contribution by participating in fundraising and other school activities. Tuition is generally maintained at as reasonable a rate as possible through the dedication of parent volunteers. Parents are encouraged to support the activities of the school, as a way of modeling for the children the fact that they value the education at St. Thomas Aquinas School. All our school publications form a key link between the school and the home. We urge parents to read:

- The Principal’s informational letters
- The teacher’s weekly newsletters
- The school news section of the Parish bulletin
- Any other communications that are sent home
Our website is also a means of communication to and with parents. The Handbook, the informational letters and other news may be found on the website.

Parent Fundraising Requirements:
STA Parents who receive Parishioner Tuition Rates are required to commit to volunteering at the St. Thomas Aquinas Parish Fall Festival that will take place on November 7-10, 2019 for a minimum of four (4) hours.

All parents are required to participate in school fundraising activities that include, but are not limited to, 5K Run, Handbag Bingo, and the Poker Tournament.

Parent Involvement Committee:
The parent involvement committee has three sub-committees.
  ● Fundraising-this committee assists with the events we have during the school year (5K Run, Handbag Bingo, the Poker Tournament, and Teacher Appreciation Week)
  ● Community Involvement-this committee assists with the free events (International Night, Christmas Movie Night, STREAM Night, Teacher Appreciation Week)
  ● Classroom Ambassadors-this committee assists in signing up homeroom parents, hosting bake sales, volunteering in the classrooms when needed, and Teacher Appreciation Week

School Communications Policy
It is the policy of St. Thomas Aquinas School that no communication of any kind will be sent to school families through the school unless it has first been reviewed and approved by the school administration. The Principal or his representative must review all items relating to athletics, class fundraising or activities, student organization activities, or teacher requests prior to their dissemination to the school families or other outside organizations. This policy is intended to protect the school and its associated organizations by assuring that any and all printed communications leaving the school are in compliance with the philosophy, policies, and practices of St. Thomas Aquinas School.

Mutual Respect
No teacher or staff member at St. Thomas Aquinas School should ever be subjected to disrespectful words, actions or gossip, or to either verbal or physical assault by the parents or relatives of any student. Faculty and staff, as professional educators, should treat parents, students and others with similar respect and courtesy. Any such incidents cited above should be reported to the Principal verbally or in writing as soon as possible. The Principal
will then contact those involved and any witnesses to the reported incident and will take such action as he deems appropriate to resolve the situation.

**Communication**

If you wish to contact a teacher please email them, email addresses are located on the school website. Telephone calls to the teacher or student during school hours interrupts the educational process. No teacher or student will be called from class for a telephone call, except for **extreme** emergencies. Please allow 24 hours for the teacher to respond. **It is generally inappropriate to call a teacher, the Principal or any staff member at home, unless there is an extreme or emergency situation.** (Please see Problem Solving Procedure below). If a parent does not receive a response to a phone or email request please recall the school. Students may only use the school telephone in case of an emergency, illness or cancellation of an after-school event. They are to seek permission through the school office.

**Visiting the School**

St. Thomas Aquinas School is a closed campus. All visitors, including parents, must be signed into the Raptor system in the school office and receive a visitor’s badge. Parents are most welcome at our school, but **no one may enter the interior school area without permission. This policy is intended to protect your children.** Classes may never be interrupted by parents or other visitors without the principal’s or teacher’s **specific and express permission.** PARENTS ARE ASKED TO COOPERATE WITH THIS REQUEST. This is a very serious issue in schools today. Every interruption affects the instructional/learning situation in the classroom, which is very unfair to the teachers and students. Parents are NOT to look in classroom windows/doors to distract the children. Parents who are at school for a meeting or to volunteer are asked to refrain from wandering through the halls. **We ask that you go directly to your meeting location. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated by the faculty.**

Parents are welcome to visit and enjoy lunch with their children occasionally. It is not, however, appropriate for parents to be at lunch every day unless their child has a special need for assistance. Children need to develop independence, and we appreciate parents cooperation with this restriction, as the children learn to socialize and handle situations on their own.

**All visitors must check in with the front office and wear a visitor’s badge.**

**Problem Solving Suggestions and Procedures**

**Communicating Effectively:**

- Try not to speak negatively about anyone especially in the presence of a student. It is detrimental to your child’s proper development and learning. This is especially true in relation to teachers.
Remember a key relationship that facilitates learning is the one between the student and the teacher. Any negative comments can affect relationships between all parties.

If you are angry, wait until you can review and deal with the situation objectively before initiating communication. Effective communication takes place when both parties can calmly talk and listen.

Remember to “live as Jesus lived.”

If a problem arises:

- The student should discuss the problem with the teacher, preferably one on one. If the child is shy, have the child write a note to the teacher explaining his or her concerns. This is a wonderful learning and maturing opportunity. If the problem goes unresolved, the parent should email the teacher explaining the problem more thoroughly. The teacher should respond to the email or by telephone within 24 hours.
- If the problem persists or goes unresolved, schedule an appointment with the teacher and be sure to include the student.
- If the issue is still not resolved, schedule an appointment with the teacher and the principal.

**HEALTH AND SAFETY**

"When a pupil becomes ill or is injured in an accident at school, the school office will contact the parent or designated guardian immediately. If no one can be reached, the student will remain in the clinic until an appropriate person can be contacted. In the event of an accident warranting professional attention, the Principal or office personnel will call the police and/or rescue unit and seek their assistance." Diocesan Policy #655.2

All families must provide the school with an emergency medical form containing:

- Address and telephone numbers (home, work, or cell of the parent)
- Names and telephone numbers of two others given authority by the parent to assume responsibility for the student, if the parent cannot be reached.
- Name and telephone number of a family physician and a dentist.
- Name of a preferred hospital for treatment.

These emergency medical forms must be updated annually. Students are covered by the student insurance policy for accidents that happen at school. Cost of this coverage is included in school fees. Information is available at the School Administrative Office.

**Clinic**

Office personnel and volunteers staff our school clinic. It is NOT a true medical facility. They may clean and cover minor scrapes and cuts and/or apply ice to injuries. They do not
provide "medical care." The school is not permitted to dispense any medication without an "Authorization to Dispense Medication" form. **We are not allowed to provide any over-the-counter medications**, such as Tylenol, aspirin, etc. If your child may need any such medication, it must be brought to the office along with the permission form. Please mark the child’s name on the container. We cannot accept permission over the phone to give your child any form of medication. Such permission must be in writing, per Diocesan policy.

A parent will always be called if the student is too sick to stay in school or is running a fever. We anticipate the child being picked up as quickly as possible. This is important!

**Illness**

Children who are ill should remain at home. **Children should be fever-free for 24 hours before returning to school.** In case of contagious disease, consult your family physician regarding a time for the student to safely return to school. Should your child be diagnosed with a contagious condition, such as Fifths Disease, Chicken Pox, Mumps, Pediculosis (head lice), H1N1 virus (Swine Flu), virus etc., please inform the school office immediately. While every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality, we must be given the opportunity to inform/alert parents of the possibility of contagion.

