



PARENT/STUDENT  
HANDBOOK  
2016/2017

LET IT BE KNOWN THAT JESUS CHRIST IS  
THE REASON FOR THIS SCHOOL, THE  
UNSEEN, BUT EVER PRESENT TEACHER IN  
ALL ITS CLASSES, THE MODEL OF ITS  
FACULTY AND THE INSPIRATION OF THE  
STUDENTS.

St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School  
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Glen Mills, PA 19342

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*Smile, Share, Make Good Decisions*

Accredited by  
Middle States Association of Colleges and  
School

***SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE SCHOOL  
ADMINISTRATION, FACULTY AND STAFF***

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Aides	Mrs. Carol Corey	PreK
	Mrs. Carrie Hughes	PreK
	Mrs. Cathy Koncir	PreK
	Mrs. Kristin Hodlofski	PreK
	Mrs. Nancy Pontarelli	PreK
	Mrs. Maria Bush	Kindergarten
	Mrs. Linda Mancini	Kindergarten
After Care Director	Mrs. Carrie Hughes	cares@staglenmills.org
Building Maintenance	Mr. Harry O'Neill	
	Mr. Phil Popiel	

## **St. Thomas the Apostle Code of Conduct**

- **Respect others and property**
- **Be kind to others**
- **Practice good manners**
- **Raise your hand in class**
- **Keep your hands and feet to yourself**
- **Use appropriate language**
- **Fighting and bullying are not acceptable**
- **Smile, Share, Make Good Decisions**

## **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR BUS RIDERS**

### **PLEASE REVIEW THESE RULES WITH YOUR CHILD**

Your transportation/bus ride should be a pleasurable one. We ask that students abide by the regulations listed below in order to prevent injury. **Disregard of the regulations could result in a student being suspended/deprived of his/her privilege to ride the bus.**

No student may cross districts and ride on another bus.

1. The driver is in full charge of bus and pupils. Pupils must obey the driver. Loud talking or yelling will not be permitted.
2. Students **MUST** be seated at all times when riding on the bus. No one is to be walking or out of a seat while the bus is in motion.
3. Pupils may be assigned a seat in which they will be seated at all times unless permission to change is given by the bus driver or principal.
4. Pupils will assist in keeping the bus clean. No papers or trash are to be thrown on the floor. No thing is to be thrown out the window.
5. No pupil shall at any time extend his or her head, hands, or arms out of the window.
6. Pupils must board and exit the bus in an orderly manner.
7. Pupils must cross the highway/street only in the front of the bus at the consent of the driver.
8. Pupils must not play or stand in the roadway while waiting for the bus.
9. Pupils who have to walk for some distance along the roadway to the bus-loading zone must walk on the left hand side, facing the oncoming traffic; this will also apply to pupils leaving the bus loading zone in the evening.
10. Pupils must not ride on the outside of the bus.
11. Pupils may not have anything in their possession that may cause injury to another, such as sticks, straps, pins or toys.
12. Each pupil must see that book bags and possessions are kept out of the aisles.
13. Pupils should not talk to the driver while the bus is moving unless it is an emergency.
14. No pupil shall sit in the driver's seat or interfere with the driver in any way.
15. Students are not permitted to eat or drink on the bus.

# **MISSION STATEMENT**

*As a Catholic School, we play an integral role in the mission of the Church. We are committed to preparing our children for productive lives as twenty-first century learners so they will serve God in the use of their talents, serve the Church as courageous leaders, and serve the community by bearing the Gospel message to the world.*

## **HANDBOOK**

### **Spiritual Privileges**

As a Catholic school, all aspects of our day focus on deepening the knowledge and appreciation of our Faith and Christian values. In addition to daily religion classes, the students of Saint Thomas the Apostle School have many opportunities for spiritual growth:

#### **First Friday Mass**

Each grade will have a turn preparing one of these liturgies and will have the opportunity to serve as lectors, gift bearers, and cantors. Please check the monthly calendar for the date and time of Mass. Parents are always welcome to celebrate with us!

#### **Penance Services**

During Advent and Lent, Penance services are scheduled for the children. Children are also encouraged to take advantage of parish confessions on Saturday afternoon and/or Sunday morning.

#### **Stations of the Cross**

Stations of the Cross are held with the school children during Lent. Please check the school calendar for the date and time and join us if you can.

#### **Inscription**

There will be two special Inscription Masses in the fall: One for students preparing for Communion and one for students preparing for Confirmation. Please check the calendar for the date and time.

#### **Retreat Days**

Retreats for students preparing for Confirmation and for students preparing to graduate from Saint Thomas the Apostle School are scheduled during the school year. These are special opportunities for spiritual growth and reflection. Bus transportation for the eighth grade retreat is provided.

#### **Forty Hours**

Forty Hours is a time of special Eucharistic adoration in the parish. The students participate in Forty Hours during the school day, and the previous year's Communion class and all altar servers participate in the closing Procession. Parents are strongly encouraged to attend evening services with their children during Forty Hours.

#### **Parish Mission**

The annual Parish Mission is a special opportunity for spiritual growth. During the mission, the students attend Mass and, when appropriate, the spiritual talks as well. Parents are encouraged to attend evening services with their children.

### Sacraments

Students who have met the requirements of the Church will receive First Penance and First Communion or Confirmation in second and sixth grades respectively.

We ask you, as parents, to be vigilant in seeing that your children participate in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass from beginning to end each and every Sunday and Holy Day of Obligation. Also, we urge you to form in your children the habit of going to confession regularly. When you do these things, you show your children how to grow in their relationship with the Lord.

### Adoration

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is available every Monday, all day, in the 1852 Chapel.

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### Alcohol

The possession or consumption of alcoholic beverages on school property by any student is strictly forbidden. Students who violate this policy face immediate expulsion. To assist in the enforcement of this policy, the school strongly discourages the use of alcoholic beverages by adults at events where children are present.

### Altar Servers

Girls and boys in grades 5 through 8 have the privilege of being altar servers. They are expected to serve with reverence, commitment and pride. After graduation from 8th grade, students may continue to be altar servers by contacting the Rectory at 610-459-2224.