**Medication**

By law students may **NEVER** carry any form of medication (with the exception of an inhaler) on their person while at school. This is the law and a very strict policy. Students requiring prescription or nonprescription medication (even cough drops - held by teacher) during school hours must leave it in the school office. The medication must be kept in the original bottle from the pharmacy and an "Authorization to Dispense Medication" permission form must be on file according to the State law listed below. Arrangements must be made, if the use of an inhaler is required.

According to Florida School Law, (#232.46 1.b.1 and 2) "each prescribed medication the student's parents or guardian shall provide to the school Principal, a written statement which shall grant to the Principal or their designee permission to assist in the administration of such medication and which shall explain the necessity for such medication to be provided during the school day, including any occasion when the student is away from school property on official school business. The school Principal or their trained designee shall assist the student in the administration of such medication."

"Each prescribed medication to be administered by the school personnel shall be received and stored in its original container. When the medication is not in use, it shall be stored in its original container in a secure fashion under lock and key in a location designated by the Principal."
Other Medical Conditions
Special medical procedures, which must be performed during school hours, i.e. breathing treatments or insulin shots, should be done by the parent (or the student under supervision, if old enough). School office personnel will not be allowed to perform such procedures, unless it is a matter of life or death, i.e. allergic reaction to a bee sting.

Immunization
All students must have the following immunizations before being permitted to enter school:

**Kindergarten requirements (or students new to the school):**

- Diphtheria/Pertussis/Tetanus (DPT) 5 doses
- Polio Vaccine 4 doses
- Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR) 2 doses
- Hepatitis B vaccine series 3 doses
- Varicella/Varivax 2 doses

**7th Grade requirements:**

- Hepatitis B vaccine series 3 doses
- T/D 4 Booster 1 dose
- Varicella Vaccine 1 dose

(Or documentation of Varicella Disease)

The Hepatitis B vaccine series takes up to 6 months to complete. Following the 1st injection, a child must wait 1 month before getting the 2nd injection and 5 months before receiving the 3rd and final injection. Students who have not completed their shots, but have started the series can receive a temporary extension in order to continue attending school. In accordance with the regulations of the Florida State Health Department, a child not submitting evidence of required immunizations may not attend classes.

AIDS
The objectives of the Diocesan AIDS Guidelines are to protect the innocence of our children, to safeguard the health of our students, and to show compassion and respect for the victims of the Human Immunodeficiency Virus. Students should be made aware that the best defense against acquiring the disease is to be aware of the danger of the disease, to follow our Catholic teachings on sexual morality, and to abstain from the use of intravenous drugs. Faculty must all go through training in the proper procedures for handling the cleaning of any type of bodily fluid.

Bicycles
Bicycles may be ridden to school provided St. Thomas Aquinas receives a letter of permission from the parent or guardian of the student in question. All bicycles must be locked on the bicycle racks provided by the school. We recommend that students riding
bikes to school enroll in a bicycle safety course offered by local police departments. Students are always expected to wear a helmet when riding to or from school.

**Fire and Emergency Drills**
In compliance with Diocesan Policy No. 655.3, fire drills will be conducted once a month. Additionally, emergency crisis drills and severe weather drills will be conducted at least twice a year. These will involve extreme weather situations (hurricanes and tornadoes) and other situations such as bomb threats and threats from persons with weapons. The Diocese of Orlando has an emergency management manual, which is on file at the school and which all Catholic schools will follow in the event of such crises.

**Closings Due to Inclement Weather**
In order to simplify the decision making process in terms of severe weather conditions, St. Thomas Aquinas School will follow the decisions of the Osceola County Schools in regard to closing school for severe weather situations. If Osceola County Schools are closed for the day or are dismissing early due to weather conditions, St. Thomas Aquinas School will follow this decision as well. The decision to reopen school will be that of St. Thomas Aquinas School and the Diocese of Orlando. These announcements will be found on the school answering machine or announced over local radio and TV stations. Do not assume that STA continues to be closed because the public schools are closed. Their decisions are often based on school transportation issues.

The Diocesan School Policy manual contains procedures and practices in this regard for all Diocesan schools. An email will be sent to all school families from the school office to assist in the dissemination of information to families in the event of an early emergency closing along with radio announcements. At times, although the weather may not seem severe, if flooding or impassable streets are predicted, the Principal or her designee may have to decide the best course of action under such circumstances. In all cases, the children will be kept safe and under supervision at school until a parent comes to pick them up.

**Asbestos Review**
In accordance with the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA), 40 CFR 763.93 (g), the Management Plan for ASBESTOS-containing materials as developed by Law Engineering is available without restriction for parent’s inspection at the school’s administrative office. Parents are asked to make an appointment if you wish to review the plan. Periodic surveillance reports are completed in this regard every six months in accordance with the directive of the Diocesan school office.

**Child Abuse Reporting**
Diocesan Policy #PS006, Florida Statutes Chapters 415, 232.50: Any clergy, religious or lay employee or volunteer of the Diocese of Orlando, who knows, or has serious cause to suspect, that a child has been subjected to any form of abuse or neglect by any person, is expected to observe the following procedures immediately:
● Contact the Florida Department of Children and Families toll free, abuse registry-hotline the same calendar day the abuse is discovered.
● Respond to the local DCF call back with additional information.
● Cooperate with any and all authorities in the investigation of any child abuse report.
● The teacher or principal must ALWAYS be with the child when he or she is being interviewed by the DCF worker.

**Child Custody**
Divorced or separated parents and guardians are all “parents” in the true sense of the word. The word “parent” as used throughout this manual signifies biological parent or legal guardian. In the event there is a court order regarding the custody of the child, the school should have a printed copy of it held in a confidential file, otherwise the school is powerless to enforce such an order.

It is required that the custodial parent provide the principal with an official, updated copy of the custody order. In the absence of a court order, the school will provide the non-custodial parent the opportunity, upon request, for a parent-teacher conference. Likewise, the school will share pertinent information with the non-custodial parent in a timely fashion.

**DISCIPLINE AND CONDUCT**

St. Thomas Aquinas School exists to provide an academic community that will help each student grow in his or her awareness of God, self, and others, and encourage each student to achieve his/her maximum potential intellectually, personally, socially, physically, and spiritually. To that end, STA has established standards of behavior and character development expectations for its students.

The following disciplinary objectives provide the standard of judgment and the guide for action in the area of discipline. When strict enforcement of this discipline policy and the student behavior code achieve results contrary to the school's philosophy and objectives, the school’s philosophy and objectives take precedence. St. Thomas Aquinas School recognizes and accepts the responsibility it shares with the parents in the supervision of the student, while he/she is in school or at any off-campus event acting as a student of the school. This document is interpreted and applied by St. Thomas Aquinas School as a form of instruction for all students in the school. The final interpretation of any given school behavior policy or situation remains with the administration.

**Diocesan Policy Statement**
In Catholic Schools the school and the Administrator can impose consequences for conduct occurring outside the school. What students do off-campus can detrimentally impact a school or program’s reputation. By Diocesan policy the school administration
reserves this right. Parents also share responsibility for their children’s conduct while they are in school or on an authorized school field trip. Teachers and staff members do share this responsibility with parents, while children are at school, and thus act “in loco parentis” (in the place of parents) in terms of any and all decision making regarding safety and proper behavior of students.

CLASSROOM CONDUCT RULES
Individual teachers will establish rules of conduct for their individual classrooms. These will be explained to the students and parents and will be visibly posted in the classrooms. Our disciplinary policy uses a graduated set of rewards, consequences, and corrective steps. Teachers and/or the principal select the proper response to both reward good behavior and to discourage the breaking of school and classroom rules.

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES
Teachers are the ultimate authority in their individual classrooms. Issues and situations of a very serious nature may be brought to the Principal or Assistant Principal, who have the final authority in all disciplinary matters. Depending on the situation, in some instances warnings should and will be given, but repeated offenses will result in an infraction or a detention. Daily detentions, are recorded in the back of the student agenda in grades 4-8. Parents are expected to sign the infraction form, so they are aware of their child’s behavior. Infractions may be given for any of the following reasons:

Minor Infractions
- Chewing gum.
- Misbehaving in class or in any other area of the school.
- Misbehaving in church.
- Using bad language.
- Being dishonest.
- Wearing makeup or nail polish.
- Running in any area of the school other than recreational areas.
- Eating food or candy in class or hallway.
- Not dressed in proper school uniform.
- Leaving the classroom without permission.
- Touching things that do not belong to you.
- Throwing any objects.
- Failure to return signed written communication.
- Tardy to class.
- Public display of affection.
- Horseplay (pushing, shoving, tripping, pulling chairs, etc.).
- Insubordination to authorized school personnel, including, but not limited to, repeatedly failing to comply with the directions of teachers, substitute teachers, student teachers, teachers aides, support staff members or any school employee.
• Forgetting homework or school IPad at home.
• Mistreatment or abuse of the school IPad.

Detention
Detention, will be held during recess, lunch, and/or after school. Students will be given adequate notice to allow parents/guardians to make transportation arrangements for after school detention. Students will attend after school detention from 3:10 to 4:10. Students not picked up from detention will be sent to after care.

Any student with multiple detentions or suspensions will forfeit their right to attend any school or class field trips under the discretion of the principal.

Rules for Suspension and Expulsion
"Suspension from school is imposed only for a very serious reason or for repeated infractions for which the student has received several warnings and detentions. The decision to suspend a student rests with the Principal. Prior to suspension, parents will be notified of this disciplinary action and the reasons for such action." Any student who has been suspended from school will not be allowed to attend any after school activities including sports and clubs or school dances.

"Expulsion is resorted to only when all other means of discipline have proved ineffectual, and the student’s conduct is a definite hindrance to the welfare and progress of the school community. The measures taken to implement the decision and notification of the parents are the same as those for suspension, which is at the discretion of the Principal. Diocesan Policy #652.2

Students will be responsible for all work missed while they are serving a suspension.

Suspension, dismissal, and or behavior contracts may result from any of the following serious infractions:

• Actions that endanger the physical well-being of self or others, such as fighting or the intent to injure another.
• Possession, use, or serious threat of use, or exhibition of dangerous weapons (including pen knives), fireworks, or instruments of similar nature.
• Possession of tobacco, alcohol, marijuana, unauthorized prescription drugs, vape pens or any other harmful substance while in school or at school sponsored activities held off school premises.
• Coercion - forcing another by action or threat to do something against his/her will.
• Engaging in any form of sexual activity while in school or at school sponsored activities on or off school premises.
Leaving the school premises at any time during school hours or activities unless signed out by parents.
- Sexual harassment in physical or verbal form.
- Serious acts of physical or verbal violence, including bullying.
- Cheating or helping others to cheat (including plagiarism).
- Damaging school, church or other’s personal property.
- Persistent harassment of students or staff members.
- Defiance or disrespect to adults and/or school rules and regulations
- Any behavior or action of a serious nature which reflects negatively on the school.
- Serious and persistent use of vulgar language or gestures and racial slurs.
- Inappropriate Conduct weather inside or outside of school and including the use of the internet or social site.

HARASSMENT AND BULLYING
As defined in the Diocesan Policy and Procedure Manual, Policy #ER008. “The Diocese of Orlando strictly prohibits harassment of any individual in any form because of his or her age, race, religion, color, national origin, age or disability in any of its schools. Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination that violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and will not be tolerated at any Diocesan entity. Once a child is warned of an incident of harassment, they are in a “0” tolerance situation and will be suspended for the next incident of harassment, and possibly expelled, depending on the severity of the infraction.” The school is required to follow these procedures by the Diocese of Orlando.

Bullying
Harassment is a form of bullying, although bullying is traditionally defined as “a stronger, more powerful person hurting, intimidating or frightening a smaller, weaker person deliberately and repeatedly.” It is also seen as any negative actions by one or more persons being imposed on another person being bullied or victimized. Students being subjected to such behavior are to report such behavior to their teachers or the school office for resolution. People guilty of such bullying, whether it be physical, emotional or social, will be punished appropriately, as such behavior is NEVER acceptable. In a Catholic school we must follow Jesus’ words and actions and live a Christian life.

Email Threats or Hurtful Statements
A new problem has arisen from the age of technology. Often students make negative, untruthful statements about staff and other students. The website “ratemyteacher.com” in addition to “blogs”, and other social media sites, offer students opportunities to post potentially defamatory statements about others. Despite their quasi-public figures, the courts now have taken a stand on this issue and state that teachers have the same right to their reputation that other people have. Therefore, if defamed, teachers have a right to use. In the same vein, administrators can punish students who defame others in the
school community. Deliberate defamation of others is not consistent with Christian values, and students should be held accountable for intentional hurt they cause others.

Search and Seizure
Although rarely used, St. Thomas Aquinas School reserves the right to search the lockers, desks, person and personal belongings of a student when there is “reasonable suspicion”, and it is believed to be necessary for the health, safety, and welfare of other students. Students are advised that their lockers, desks, persons and personal belongings are subject to search for forbidden, dangerous or illegal substances or items. Students are instructed at the start of the school year that certain items are not to be brought to school, i.e. anything that could be construed as a weapon, any electronic devices, any form of drug etc.

Cell Phone Policy
Student cell phones are not permitted on campus, including after school activities. Cell phones are to be dropped off at the front office and picked up at the end of the day. If a cell phone is found it will be confiscated and held in the principal’s office until a parent can retrieve it.

Sports and Behavior
Students who consistently receive detentions, who are suspended, or are on behavioral contracts will be suspended from participation in the sports program for a period of time determined by the Principal and Athletic Director and coach. Students with low academic performance will be held ineligible from participation until approved by his/her teachers.