### Arrival and Dismissal

Parents delivering students to school in the morning should use the NEW church driveway and drop children off in the parking lot in line in the same manner the children are picked up in the afternoon. Children will walk down the walkway and cross over to the gym doors where they will enter. **Students may not be dropped off at school earlier than 8:00 a.m. unless the child is registered in the C.A.R.E.S. program.** The first bell rings at 8:20 a.m. Any child who arrives at school after the 8:20 a.m. bell is late. The child will report directly to the Dean of Students to receive a late slip, whether excused or unexcused. The child will sign in and be directed to report to homeroom where the homeroom teacher will collect the late slip. **Three late arrivals will result in a school detention.** Prayers begin promptly at 8:25a.m. A second bell rings at 8:30 a.m. and classes begin immediately after prayers.

Parents picking children up at the end of the day should use the NEW church driveway and form a line in front of the rectory and mailboxes and WAIT for the children to be walked out by a teacher. All children should be picked up promptly by 3:15 p.m. **Parents should never leave their cars or park their cars and allow younger children to play on the playground equipment. It is important that cars leave the lot as soon as the children dismiss in order to avoid traffic jams and safety hazards. Children are not permitted to play on the playground during dismissal for safety reasons. Please do not use your cell phone while picking up students.**

**Parents are asked not to pull in front of the school and gym doors in order to provide a safe boundary for the students.** If you are picking children up early, please park in the new church parking lot and report to the school office. The following are our hours of operation:

School Office Hours:	8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
School Hours:	8:20 a.m. to 3:05 p.m.

Lunch Times: 12:00 p.m. to 12:50 p.m.

### Attendance/Absence

Regular attendance is essential to a student's success in school. Most subjects are taught in sequence, requiring the understanding of each concept in the order of its presentation. Persistent absence or lateness creates a genuine hardship for a student and is regarded as a very serious problem. **It is the responsibility of the student to obtain and make up all work missed while absent.**

If your child is going to be absent from school, parents must call the nurse's office before 8:30 a.m. (610-459-1418) and leave a message giving the child's name, grade, and reason for absence. If a child is absent and there is no notification, the parents will be called to check on the child's whereabouts. Your child's safety and welfare are of great importance to us.

A written note from a parent is required to be brought to school on the day the child returns to class after an absence. A written note from a doctor is required after an absence of three or more days. If your child was sick, please indicate the type of illness so that the school can chart the types and frequency of illnesses in the grade or school.

Parents should be aware that lateness and partial absences do affect a child's attendance record. In order to be considered present for the morning and/or afternoon session, a child must be in school for more than half of the time for that session. Students taken out of school for doctor or dental appointments ARE considered absent if they are gone longer than half of the time for that session. A note from the doctor or dentist should be given to the teacher upon the child's return. **Students are to be picked up outside the school office. The parent or guardian must come into school and sign the student out in the book in order for the student to be released. The school must be notified if someone other than the parent or guardian is picking up a child.**

As educators, we strongly discourage vacationing during the school year. The week of anticipation, the week of vacation, and the week of memories following the vacation turn a week's trip into a three week loss of productivity on the child's part. In the event that such a trip is unavoidable during the school year, parents are required to notify the principal and teacher in writing prior to the trip. Because it is difficult for teachers to determine the work that will be covered while your child is on vacation, **make-up work will be assigned upon the child's return.** Your cooperation with the teachers' requirements for the completion of assignments is essential. Missed tests will be scheduled at the teachers' discretion.

**If there are excessive unexcused absences, and schoolwork is affected, a conference may be required with the child's parents/guardians.**

### Band

Saint Thomas the Apostle School has an optional band program available for students in grades 2 to 8. Band lessons are given each week by our band instructor in the music room or on the school stage. All fees are paid directly to the instructor. During the first month of school, a band demonstration is scheduled to introduce the students to the program. The children will receive information at that assembly program regarding sign-ups, lessons, and payment methods. Band concerts are generally held at Christmas and the end of the year.

### Birthdays

Parents who wish to send a small treat to school for the class to celebrate their child's birthday may do so. In accordance with the **Wellness Program, you are asked to send nutritious, healthy treats such as fruits, vegetables or granola bars.** Please be sure to include enough for the entire class. **No other celebrations are permitted. Invitations to birthday parties may NOT be given out in school unless everyone in the class receives one. Invitations to selected individuals must be sent from home.**

### Books and Materials of Learning

Every student must carry his or her books to and from school in an appropriate book bag. All books must be covered, with the exception of copybooks. All books and covers must be kept free of doodles, drawings and unnecessary writing. The school reserves the right to have a child replace any book that has inappropriate material on or in it. Books, copybooks, and materials should be labeled with the student's name and room number.

All lost or damaged books must be paid for in full by the student and/or parents. A charge will be made at the rate at which the book was purchased by the school.

### Bullying/Harassment/Violence

As a reflection of the mission of St. Thomas the Apostle School and the Archdiocese of Philadelphia it is recognized that bullying, harassing, or violent behavior will not be tolerated. We seek to create an environment of learning, compassion, safety and a culture of kindness by educating teachers, staff, parents, and students concerning respect.

Bullying involves actions or words against another person for the purpose of inflicting physical or emotional harm, discomfort, or damage to a person's reputation that is intimidating or threatening and affects the learning and school environments. It is an abuse of power by an individual or group who deliberately target and repeat inappropriate behavior. If the bully is threatening a student, the student should talk to a teacher or the principal or talk to his/her parent who may contact the teacher or principal.

Bullying can include a pattern of deliberate isolation or exclusion. It includes but is not limited to pushing, punching, hitting, kicking, making fun of, ethnic slurs, writing notes, verbal threats, or encouraging a fight.

All forms of cyberbullying on the computer at school or at home are unacceptable. Cyberbullying includes but is not limited to misuse of technology, harassing, teasing, intimidating or threatening, posting blogs, hurtful messages.

Conduct incompatible with the educational and religious message of the school is grounds for disciplinary action including detention, suspension, or dismissal of the student, as well as reporting incidents to appropriate lawful authorities.