Enrichment Programs
Curriculum enrichment and extracurricular activities are offered in accordance with student interest and the availability of sponsors, volunteer instructors and coaches.

Team Sports
Volleyball, basketball, cheerleading, soccer, and track are offered through Orlando Athletic Conferences, such as CYL and CMAC. The school also participates in the newly formed Osceola Christian Athletic League, which is offered as an alternative to the CMAC league when we are unable to field a team for CMAC. OCAL policies are more lenient and the league less competitive than CMAC. Eligibility for all sports is determined as follows: Students who have an lower than a “C” average or an “F” in any core subjects are ineligible until they get clearance from their teacher to participate in games. If a student is absent or served an ISS or OSS from school on a given day, he/she cannot participate in any extracurricular activities on the day of that absence/suspension. Participation in team sports requires a fee, which is paid to the conference, to underwrite costs of officials, administration of leagues, etc. All sport uniforms are school property and must be returned clean at the end of the sport season.
Extracurricular Activities
The school will offer as many extracurricular activities and clubs as possible, depending on student interest and willingness to be involved. Activities include altar servers, broadcast club, safety patrol, student council, National Junior Honor Society, drama club, ministry programs, choir, and so on.

Attendance at After School Sports Events
Students, who wish to attend an after school sports activity as a spectator, must be accompanied by a parent or other responsible adult. **NO STUDENT will be allowed to attend games without an adult "chaperone."** A written note from a parent stating that the child has his or her permission to attend the game alone or with a friend is not acceptable. Arrangements should be made with another parent to be responsible for the supervision of a child wishing to attend a game. Should a child be found at a game without supervision, the child will be allowed to call the parent to pick them up and will be sent to Aftercare to wait and will be charged accordingly. This is for the safety of all students.

If a student has an after school practice or activity, he or she **MAY NOT BRING HIS OR HER SIBLING(S) to such practice or rehearsal.** The child(ren) will be sent to After Care immediately, and the parent will be charged for the time the sibling is in After Care. Our coaches are not able to nor obligated to provide after school care for their players' siblings, and it is impossible for your child to practice and babysit his or her siblings simultaneously.

Field Trips
According to Diocesan policy all field trips which take away from school instructional time, must have "a clearly defined educational component." At times trips which involve other purposes beneficial to the students may be approved by the Principal. School field trips are a privilege, not a right, and students may be denied participation if they fail to meet behavioral or academic requirements. Diocesan permission forms are provided to each child in advance of the planned trip. Students are required to turn in the completed field trip permission slip, which is required by Diocesan policy. The permission slip cannot be altered or added to in any way. If this permission slip is not signed by the parent/guardian, then the school will not permit the child to participate in the activity. The school will not accept letters stating that the child may go on the trip. According to Diocesan attorneys, **only the proper Diocesan field trip form is acceptable.** Based on Diocesan policy, permission over the phone is not acceptable in lieu of the Diocesan permission slip.

The use of commercial transportation, rather than parent cars, is encouraged. In the event of parent transportation, all volunteer drivers are required to submit, at least one week in advance of the trip, a copy of a valid driver's license and proof of their insurance policy.
stating coverage amounts. The Diocese requires coverage amount of 100/300/50. Diocesan regulations require that all chaperones and drivers must have submitted their fingerprints and background check form and have been cleared by the Diocese, (see Fingerprinting) before being permitted to drive students (other than their own) on any trip. No siblings of students are allowed to attend the field trips.

Overnight field trips and other activities involving water related activities for elementary school students are not allowed by the Diocese. Liability for such trips quadruples insurance liabilities according to Diocesan authorities.

SCHOOL UNIFORM CODE

It is the parent’s responsibility to see that children are sent to school wearing the proper uniform. All students are required to wear the approved uniform daily, unless a special exemption has been given. Students who are not wearing the appropriate uniform, as outlined below, will call home to have a parent bring in the proper uniform item before returning to class and may receive an infraction for continuous disregard of the uniform policy. All shirts should be tucked in at all times.

UNIFORMS FOR GIRLS

Kindergarten through Fifth Grade
Green polo shirt with the STA name, with plaid skirts, skorts, or navy blue shorts w/belt

Sixth through Eighth Grade
Red polo shirt with plaid skirts, skorts or navy blue shorts w/belt
Navy blue slacks with a belt may be worn on cold weather days.

UNIFORMS FOR BOYS

Kindergarten through Fifth Grade
Green polo shirts with STA name.
Navy blue shorts or navy blue slacks with a belt.

Sixth through Eighth Grade
Red polo shirt with STA name.
Navy blue shorts or navy blue slacks with a belt.

PE Uniform for K-8 Girls and Boys
Maroon PE school shirt with maroon PE mesh shorts with the new STA logo must be worn on PE days.
PRE-KINDERGARTEN UNIFORMS
Maroon t-shirts and navy blue gym shorts with the new STA logo, will be the uniform for both boys and girls. Shoes may be of the parents choosing at Pre K grade levels only. These shoes must be regular shoes (closed toes/heels). For the safety of your child No flip-flops or sandals are permitted.

UNIFORM POLICIES

Shoes
Black uniform flat heeled dress shoes may be worn.
Approved low-cut (no high or mid-cut style) athletic shoe (leather) only may be worn.
**Shoes must be completely black (No logos or insignias). On PE days, students may wear any color non-skid athletic shoe.**
No roller skate type shoes are to be worn at the school on any occasion.

Socks
**Socks must be worn and visible;** black or white

Belts
Solid black, brown or navy blue belts **must be worn** at all times when wearing shorts or slacks.

Skorts/Skirt Length
K-8th girls may wear uniform skorts, or skirts
They must not be shorter than 2” above the knee when worn at the natural waist.
**The waistband of the skirt may not be rolled up at any time.**
No exceptions will be made to this 2” rule, regardless of grade level.

Sweatshirts/Sweaters/Jackets
Maroon sweatshirts, sweaters or jackets with STA logo may only be worn while in school.
**No other sweatshirts or jackets are permitted.**

Zero Tolerance Makeup Policy
Students are not permitted to wear any form of makeup to school at any time, **including dress down days.** Makeup includes, but is not limited to, lipstick, colored or clear lip gloss, mascara, eyeliner, eyeshadow, glitter, foundation, blush, bronzing powder or any other form of facial decoration. The **only exception** will be the use of clear nail polish and foundation used to cover a skin condition. Students wearing any other form of makeup will be sent to the office to remove the makeup. Parents will be called if the offense is repeated. The child will have to wash the makeup off before being admitted back to class. We will make no exceptions to this policy.

Jewelry
Boys and girls may wear a watch and a small cross or religious medal on a light chain. For the safety of your child, girls may wear one pair of small post earrings. No hoop earrings are permitted. No part of the earring may extend below the lobe of the ear. This is a safety issue. No wrist or ankle bracelets are allowed. No type of body rings or studs are permitted. One ring is permitted.

Hair
Hair color may not be dyed or altered in any extreme fashion (no unnatural colors). No hair decoration, such as glitter, etc. may be worn. Hair extensions and weaves are not allowed. Tails, scalp sculpting, lines or symbols are not allowed. Boys and girls’ hairstyles should be neat and worn off the face.

Girls - may wear narrow ribbons, hair bands, or small clips/barrettes in solid, uniform colors or school plaid to hold their hair in place. Hair must be out of the eyes.

Boys - are to avoid haircuts or hairstyles that interfere with the student’s vision or are extreme in appearance. Hair should be neat and brushed, also it should not touch the ears or shirt collar. Man buns are not allowed to be worn. Boys must be clean-shaven. Facial hair, such as beards, moustaches or sideburns are not permitted. Bowl haircuts, such as “surfer” cuts, styles with any portion of the head shaven, and extreme layering are not permitted.

Hats or Scarves
Hats and scarves are not permitted. On special occasions where hats are permitted, they are not to be worn in the classroom.

Dress Down Days Guidelines
Students may wear jeans or shorts, providing the jeans are not ripped or torn and must be worn at the natural waist. No excessively baggy, tight or low-cut pants, nor extremely low rise or hip-huggers are allowed. Shorts must be mid-thigh in length, and the waistband of the shorts are to be worn at the natural waistline. Short shorts are not allowed. Undergarments should never be visible.

Open toed shoes, flip-flops or sandals without back straps may NOT be worn on school grounds at any time. This is for safety reasons. No rollerblade type shoes or sneakers may be worn at school on school days or for any school sponsored event.

No suggestive or offensive logos on any attire are allowed. Tank tops, ripped or sheer blouses, low cut, strapless or spaghetti strapped tops are NOT permitted. No exposed midriffs are allowed. Blouses or tops should be long enough to still be tucked into the pants.
or skirts when the student's arms are raised above their head. This guideline will be used when the length of a top is in question.

Questionable attire will always be reviewed and remain the sole decision of the Principal or designee. Students improperly dressed will be asked to call home for a change of clothing.

All dress down rules apply to all school gatherings including dances and festivals.

“Dress Warm Days” Guidelines
When the weather forecast indicates unusually cold weather a “dress warm day” may be called. Guidelines for dress on such days are: STA maroon jackets, STA maroon Track jackets and track pants, STA maroon sweatshirt and sweatpants or STA shirt and long blue pants. Under no circumstance is any other outside jacket or sweatshirt allowed, also no Under Armor pants or any other shirts are to be worn under the uniform with the exception of short sleeve plain white undershirt. Girls may wear navy blue, black, red, or white tights. These are the ONLY OPTIONS for “Dress Warm Day”.

“Birthday Days”
Birthdays are a special occasion for children. Children may dress down for his or her birthday. Students must follow the dress down guidelines. Students may not dress down on Mass days.

Dress Requirements for Mass Days
Boys are to wear long navy blue slacks and girls are to wear skirts or skorts as the official dress uniform on Mass days. Students who have PE on Mass day may wear their PE uniforms to school. On Holy days of obligation, students should wear their dress uniforms.

Other important items

Calendar
An official school calendar of no less than 181 student days will be developed each year. Unless noted, all days will be full days. School calendar is posted on the school website. Additionally, in the principal’s newsletter which is published at the start of each month, it will be the most accurate recounting of school events for the current month.

Class Size
By the Diocese of Orlando and FCC policy class size of a maximum of 35 students are allowed in grades 1-8. In kindergarten, class size is limited to 30 students with a teacher and a full-time instructional assistant. In Pre K3 class size is limited to 20 students with a full-time teacher and a full-time assistant. Pre K4 class size is limited to 20 students with a full-time teacher and full-time assistant.

Advanced Courses
The eighth graders at STA may receive credit for Algebra I and Spanish, which they take at STA. These courses must encompass the academic materials of the ninth grade curriculum and syllabus used in the Osceola County Public High Schools, as these schools will formally grant the credit to the students. As an elementary school, STA has no authority to grant high school credit. The above courses are designated Advanced courses and potentially grant high school credit (if the student passes the end of course exam offered by the public school). Spanish may allow students to test out of Spanish I and into Spanish II at the end of this year, who have been in the program since sixth grade.

Physical Education
All students are required by law to participate in the physical education program, unless a written physician’s statement limiting the student’s physical activity is provided. "A sound mind in a sound body" continues to be a motto for the ages. The PE program, prescribed for elementary and middle school grades by the Diocese of Orlando, is followed at St. Thomas Aquinas School, with age-appropriate skills and games being introduced throughout the school year. As described in the Uniform Code section, a St. Thomas Aquinas PE uniform must be worn to Physical Education class by all students, grades K thru 8. Failure to come in uniform for PE, the student’s grade can be lowered for that class.

Records – Permanent Files
Every student has academic and health record folders on file. Those who have been tested for special services may have an additional, separate file folder. These records are available for review by the parent upon appointment with the School Principal. When requested, official records are forwarded by the school directly to the next school. No official records are ever handed to the parents, although unofficial copies may be shared. Information about students who have attended STA, are kept on file for fifty (50) years by State law. Information must be available to verify the student’s attendance at the school and all associated information. Records of serious injury to any student are kept in the school’s accident report file for 7 years. All such records are kept under lock and in a secure area resistant to water, theft or fire. Records are available only to authorized personnel.

If parents have not cleared accounts with the school, student records will be held until such financial obligations are satisfied. Retention of records is the only possible way the school has to insure the satisfaction of all debts owed to it. This is an action the school, of course, prefers not to take. Parents are asked to take care of financial and other such obligations and not put the school or the children in this difficult situation.

Code of Conduct
At St. Thomas Aquinas School we believe in providing a Christian educational environment that encourages each student to achieve his or her maximum potential intellectually, personally, physically, and spiritually. Extracurricular activities extend the STA educational objectives from the classroom to other activities in the daily lives of students. In an effort to have a Christian value system permeate throughout the student’s environment and reinforce the values implanted and fostered at home, each student and all
family members are expected to demonstrate appropriate behavior at all STA extracurricular activities. All STA students and families represent our school at such activities and should display Christian values, encourage fairness and sportsmanship, be courteous and respectful to others involved, and present a positive image of STA.

Lost and Found
Articles of clothing, lunch boxes, and other large items found around the school are kept in our lost and found area. Smaller items such as jewelry, glasses, money, etc. will be kept in the school office and may be retrieved by accurately describing the item in question. To help alleviate the problem of lost items, please mark as many of the student’s belongings as possible with his/her name. At the end of each grading period, all unclaimed clothing items will be given away or sent to the uniform exchange.