### Bus Routes and Operating Policies

Eight school districts service Saint Thomas the Apostle School: Garnet Valley, West Chester, Unionville-Chadds Ford, Rose Tree Media, Penn-Delco, Chichester, Chester-Upland, and Kennett Square. **Due to state and insurance regulations, students may NEVER ride any other bus than the one from the district in which they live.**

Bus routes and stops are determined by the transportation departments of each school district. If you are experiencing a problem, please contact the transportation department of your local school district.

It is a priority that our students be transported to and from school safely. We expect all students to cooperate with the bus rules and regulations. If a student is disruptive, he/she will relinquish the privilege of riding the bus for one week. Parents will be notified of disruptive behavior and must provide transportation to and from school during that time.

### Calendars for the School Year

A tentative yearly calendar is sent home in the summer mailing for the upcoming school year. The monthly calendar is available on the school website. Please consult the calendar for days off, early dismissals, liturgical



celebrations, special lunches, etc. More details about the school's events, personnel, activities, etc. will be included in each newsletter.

### **Cancellation of School**

Cancellation of school takes place only during extraordinary circumstances such as snow, ice, loss of electricity, etc. The school is aware of the hardship that can be caused by an abrupt cancellation of school. Therefore, school will not be cancelled unless a significant health and/or safety risk has been created by the extraordinary circumstances.

In the event of inclement weather, the decision to close is based on the decision of Garnet Valley School District. This district provides the majority of bus transportation for our students. If the decision to close or not open in the morning is made, you will receive a personal phone call, text, and/or email via Option C. Please be sure to keep the office updated of your most current numbers and email addresses. If the school district in which you live announces a school closing, you will not receive bus transportation. IF POSSIBLE, parents should provide transportation for their children if St. Thomas School is open.

SCHOOL CLOSING INFORMATION WILL BE AVAILABLE BY WATCHING CHANNEL 3, CHANNEL 6, CHANNEL 10, FOX 29 and station affiliates.

When school opens one or two hours late, the PreK 3 & 4 classes are cancelled for the day.

Parents should never drop children off at school without being sure that school is open that day.

When school is closed due to weather conditions or another emergency situation, all children's after school and evening activities are automatically cancelled.

In the unusual event that the children are dismissed early for weather or other emergency, you will be contacted using the school messenger system. It is vital that you provide accurate and up-to-date emergency numbers. Parents should be sure that their child is also aware of an alternate plan to follow when parents are still at work. **Please make sure that your child knows what to do and where to go in an emergency dismissal situation.**

### **C.A.R.E.S.**

For the convenience of our families, St. Thomas offers an extended day program known as C.A.R.E.S. (Children Are Receiving Extended Services). Children may be brought to school as early as 7:00 a.m. and stay as late as 5:30 p.m. Parents are billed at the end of the month for time used. Morning CARES is \$5.00. The cost for AFTER CARES is \$8.00 per hour for 1<sup>st</sup> child; \$6.00 for 2<sup>nd</sup> child; \$5.00 for 3<sup>rd</sup> child. Teachers or parents monitor the children during this time and provide a variety of activities for them. While children may begin their homework during after care, tutoring by the teacher on duty is not provided. **Children MUST be picked up by 5:30 p.m.**

### **Cell Phones and Electronic Devices**

Cell phones and personal electronic devices are permissible; however, they are to be handed into the morning homeroom teacher on a daily basis at the beginning of the school day and they are returned at the end of the school day (see acceptable use policy)

Students are not permitted to use cell phones and other personal electronic devices during the school hours.

### **Change of Address**

Please notify the school immediately regarding the change of your address, telephone number, or emergency numbers.

### Classroom Parties

Classroom parties and/or treats may be held during the school year to celebrate Halloween, Christmas, and Valentine's Day or at the discretion of the teacher. These activities are planned by the teachers with the assistance of the homeroom parents. Healthy and nutritious treats are encouraged. Please be aware of any food or peanut allergies.

### Communication

Each Monday, an electronic white envelope is sent home via email. Additional information can be transmitted by Option C, emails, text, and voice messages.

### Conferences

Formal parent-teacher conferences are scheduled in the middle of the first trimester. Conference times will be scheduled with classroom teachers. Every effort should be made by the parent(s) to attend the conference.

In the event that parents have a concern about their child's academic progress or about an event that occurred in the classroom, they are asked to first contact their child's teacher, who can best provide first-hand information. If a concern still remains, the matter should be brought to the attention of the principal.

### CONSEQUENCES

Certain behaviors are considered violations of the Code of Conduct and will NOT be tolerated. While we recognize the need for varying expectations depending on the age of the student, the following guidelines have been established in order to provide consistency in the level of acceptable conduct for ALL of our students.

Parents and students are reminded that this code of conduct is expected both on and off school grounds whenever the children are representing the school, whether or not it is during school hours. This includes activities such as, but not limited to, the bus, field trips, CYO activities, Scouts, academic activities, etc.

#### **a. Demerit**

Demerits/detentions affect the student's conduct and/or effort mark. The accumulation of three demerits will require that the student serve a detention. Violation of the Code of Conduct will warrant a demerit or detention. An Option C email will be sent to parents to inform them of demerits or detention. **Accumulation of two detentions within a trimester will require a meeting with parents, teacher and principal.**

#### **b. Detention**

Detentions will be scheduled as needed on a Thursday morning from 7:30 to 8:00 a.m. and will be monitored by the Dean of Students. Parents must drop off their child between 7:25 and 7:30 a.m. Failure to attend a detention will result in a parent/student conference with the principal and possible future discipline.

#### **c. Suspension**

Out of school suspensions may be from one to three-days. During this time, the student will be responsible for completing all assignments. Suspensions will result in an automatic U in conduct in grades 5 through 8 and a 1 in grades 1 through 4. **After meeting with the child's parents and 2 detentions have been served, the consequence may result in-school suspension to be served in the Dean of Students office.**

#### **d. Expulsion**

The school reserves the right to dismiss a student at any time when the school considers the conduct of the student or parent/guardian to be inconsistent with school policy, the good of the school community, contradictory to Catholic teachings, or a threat to the safety of the students or staff.

In some of the following actions, proper authorities will be notified and additional criminal charges may be warranted.

- Bullying, verbal or physical attack of a person in authority
- Gross insubordination
- Possession of a weapon
- Possession of alcohol or illegal drug
- Making terroristic threats
- Breaking and entering of school property
- Parents' or student's refusal to comply with the regulations and policies of the school
- Truancy
- Theft
- Immorality
- Repeated failures in conduct
- Vandalism
- Arrest or conviction of a crime outside of school

#### **Curriculum**

The curriculum followed by the faculty of Saint Thomas the Apostle School is the one required by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. An official course of study is designed for every subject taught at each grade level. Parents may view the curriculum of the Archdiocesan website at be [www.catholicschools-phl.org](http://www.catholicschools-phl.org) or the link on the school website.

#### **Dismissal**

Parents remain in their cars until the children are brought out by a teacher. Each bus line will be walked out by a teacher. Children are expected to walk into the bus and be seated and remain in a seat at all times. Three car lines will form located closest to the school playground and the middle of parking lot (same area as morning drop off point) and no cars will be permitted to move until all students have been placed in their cars or are supervised in the designated area with the faculty in the parking lot. **Please refrain from use of cell phones.** Children are not permitted to use playground equipment during dismissal.

#### **Doctor and Dentist Appointments**

Parents are expected to make every effort to schedule doctor appointments outside of school time. When this is not possible, a written request for an early dismissal must be brought into school in advance of the appointment. Students taken from school for such appointments ARE considered absent if the time they are gone exceeds half of the morning or afternoon session from which they were taken. Students waiting to be picked up will wait in the foyer outside the office until a parent arrives. Work missed while a student is absent must be made up.

#### **Dress Code**

Neatness and cleanliness in personal attire are a vital part of a child's education and the responsibility of the parents. When a child looks and feels good about himself/herself, he/she acts and works accordingly.

**Any student not in compliance with the dress code will receive a demerit. After one demerit, a parent will be called and the student will be sent home until the uniform meets the regulation code.**

#### **Boys: Grades K to 8**

- Navy blue "dress" pants (NO jeans or elastic cuffs). Pants/shorts must FIT and must be worn AT THE WAIST.
- Light yellow dress shirt (either short or long sleeves) and a navy blue school V-neck sweater or vest is mandatory.
- Plaid school tie is worn with the dress shirt.
- School shoes are required: Black leather and tie Oxford dress shoe ONLY
- Solid white or navy socks that are at least three inches above the ankle should be worn.
- A belt is required on both pants and shorts.
- Regulation navy blue shorts may be worn at specific times of the year (TBA). They should be worn with the schools yellow knit shirt, white or navy socks, and shoes (not sneakers).
- The yellow knit shirt may also be worn with the dress pants with summer uniform.
- Boys' shirts must be tucked in at all times.

#### **Girls: Grades K to 5**

- Plaid jumper with light yellow blouse (either short or long sleeve). Jumpers are expected to touch the knee. All jumpers must have school circular patch emblem on the left side.
- Navy blue long pants with black belt.
- Navy blue knee socks or tights with NO rips, tears, or holes (NOT opaque stockings!)
- Navy blue school sweater is optional.
- School shoes are required in black leather, tie Oxford dress shoes. Shoes must have nonskid soles.
- Regulation navy blue shorts may be worn at specific times of the year (TBA). They should be worn with the yellow knit shirt, yellow or navy socks.
- Girls' shirts must be tucked in at all times.

#### **Girls: Grades 6, 7, 8**

- Plaid skirt (these may NOT be rolled at the waist and must touch the knee) with light yellow oxford blouse.
- Navy blue long pants with black belt.
- Navy blue school V-neck sweater or vest is mandatory.
- Navy blue knee socks or tights with NO rips, tears, or holes (NOT opaque stockings!)
- School shoes are black leather tie Oxford dress shoes. Shoes must have nonskid soles.
- Navy blue regulation school shorts may be worn at specific times of the year (TBA). They should be worn with the school's yellow knit shirt, yellow or navy socks, and shoes.
- Girls' shirts must be tucked in at all times.

#### **Dress Code: General Regulations**

Only religious medals or chains may be worn -- except on the school day closest to a holiday, when seasonal jewelry is permitted within reason.

For safety reasons, **rings, bracelets and necklaces are never permitted.** This includes all rope, yarn, and beaded neck, wrist, and ankle bands. **Girls are not permitted to wear dangling or hoop earrings, nail polish, make-up,**

**lip gloss, or multiple earrings per ear. False nails are not permitted. To prevent damage and loss, no apple watches are permitted as per cell phone and electronic device section.**

Boys may NOT wear earrings, bracelets, or necklaces. This includes all rope, yarn, and beaded neck, wrist, and ankle bands. Only religious necklaces and chains may be worn.

Body piercing of any kind (lip, nose, eyebrow, etc.) is NOT permitted for girls or boys. Tattoos are not permitted.

Facial hair, i.e., beards or mustaches, are not permitted.

Charity bands must be approved by the principal.

**Final approval or disapproval of dress code discrepancy is at the discretion of the principal.**

### **Dress Code: Gym Uniform**

Students in Grades K to 8 must wear a mandatory gym uniform for physical education classes. This consists of regulation hunter green, knee-length gym shorts and gray tee shirt with the school logo, plain white socks or black socks that come at least three inches above the top of the ankle. Sneakers must be tightly laced so they are secure on the feet. Velcro sneakers are permitted. Sneakers are not permitted to have lights, wheels, or other extraordinary decorations. Jewelry is not to be worn on gym days, especially chains around the neck. The girls may wear a small post earring.

**Pants/shorts must FIT and must be worn AT THE WAIST.**

During cooler weather, regulation hunter green sweatpants and sweatshirt or long sleeve gray tee shirt should be worn. At no time may shirts, shorts or pants have any design or writing other than a St. Thomas logo. St. Thomas CYO Shirts and other organizations may not be worn for gym.

### **Dress Code: Hair**

Maintaining a neat appearance necessitates hair that is clean and nicely styled. Shaved or partially shaved heads, tails, and other "fad" styles are NOT permitted for girls or boys.

Boys' hair should not touch the shirt collar in the back or be over the ears. A "typical" boy's haircut should be worn at all time and throughout the grades. Neither boys' nor girls' hair should hang in their eyes nor cover the forehead.

Dyed hair is not permitted for boys or girls.