Food Service
Hot lunch is served Monday through Friday. A monthly menu is provided to parents. Parents are HIGHLY encouraged to order lunch through www.booni.com website and it needs to be ordered at least three days in advance. If a student forgets a lunch, they will be given an emergency lunch. Emergency lunches will be charged to the FACTS account on a daily basis and applied to the next available payment.

Students are always welcome to bring their own lunch any day of the week. All food brought to school should have nutritional value. Students have no access to heat up food. Gum, candy and soft drinks (soda) are not permitted other than on special occasions when supplied by the school. Students are not allowed to bring drinks to their classrooms from outside companies like Starbucks or Dunkin Donuts. Students are only allowed to have bottled water in the classrooms.

Recess is normally held every day for 15-20 minutes at times determined by the teachers.

Students must display proper behavior, manners and etiquette when eating lunch. A set of rules is established for the lunch period to maintain a calm, peaceful time for students to eat, socialize quietly and relax. There is a procedure for picking up lunch and the disposal of trash. Students who misbehave during the lunch period will not be allowed to attend lunch recess.

Specific tables are set aside for individual grades. “Set seating” will be used at all grade levels, and all students will have assigned seats with their classmates. Seats may change every month, so that over the course of the year students may get to know all their classmates well. No student will be allowed to sit in any other than his or her assigned seat.

School Board
The board is established in accordance with Diocesan policy to assist in the governing of the school. The School Board is “consultative” in nature, meaning the members cannot act apart from the Pastor and/or Principal, and cannot make decisions binding on the school.
without the approval of both Pastor and Principal. The membership of the St. Thomas Aquinas School Board shall consist of the Pastor, Principal, Assistant Principal, teacher representative, the school board president and other members who will be broadly representative of the school community it serves. Board members will be approved by the pastor.

**Change of Address**

If your address, telephone or email address changes, please notify the school office immediately. This is especially important in light of the school’s need to reach parents in cases of illness, emergencies or a variety of other school-related issues and situations. This request also relates to emergency numbers for other authorized adults to be called in the event parents cannot be reached. Changes in family status, such as separation, divorce, etc. should also be brought to the school’s attention to be sure that the school is aware of such traumatic events in the child’s life. This information is always held confidential.

**Fingerprinting/Background Check**

Nothing is more important in our schools than the protection and safety of our youngest and most vulnerable members, our students. In light of this and at the urging of the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops, the Diocese of Orlando in 1998 initiated a program requiring all parents and other volunteers to safe environment trained, fingerprinted, and have background checks run to allow them to participate in our schools as volunteers and coaches. Teachers and other employees are required to go through this process at the time of hiring and must be rechecked every five (5) years. All other persons volunteering to work with or around students must have a cleared fingerprint card and background check on file in the school office. These are renewed every five (5) years. These must be processed through the diocese and the FBI– no other background check or fingerprint verification is acceptable. Please follow the diocesan steps for setting up an appointment to be fingerprinted. A list of fingerprinted/approved parents must be kept in the school files. Only these parents, whose fingerprints have cleared the background check, will be eligible to assist at school activities and in the presence of our school children.

**Forgotten Items**

Learning to be responsible is an integral aspect of growing up and an important skill learned in school. Students must learn to come to school prepared to work and be responsible for their obligations and possessions. **Students will not be allowed to call home to ask for forgotten homework, projects, books, money, clothes, sports equipment, permission slips, etc. without express permission of a teacher.** If the parent happens to bring an item that the student has forgotten, it should be left in the office with the student’s name and grade on it, and it will be delivered to the student’s classroom at an appropriate time. Parents are not allowed to deliver the item to the child in person, as this practice is very disruptive to the classroom.
Birthdays:

How to Celebrate in School
A child’s birthday is a very special event. Students may “Dress Down” for their birthday. Dress down rules apply. **If a student’s birthday falls on a Wednesday, dress down can be used the day before or after as uniforms must be worn in Church.** If a parent would like to bring a treat for his/her child’s class, he/she is asked to get the permission of the teacher and coordinate the time and type of items to be brought to school. We encourage only individual treats, such as cookies, cupcakes, brownies, that can simply be passed out one to each child. Treats for the grades 3th through 8th, will not be distributed during class time. Should a parent wish to bring treats for the older students, it must be done during their regularly scheduled lunchtime only. We ask that you not bring any type of “goody bags” to pass out for any grade level. There are good reasons for this policy prohibiting goody bags, i.e. they are a distraction in the classroom during the remainder of the school day. Students that have birthdays during the summer months may celebrate their birthday on their half birthday. For example if a child’s birthday is on July 15, then they may celebrate their birthday on January 15.

Issuing Invitations to Parties Held Outside of School
In fairness to and in consideration of all children, we do not allow invitations for parties to be passed out at school, **unless the entire class is being invited (or “all the boys” or “all the girls”).** We must consider the feelings of those children who may not be invited. Nothing is more hurtful than to be "left out." If you wish to have a party for your child and are able to invite only certain children, we suggest that you mail the invitations directly to their homes. There are no exceptions to this rule.

Required Written Notes
A written note is required in the following circumstances:
- Excused tardiness.
- Excused absence.
- Permission to leave early or to stay after school.
- Permission to take medication.
- Permission to walk or ride a bike home.
- Permission to go home with a student/family not on your pickup list.

These permissions cannot be granted over the telephone. **The school needs proper documentation for its records by policy of the Diocesan Office of Schools.**

**SPIRITUAL ACTIVITIES**

School Mass
School Masses are celebrated once a week and on Holy Days. Students must dress in school uniform for all school Masses. All students in grades K-8 will attend school Masses. PreK4
classes are welcome and will begin to attend at some point in the school year, depending on the judgment of their teachers.

**Religious Education**

All STA school students are required to attend formal classes in religion. It is expected that all students, regardless of religious affiliation or belief, will participate fully in the religious/spiritual activities at the school, including Mass, liturgies and prayer services. Diocesan guidelines develop the curriculum plan for each grade centered on four major themes: Doctrine and Scripture, Prayer and Liturgy, Faith Response/Morality, and a Family Life Program.

**Sacramental Preparation**

Sacraments are important spiritual events in the lives of individual Catholics and our parish collectively. The Director of Religious Education for the parish is the point of contact on sacramental preparation. The school will facilitate communication between the Director of Religious Education’s office and our school families; however, the church handles and schedules the dates of these events. Students are prepared for sacraments as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sacrament</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Communion</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Reconciliation</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirmation</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These sacramental preparations demand certain key prerequisites for their reception:

- Parents must be involved in the student’s preparation and attend the required meetings.
- In preparing for each sacrament, it is important to understand that Sacraments celebrate key spiritual events in our lives and help affirm the faith that is already being practiced. For this reason it is important that parents and their children practice the faith, especially through regular attendance at Sunday Mass.

**Community Service**

The true mark of every Catholic/Christian is found in his/her love for others. The children of St. Thomas Aquinas School demonstrate their faith in action through our community service program and our special ministry programs during the school year. Students at St. Thomas Aquinas School will provide a variety of service activities through their individual classes and collectively as a school through the parish and civic community.