Hair bands and accessories must be simple and conservative. Hair scarves are not acceptable nor are exaggerated head bands and ornaments.

**1st notice is a verbal warning - which allows the child up to 1 week to receive a haircut. We encourage the child to receive a haircut ASAP from the 1st verbal warning. Consequences can be, but not limited to, a demerit or detention.**

### **Dress Down Days**

On certain days throughout the year the students may participate in a day where they may be permitted to wear clothes other than the daily uniform. These days usually exist to support a cause. Typically the students

will be required to pay \$1 or bring a canned good to school. Proper dress is expected. Students may not wear shirts that contain inappropriate messages. The girls are expected to wear shirts that are not revealing or low cut. They are not permitted to wear shorts that are very short, tight or contain writing in inappropriate places. No skinny jeans, yoga pants, jeggings, leggings, compression pants, spandex and volleyball shorts are permitted. **If a child has a dress down day during the summer uniform months, the shorts length must be AT LEAST 3" above the knee.** School gym sweat pants/shirts are permitted. Students who violate an acceptable mode of dress will be required to call their parents for a suitable change of clothing or will be issued school appropriate wear and you will be charged a fee for loaning of appropriate clothing.

NUT Pass days will be designated by the school principal. NUT Passes may not be accumulated. They must be used on the month designated on the pass.

### **Early Dismissals**

All early dismissals will be at 12:00 p.m. except on the last day of school when the early dismissal will be at 10:30 a.m.

Bus transportation will not always be available for these early dismissals. Check the monthly calendar for specific dates.

### **End of the Year Assessments**

Final cumulative examinations (assessments) will be administered to the students in Grades 1 to 8 in June.

### **Extra-Curricular Activities**

A wide variety of extracurricular activities are provided for the enjoyment and enrichment of students on all grade levels throughout the year. These activities include various school clubs and dances, C.Y.O sports, and student newspaper - to name just a few.

These events/activities may be held on or off school property. Respect and proper behavior is expected of students at all times! Parents who are activity moderators, coaches or chaperones must keep the children in order and prevent injury or damage to the facility in which the activity takes place. Children must be supervised at all times and may NOT be left alone to wait for a ride.

### **Fees**

The collection of fees during the school year is necessary to cover the cost of certain activities. Most fees are collected at the beginning of the school year. Any fees not paid by the end of the trimester will result in the withholding of the student's report card.

Individual teachers may charge the students a fee to cover specific projects, subscriptions, trips, etc.

Each spring, students re-register for the following year before an open registration of new students is held.

### **Field Trips**

The purpose of class trips is to broaden the intellectual, cultural, and social experiences of the child. Teachers will decide how chaperones are chosen and how many may accompany the class. Parents not chosen as chaperones may NOT attend the trip or meet the class at their destination. Parents must sign the school's permission slip before their child may attend the trip.

Attending a class trip is a privilege from which a child may be excluded if the teacher feels it is appropriate to do so. If a parent does not wish a child to attend the trip for any reason, the teacher should be notified in writing.

All children are to attend field trips. If a child does not attend a field trip, they will be required to stay home on that given day.

Any parent who attends a class trip must have all required clearances. Please contact the Rectory at 610-459-2224 for information and questions. Clearance forms can be found on the school website.

### **Graduation**

Eighth grade students who have successfully completed the prescribed course of study and maintained suitable discipline and attendance records are eligible for graduation if all financial obligations have been met. Procedures for graduation are determined by the principal and the eighth grade teachers. **Participation in closing graduation exercises is a privilege, not a right.** The school has the right to deny any student from participating in closing exercises if, in the view of the Administration, the student's conduct or academic or disciplinary records indicate that this privilege should not be extended.

### **HEALTH**

All immunizations and required vaccinations must be documented and placed in the nurse's office **before** entering or returning to school. All health information must be up to date.

#### **(a) Illness or Injury**

In case of the illness or injury of a child, emergency care will be given by the school nurse. Parents will be contacted immediately if necessary. If your child must be sent home from school due to illness or injury, you are asked to come for your child as soon as possible. It is IMPERATIVE that each child has on file an EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARD. PLEASE NOTIFY THE SCHOOL IF THERE ARE ANY CHANGES TO BE MADE ON THESE CARDS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR. PLEASE BE SURE THAT THE EMERGENCY PEOPLE TO BE CONTACTED ARE AWARE OF THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES IN CASE THEY ARE NEEDED.

#### **(b) Immunizations and Vaccinations**

State law requires that every child who is admitted to school have evidence of a successful vaccination for diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, and polio. Also required are a rubella vaccination and a tuberculin test. The school nurse will keep up-to-date records and contact parents if immunizations are not current. Please notify nurse, teachers, and homeroom parents of any allergies.

#### **(c) Medications**

ALL medications MUST be brought to the nurse's office in order to be dispensed properly and at the appropriate time. If your child must bring medication to school, the following requirements MUST be met:

1. Keep medicine in its original container (prescription bottle, etc.)
2. Clearly identify the medicine with your child's name and grade.
3. Clearly indicate the dosage instructions.
4. Don't send in prescription medicine that is outdated.
5. Don't send more than one week's medicine at a time.
6. Medicine will be given by the school nurse or the school secretary or principal.
7. Please notify the school in writing if your child's medication is changed or discontinued.

#### **(d) Nurse**

A school nurse is provided from Garnet Valley School District one day of each week. On the remaining four days, there will be a nurse available. A fee is charged annually to pay for the nurse the remaining days of the year. The nurse's office is located to the left of the main foyer of school. The Garnet Valley nurse is responsible

for the maintenance of health records, routine health checks, parental contact concerning health problems, care of minor injuries, vision and hearing screening, etc. The nurse's office phone number is 610-459-1418.

**Parents are asked not to send a child to school who is sick in the morning prior to leaving home.**

### **Home and School Association**

All parents who pay the annual Home and School dues are considered members of this organization and are able to vote for board members each spring. The Home and School Board is comprised of the pastor, principal and a board of elected parent members. The Home and School Association seeks to assist the school in whatever ways the administration deems necessary and beneficial. This organization also provides financial assistance to the school for its activities and needs. The setting of school policies, the hiring of personnel, and the distribution of financial resources are the responsibility of the pastor and principal and are not under the realm of the Home and School Association.

The Home and School sponsors events from time to time for parent or family involvement. All parents are strongly encouraged to attend these programs and participate in Home and School activities.

### **Homework**

Homework is an important extension of the learning that takes place in school. Homework provides practice and drill to reinforce classroom learning and can provide opportunities for independent study, research, and creative thinking. Parents can help their children by arranging a quiet, comfortable place for the students to work, by seeing that assignments are completed neatly, and by limiting telephone interruptions while study is in progress. Students should copy assignments into a homework assignment book to ensure that the correct homework is done. Students usually have two kinds of homework. Many times, "I'm finished!" means "I've finished my written homework." Study homework is by far the more important of the two and deserves at least equal time.

Archdiocesan policy recommends the following time allotments for homework per night:

Grades 1 and 2	30 minutes
Grades 3 and 4	60 minutes
Grades 5 and 6	90 minutes
Grades 7 and 8	120 minutes

In the event of absence or suspension, all homework and assignments are the responsibility of the student. Homework assignments are posted on teacher's websites.

**ALL students in grades 6-8: if a child misses 3 homework assignments, they will receive a demerit for that given subject.**

### **Honors Math**

St. Thomas School is proud to participate in the Archdiocesan Honors Math Program. This program allows students who qualify to follow an accelerated program of instruction that enables them to complete the first year of algebra before graduating from eighth grade. Students are identified at the end of fourth grade.

In September 2011, Saint Thomas the Apostle School began to follow the Common Core Standards that have been adopted by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. The math curriculum directly impacts the Honors Math program. Eligibility for the program is based on the following Archdiocesan criteria.

- CSI score of 125 or above (standardized testing)
- Consistent scores of 90 or above in Math Total on standardized testing



- Total Reading score of 85 or above on standardized testing
- Final Math Level Test score of 85 or above
- Final math grade on report card of 90 or above
- Evidence of above average performance on Math level and mastery tests
- Recommendation of classroom teacher
- A 90 average must be achieved at the end of each trimester

Only students who meet all of the above criteria will have their information submitted to the Diocesan Math Curriculum Committee for approval. During the summer, this committee will make its decisions regarding each student's admittance into the Honors Math Program.

Just prior to September, the school will receive a letter regarding the status of the individuals whose names were submitted for review. When school begins, a letter will be sent home to the students who have been accepted. All students are admitted on probation. Students who do not maintain the necessary average of 90 or above are removed from the Honors class. Students in upper grades who transfer from another Diocesan school may be admitted to the program if they were in the Honors class in their previous schools.

### Invitations/Cards/Gifts

While it is perfectly understood that when a child is celebrating a birthday, it is not always feasible to invite the entire class, special care must be taken that children's feelings are not hurt. IF YOU CANNOT INVITE EVERY CHILD IN THE CLASS, INVITATIONS MAY NOT BE DISTRIBUTED IN THE SCHOOL OR ON THE BUS. Invitations should be sent out in the mail so that the "uninvited" are not hurt.

For birthday celebrations, if you choose to send to school a treat, please be sure to have enough for every child in the class. Please be aware of food and nut allergies.

Likewise, Christmas cards and Valentine cards should NOT be distributed in school UNLESS your child has a card for every other child in the class. This DOES NOT mean that every child must bring in cards, but IF they do, one for every other child, please! The same applies to gifts.

### Kindergarten

Prior to the start of school in September, letters are sent to the kindergarten students and parents by their respective teachers. An orientation is held for parents on the morning of the day school opens to inform them of details specific to the kindergarten classes. Kindergarten classes begin on the Monday following the opening of school. The kindergarten children wear the same uniform as the rest of the school.

**Please make sure that your child's name is clearly printed on all of his/her belongings, including clothing.**

Kindergarten students will be issued a report card on the same schedule as the rest of the school. Frequent communication between the parents and teacher is encouraged.

The kindergarten classes hold a closing ceremony at the end of the year. Parents are notified of details well in advance.

### Lateness

After 8:20 a.m. a student is considered late and **MUST** enter through the **front doors**, reporting to the Dean of Students office. A demerit is assessed for each lateness and three (3) **unexcused** lateness will result in a **Detention**.

**Late students will be required to sign in. The Dean of Students will issue the student a red or green slip. A red slip denotes an unexcused lateness and a green slip denotes an excused lateness.**

## Library

In order to maintain a current selection of books and materials, a nominal fee is charged in September. This is supplemented by the collection of Labels for Education and Box Top Labels.

Each class has a weekly library period when students are taught library skills. Students in grades 1 to 3 enjoy story time on a weekly basis. In the event that a book is lost or destroyed, it is the responsibility of the child to pay for the book. Appropriate conduct is expected in the library at all times. Failure to cooperate with library rules will result in the restriction of a student's library privileges.

## Lost and Found

Lost and found items are taken to the school office. YOU COULD HELP US TREMENDOUSLY IF YOU WOULD MARK YOUR CHILD'S BELONGINGS WITH HIS OR HER NAME. Unclaimed items will be given away to a needy organization or discarded if deemed useless.

## Lunch

Students are required to bring a nutritious lunch from home except on specified special lunch days. FAST FOOD IS NOT PERMITTED. Parents are asked to review general manners and proper eating habits with their children. Please include a paper towel in your child's lunch that can be used as a placemat, as well as plastic eating utensils. Children are expected to remain in their seats and eat over the lunch table. When instructed to do so by the teacher on duty, children are expected to gather their trash, clean up their places, and WALK into line. Students will then be directed to the playground or their classrooms, depending on the weather. Respect and courtesy are to be shown to the parents who supervise and assist during this time! **If a child forgets a lunch, it is the parent's responsibility to bring one to school, by 11:30 AM.**

## Milk and Juice Orders

Children may order from a selection of milk and juice on a monthly basis. Children will receive the same flavor for the entire month. All orders are placed through the St. Thomas the Apostle website and money is due at the time orders are placed. LATE ORDERS CANNOT BE ACCEPTED ONCE THE ORDER HAS BEEN PLACED.