**Community service is a vital and integral part of the life of St. Thomas Aquinas School and its students.** Every student has an **obligation and a responsibility** to complete a certain number of community hours each year as part of his or her program. Community service means actual work done to benefit others without pay or other compensation. The school will provide some opportunities for service hours, as will parish, student activities,
and neighborhood opportunities. This work is not to be done at home nor as part of a student’s normal chores. Student graduation and/or promotion depend on fulfilling this critical obligation. Service Hours must be accomplished at determined points throughout the year. Students that do not complete the proper amount of hours per quarter will receive no credit for their community service grade. To fulfill their quarterly service hours. The following are the required hours of service for each grade level:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Service Hours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K-2</td>
<td>2 hours per trimester</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grades 3-5</td>
<td>4 Hours Per trimester</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade 6</td>
<td>6 Hours Per trimester</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade 7</td>
<td>7 Hours Per trimester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 8</td>
<td>8 Hours Per trimester</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Specific forms to properly document service hours are available in front office and from homeroom/classroom teachers, and must be completed by the student and signed by the supervising adult of his or her service work. **FORMS ARE NOT TO BE SIGNED BY PARENTS.** These forms are turned into the classroom/homeroom teacher and class records are maintained by him or her.

**Family Life Program**

Students at St. Thomas Aquinas School have the opportunity to participate in the Diocesan Family Life Program. The goals of this program, dealing with issues of family life and human sexuality, are to:

- Assist parents in opening lines of communication with their children in this very important area of life.
- Provide the necessary, age-appropriate information to the students.
- Help in the formation of a Christian conscience in areas of a sexual nature.

To achieve these goals, parents are encouraged to discuss the material with their children. Parents may review all instructional material prior to the start of the program. If, after such a review, parents do not wish their child(ren) to participate in the program, they may submit a written request to the Principal to exempt their children from the program. In such a case, the child will leave the classroom during the instructional period.
2.2 Technologies Covered: St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School may provide Internet access, desktop computers, mobile computers or devices, videoconferencing capabilities, online collaboration capabilities, message boards, email, and more. Also, St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School may allow students to bring their personal devices which will also be covered by this policy. As new technologies emerge, St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School will attempt to provide access to them. The policies outlined in this document are intended to cover all available technologies, not just those specifically listed.

3.0 Usage Policies

All technologies provided by the school are intended for education purposes. All students are expected to use good judgment and to follow the specifics of this document as well as the spirit of it: be safe, appropriate, careful and kind; do not try to get around technological protection measures; use good common sense; and ask if you do not know. In the event that the inappropriate behavior happens outside of the school and it is brought to the principal’s attention, St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School will investigate and may have disciplinary repercussions at the discretion of the school according to the Code of Conduct.

3.1 Web Access

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School provides its students with access to the Internet, including web sites, resources, content, and online tools. That access will be restricted in compliance with Diocesan Social Communication Policy, CIPA (Children’s Internet Protection Act) regulations and school policies. Web browsing may be monitored and web activity records may be retained indefinitely.

Students are expected to respect that the web filter is a safety precaution, and should not try to circumvent it when browsing the Web. If a site is blocked and a student believes it should not be, the student should follow school protocol to alert Technology staff or submit the site for review.

3.2 Email

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School may provide students with email accounts for the purpose of school-related communication. Availability and use may be restricted based on school policies.

If students are provided with email accounts, they should be used with care. Students should not send personal information; should not attempt to open files or follow links from unknown or untrusted origin; should use appropriate language; and should only communicate with other people as allowed by the school policy or the teacher.
Students are expected to communicate with the same appropriate, safe, mindful, courteous conduct online as offline. Email usage may be monitored and archived.

3.3 Social/Web 2.0 / Collaborative Content

Recognizing the benefits collaboration brings to education, St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School may provide students with access to web sites or tools that allow communication, collaboration, sharing, and messaging among users.

Students are expected to communicate with the same appropriate, safe, mindful, courteous conduct online as offline. Posts, chats, sharing, and messaging will be monitored by teachers and the sites will be protected from outside viewers. Students should be careful not to share personally-identifying information online.

The use of personal social media sites for enjoyment is prohibited on campus during instructional hours. Students must refrain from taking and posting pictures and videos of themselves, other students or teachers at school during instructional hours.

3.4 Mobile Devices Policy

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School may provide students with mobile computers or other devices to promote learning outside of the classroom. Students should abide by the same responsible use policies when using school devices off the school network as on the school network.

Students are expected to treat these devices with extreme care and caution; these are expensive devices that the school is entrusting to the student’s care. Students should report any loss, damage, or malfunction to the Technology staff immediately. Students may be financially accountable for any damage resulting from negligence or misuse.

Use of school-issued mobile devices off the school network may be monitored.

3.5 Personally-Owned Devices Policy

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School may allow students to bring personally owned devices to use in the classroom after it has been approved by the Technology staff. Students should keep personally-owned devices (including laptops, tablets, e-readers, smart phones, cell phones, and smart watches) turned off and put away during school hours unless as instructed by a teacher or staff for educational purposes or in the event of an emergency.

Because of security concerns, when personally-owned mobile devices are used on campus requiring the use of data, these devices must only be on the school network, data services must be disabled and permission from the Technology staff is required. For the Technology staff to grant permission, students need to submit the required paperwork with the appropriate information such as MAC address and serial number. In some cases, a separate network may be provided for personally-owned devices.

Students must to follow the same code of conduct for use of personally owned devices on St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School campus or at other functions, whether on or off property, related to the St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School.

3.6 Security
Students are expected to take reasonable safeguards against the transmission of security threats over the school network. This includes not opening or distributing infected files or programs and not opening files or programs of unknown or untrusted origin.

If the student believes a computer or mobile device the student is using might be infected with a virus, IT must be alerted immediately. The student must not attempt to remove the virus or download any programs to help remove the virus.

3.7 Downloads

Students should not download, attempt to download, or run .exe programs or any other executable programs over the school network or onto school resources without express permission from the Technology staff.

Students may be able to download other file types, such as images of videos. For the security of our network, download such files only from reputable sites, only for education purposes, and following copyright laws.

3.8 Netiquette

Students should always use the Internet, network resources, and online sites in a courteous and respectful manner.

Students should also recognize that among the valuable content online is unverified, incorrect, or inappropriate content. Students should use trusted sources when conducting research via the Internet and follow copyright laws for their use.

Students should also remember not to post anything online that they would not want parents, teachers, or future colleges or employers to see. Once something is online, it is out there—and can sometimes be shared and spread in ways it was never intended.

3.9 Plagiarism

Students should not plagiarize (or use as their own, without citing the original creator) content, including words or images, from the Internet. Students should not take credit for things they did not create themselves, or misrepresent themselves as an author or creator of something found online. Research conducted via the Internet should be appropriately cited, giving credit to the original author.