## National Junior Honor Society Selection Procedures

Students in 7th or 8th grade who have attended St. Thomas the Apostle School for a minimum of one full semester and who have achieved a Final Cumulative GPA of 93 or higher for the previous year will be considered eligible for membership and receive a Candidate Packet in early September. Packets must be returned by the assigned deadline. Students will be notified by mail of selection results. Student selected for membership are required to maintain the standards for which they were selected.

### **Scholarship Requirement:**

- A student must have a final cumulative GPA from the previous year of 93 or higher to be eligible.

### **Leadership Requirement:**

- A student must name leadership roles either at school or in the community achieved since the beginning of sixth grade. All roles must include the name of the adult who supervised the activity.
- Leadership exists outside an elected position and can include leadership roles in the classroom, as well as positions of responsibility in school, sports, or in the community. Faculty Evaluation Forms will be distributed to all school staff each year to assist with providing leadership examples in the classroom.

**Service Requirement:**

- A student must demonstrate completion of a minimum of ten (10) hours of service either at school or in the community since the beginning of sixth grade. These hours may NOT be included in those required for any other purpose (scouting, Confirmation, etc.). All service activities must include verification by an adult supervisor.

**Citizenship Requirement:**

- A student must demonstrate mature participation and responsibility through involvement in activities such as scouting, community organizations, or school clubs.

**Character Requirement:**

- A student with character should demonstrate the following qualities: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, care, and citizenship.
- A student must be able to demonstrate an outstanding record of conduct and behavior with regard to school and community rules, guidelines, or policies, or be able to demonstrate sufficient growth and improvement.

**Parent Volunteers**

Saint Thomas the Apostle School considers its parent volunteers a very valuable resource. Parents are encouraged to help with our programs and activities. If you would like to volunteer, please contact your child's teacher or call the school office at 610-459-8134. **All parent volunteers must have the required clearances to volunteer for any activity or event/trip.** Every child is expected to show courtesy and respect to all volunteers.

**Physical Education**

We believe that physical education is an important part of the educational experience. The development and maintenance of a healthy body is essential for physical well-being and good mental health. A physical education teacher will conduct these classes for the students according to the time allotments issued by the Diocese. Students in grades K to 8 are required to wear a mandatory gym uniform.

**Pictures**

Individual school pictures will be taken each year by a school photographer and students are required to wear full school uniform for the first school picture in the fall. Spring school photos do not require a school uniform; however, dress must be clean, neat, and modest. Order envelopes are sent home prior to picture day and should be returned with appropriate payment on the designated day.

**Plagiarism**

Plagiarism, defined: to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own; to use (another's production) without crediting the source, to commit literary theft, to present as new, and original an idea or product derived from an existing source. A student must give credit to the originality of others and acknowledge an indebtedness whenever:

1. Directly quoting another person's actual words, whether oral or written;
2. Using another person's ideas, opinions, or theories;
3. Paraphrasing the words, ideas, opinions, or theories of others, whether oral or written;
4. Borrowing facts, statistics, or illustrative material; or
5. Offering materials assembled or collected in the form of projects or papers for previous courses without acknowledgment.

Students must present their own work when completing assignments and all works used from another source must be cited and acknowledged. **Plagiarism is not acceptable and the consequence for plagiarism will be an automatic detention.**

**Resubmission of the assignment is at the discretion of the teacher and may result in an incomplete or a zero for the assignment.**

### **Pre-School**

St. Thomas offers a quality preschool program for three and four-year-olds. Highly qualified and skilled teachers, along with class aides provide opportunities for the learning of basic academic concepts, motor skills, socialization and play in a supportive and encouraging atmosphere. The program offers a two day PreK-3 Class (full or half day) and a three day PreK-4 full or half-day Class and five full day PreK-4 Class.

### **Promotion and Retention**

The welfare of the individual student is the most important consideration in the promotion/retention decision. Parents, teachers, and administrators are all expected to keep this in mind when participating in decision making.

Evaluation for promotion/retention should involve many aspects of student activity: academic, physical, social and emotional growth should all be considered. The tools for evaluation should include teacher made tests, standardized tests, educational evaluations, teacher observations, and parent-teacher conferences.

While every effort is made throughout the school year to ensure each student's success, retention should be considered when a student is performing below grade level due to ability, emotional immaturity, or excessive absenteeism. Students who fail a grade because they are not working to ability or are indifferent toward school must attend a summer school program in order to achieve passing grades. Proof of completion of such a program is required before the student is readmitted in September.

The decision to retain a child is a difficult one, and parents should realize that much careful consideration goes into the process. It is vital that the school has the support and cooperation of the parents in this matter. In the event that the parents refuse to allow their child to be retained, the school reserves the right not to accept the child for placement at St. Thomas.

### **Recess Policies**

Weather permitting, students are given two recesses per day in grades 1 to 4 and one recess per day in grades 5 to 8. Decisions to have outside recess during cold weather will depend on the temperature and the wind chill factor. Shorter outdoor recess times are scheduled on very cold days. **Students must be dressed appropriately for cold weather recess (winter coat, hat, gloves, etc.)**

**We cannot keep individual children inside, so we ask that your children have the proper clothing.**

Students will have supervised free time in the classroom on days when bad weather prevents outside recess. Students are NOT permitted to remain in the classrooms during recess time when everyone else is outside for recess unless supervised by the teacher.

A variety of snack items are sold each day at morning recess and soft pretzels may be ordered monthly on the school website. If you prefer, you may pack a snack in your child's lunch for this morning recess. **Gum is NEVER permitted; drinks are not permitted at morning recess.**

**No food or drink is permitted in the schoolyard during lunch recess for grades 5 - 8.**

## **Report Cards**

Report cards will be published\* three times a year for students in grades K to 8. Grades on report cards are calculated from a combination of tests, projects, reports, class assignments, class participation, cooperation, homework, etc. It is important for parents to realize and accept their child's level of ability and achievement. Not all children are able to achieve high marks, and expecting a child to do so may cause frustration and feelings of low self-esteem. Comparing a child's grades or performance to siblings or to other children in the class can be extremely detrimental. It is vital that parents encourage their child to always do his or her best and to achieve to his or her personal potential.

\*Grades are posted on Option C and hard copies will not be sent home.