4.0 Personal Safety

Students should never share personal information, including phone number, address, social security number, birthday, or financial information, over the Internet without permission from a parent or legal guardian. Students should recognize that communicating over the Internet brings anonymity and associated risks, and should carefully safeguard the personal information of themselves and others. Students should never agree to meet someone they meet online in real life without parental or legal guardian permission.

If you see a message, comment, image, or anything else online that makes you concerned for your personal safety, bring it to the attention of an adult (teacher or staff if you are at school; parent or legal guardian if you are using the device at home) immediately.
5.0 Cyber Bullying

Cyber bullying will not be tolerated. Harassing, dissing, flaming, denigrating, impersonating, outing, tricking, excluding, and cyberstalking are all examples of cyberbullying. Do not be mean. Do not send emails or post comments with the intent of scaring, hurting, or intimidating someone else.

Engaging in these behaviors, or any online activities intended to harm (physically or emotionally) another person, will result in severe disciplinary action and loss of privileges. In some cases, cyberbullying can be a crime. Remember that your activities are monitored and retained.

6.0 Sexting

Any student taking, disseminating, transferring, possessing, or sharing obscene, sexually oriented, lewd, or otherwise illegal images or other content, commonly referred to as “sexting,” which can include, but is not limited to, pictures of themselves, other students or friends without appropriate clothing or in compromising or suggestive positions, will be disciplined according to the Student Code of Conduct, may be required to complete an educational program related to the dangers of this type of behavior, and, in certain circumstances, may be reported to law enforcement. This type of behavior needs to be immediately reported to the parent/guardian, and if it involves other students in the school it should be reported to the teacher or principal.

7.0 Examples of Responsible Use

The student will:
✓ Use school technologies for school-related activities.
✓ Follow the same guidelines for respectful, responsible behavior online that I am expected to follow offline.
✓ Treat school resources carefully, and alert staff if there is any problem with their operation.
✓ Encourage positive, constructive discussion if allowed to use communicative or collaborative technologies.
✓ Alert a teacher or other staff member if I see threatening, inappropriate, or harmful content (images, messages, posts) online.
✓ Use school technologies at appropriate times, in approved places, for educational pursuits.
✓ Cite sources when using online sites and resources for research.
✓ Recognize that use of school technologies is a privilege and treat it as such.
✓ Be cautious to protect the safety of others and myself.
✓ Help to protect the security of school resources.

This is not intended to be an exhaustive list. Students should use their own good judgment when using school technologies.

8.0 Examples of Irresponsible Use

I, the student will not:
✓ Use school technologies in a way that could be personally or physically harmful.
✓ Attempt to find inappropriate images or content.
✓ Engage in cyberbullying, harassment, or disrespectful conduct toward others.
✓ Try to find ways to circumvent the school’s safety measures and filtering tools.
✓ Use school technologies to send spam or chain mail.
✓ Plagiarize content I find online.
✓ Post personally identifying information, about others or myself.
✓ Agree to meet someone I meet online in real life.
✓ Send or distribute obscene, lewd or sexually explicit images.
✓ Use language online that would be unacceptable in the classroom.
✓ Use school technologies for illegal activities or to pursue information on such activities.
✓ Attempt to hack or access sites, servers, or content that is not intended for my use.

This is not intended to be an exhaustive list. Students should use their own good judgment when using school technologies.

9.0 Internet Safety Plan

✓ St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School implements an effective internet filtering and reporting solution CIPA Filter, that monitors internet activity, detects inappropriate usage and blocks and/or filters visual depictions that are obscene, pornographic or in any way harmful to minors as defined in CIPA
✓ The internet filtering solution controls access by minors to inappropriate matter on the Internet and the World Wide Web and restricts access to materials that may be harmful to minors
✓ Policies and procedures are in place that covers category blocking, automated weekly reports on internet activity, and identification of emerging threats
✓ School network is secure with CIPA Filter from unauthorized access, including “hacking” and other unlawful activities by minors online
✓ Faculty provides internet safety instruction integrated in their curriculum or as part of a technology class that covers appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking sites and in chat rooms and cyber bullying
✓ Technology Responsible Use Policy and Internet Safety Plan will be published in the parent/student handbook and St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School will hold an informational meeting to address the policy.

10.0 Limitation of Liability

✓ St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School will not be responsible for damage or harm to any personal devices, files, data, or hardware brought to the school by students.
✓ While St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School employs filtering and other safety and security mechanisms, and attempts to ensure their proper function, it makes no guarantees as to their effectiveness.
✓ St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School will not be responsible, financially or otherwise, for unauthorized transactions conducted over the school network.

11.0 Violations of this Responsible Use Policy

Violations of this policy may have disciplinary repercussions at the discretion of St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School, according to the Code of Conduct, and including but not limited to:

● Suspension of network, technology, or computer privileges
● Notification to parents
● Detention or suspension from school and school-related activities
- Legal action and/or prosecution

12.0 References

✓ Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act - http://www.ftc.gov/ogc/coppa1.htm
I understand that inappropriate and irresponsible use and conduct while using the device and/or other technology resources and/or school network shall result in appropriate disciplinary action. I agree to be a responsible digital citizen and user and will conduct myself appropriately while online. I have read and understood this Responsible Use Policy and agree to abide by it:

_______________________________________
(Student Printed Name)

_______________________________________
(Student Signature)              (Date)

As a parent/guardian, I will or have discussed Responsible Use Policy, user guide, and all other policies with my child and will support the school in guiding my child in using the device at home as an educational tool. I understand that I am responsible for monitoring and guiding my child’s activity while he/she is not at school.

_______________________________________
(Parent/Legal Guardian Printed Name)

_______________________________________
(Parent/Legal Guardian Signature)              (Date)
Parents Agreement with
School Parent-Student
Handbook Rules and Regulations

As directed by the Office of Schools of the Diocese of Orlando, each parent must sign a form indicating that he or she has read, understands and accepts the directive, rules and regulations, as outlined in the school Parent-Student Handbook. In this regard, you are asked to attach your signature on the line below to indicate your agreement with this directive. This is a requirement for your child to attend our school and must be completed within the first week of school.

The Parent-Student Handbook is part of the contractual agreement between the school and the parent and is essential to the smooth and informed running of the school program day to day. Parents having any concerns or questions about the contents may call the school, and the Principal or Assistant Principal will gladly discuss and help clarify any such issues.

I, ______________________________, understand and accept the rules, regulations and directive contained in the St. Thomas Aquinas Parent-Student Handbook for the 2017-2018 school year. I have read the book and agree to follow the spirit and intent of the handbook. I also understand that the principal has the right to amend this handbook at any time if deemed necessary.

Parent’s Signature

________________________________________________________________

Date __________________________

THIS SIGNED FORM MUST BE RETURNED TO THE SCHOOL OFFICE WITHIN ONE WEEK OF THE BEGINNING OF SCHOOL.