Please be especially attentive to the marks on the left side of the report card indicating character formation. These marks often offer an explanation for academic deficiencies.

In order to offer recognition to students who excel, St. Thomas announces its honor roll each trimester. Since students in the primary grades (1-3) are taught basic skills repeatedly until they are mastered by everyone, the Honor Roll is used only in grades 4 through 8 where more individual effort is required to excel. Primary grade teachers establish their own system of recognition for students whose effort, cooperation, and preparation exceed normal expectations.

Requirements for the school honor roll are as follows:

For the Distinguished Honor Roll, all major academic grades must be a 95 or above with the exception of Honors Math. Honors Math students must attain a math grade of 93 or above.

All character and minor subject grades must be a 3 or above.

For Honors, all major academic grades must be an 88 or above.

All character and minor subject grades must be a 3 or above.

## **Safety**

### **Fire, Shelter in Place and Lockdown Drills**

Fire drills are conducted monthly. Students are instructed to leave the building according to directions quickly and in silence when the alarm rings. Also, Shelter in Place and Lockdown Drills are conducted throughout the year.

### **Regulations**

1. Running is not permitted at any time within the school building.
2. Entry into the classrooms is not permitted without teacher supervision.
3. No student may leave the school premises at any time without permission. Every student must stay in the established boundaries when indoors and outdoors.
4. All visitors must report to the school office. A security system has been installed to further monitor the admittance of individuals. All visitors are required to sign in.
5. All outside doors are expected to be closed and locked at all times.

### **School Supplies**

Specific stationery requirements for each grade are given by the teacher of that grade. A stationery list is given to every student in June in preparation for September. Some items must be purchased at school and others may be purchased independently.

### **Socials**

From time to time, planned social activities are held for the enjoyment of our students. Socials are conducted according to grade levels. Specific information concerning these events is sent home in the online communication.

All events at St. Thomas the Apostle must be chaperoned by an adequate number of parent volunteers. Students must be supervised at all times and may not leave the event to go outside, backstage or linger in the lavatories.

Students must be well behaved at all times and obey the parent chaperones. Violations of this rule will result in individuals or groups of students losing the privilege of attending future social events.

If the school has an emergency closing on the day of a social being held at school, the social is automatically cancelled.

### **Special Lunches**

Students may purchase special lunches 3 days a week. A group of volunteer parents help facilitate the distribution of these lunches. Students have the option of purchasing these special lunches through the school website. Lunch orders are ordered and paid online with an exact due date each month.

### **Standardized Tests**

Standardized tests offer an independent assessment of a child's ability and learning potential. They are meant to offer insight into a child's particular academic strengths and needs and allow the teachers to better plan for the children's educational needs. They are only one tool in the overall evaluation process and should not be viewed with fear by a child or with undue pressure for success.

Standardized tests scores are not reflected on a child's report grades in any way but do become a part of a child's general records. The standardized testing program utilized by all elementary schools within the Archdiocese is the Terra Nova Test. This test is administered to students in grades third through seventh in the spring of each year. These results are sent home to the parents as soon as they are received by the school.

### **Student Council**

Students of St. Thomas are able to develop skills in leadership and parliamentary procedures by participating in Student Council. Many activities involving school spirit and service are conducted by the Student Council. Elections are held each year. Candidates must exhibit the qualities most desirable of students in a Catholic school and obtain the recommendation of their teachers and principal. Members of Student Council are expected to act as role models and support the policies and regulations of the school at all times.

### **Student Emails**

It is important that our students practice and utilize 21<sup>st</sup>-Century skills in order for them to learn safety and acceptable methods of communication to be used in today's workforce. We wish our students to be familiar with the skills, not only for the classroom, but also needed for employment, online application processes, etc. It is necessary for us, as parents and educators, to instruct our children in the safe methods to apply these skills.

Students in grades 4-8 are issued a St. Thomas the Apostle Student email address. This STA email address will only communicate with other STA domain emails. Students are not able to send/receive emails from other sources (Yahoo, AOL, etc.) and any attempt to send or receive emails from or sent to their email address is automatically blocked by various security software located on our server. A notification is also sent to the principal's office by email.

Student emails are to be used to assist both student and teacher for communication, submitting of assignments, homework and projects. It is not for "chatting" or sending photos, except those pertaining to class assignments. Please be aware that our security software monitors all STA emails and will flag and notify the principal by email of inappropriate material as well as any attempts to send or messages sent to the STA emails by outside sources other than the STA domain.

### **Support Services**

Support services are provided to the students in our school in remedial reading, speech and language, counseling, academic evaluation, and psychological assessment by the Delaware County Intermediate Unit.

### **Technology**

Parents and students must sign and adhere to the Schools Acceptable Use Policy before a student will be permitted access to the Internet from a school computer or electronic device. (See Acceptable Use Policy)

### **Telephone**

The office telephone should not be used by parents or students except in an emergency, and then only with permission.

### **Transfers**

If a student is transferring to another school, the parents are asked to contact the principal directly to provide this information. Student records are sent to the new school upon receipt of a request for them. Records are never released directly to the parents or guardians. Student records will only be released if all tuition and fees are paid to date.

### **Transportation**

Students may be transported to and from school by car or by buses provided by the public school district in which they reside. Any questions or concerns regarding bus transportation should be directed to the local school district's transportation department.

In the beginning of the school year, students should be made aware of how they will leave school. ANY changes in this method should be communicated to teacher or school office. Before leaving home in the morning, parents should clearly communicate to their children the manner by which they are to go home at dismissal.

Students arriving by car must be in school before 8:20 a.m. or be marked late. Some consideration is given for inclement weather.

Children who ride the bus are expected to abide by both the School and Bus Codes of Conduct.

### **Tuition**

All families attending St. Thomas are required to pay an annual tuition. Payments may be made in full or on a monthly basis from August to May which is done by electronic transfers. A tuition guide is located on school website.

In the event of unexpected financial difficulty, parents should contact Marge Coleman at [mcoleman@staglenmills.org](mailto:mcoleman@staglenmills.org).

### **Visitors**

ALL visitors to the school MUST sign in when entering the lobby of school. After you sign in and get your pass, you will be buzzed in and directed to your destination. **NO ONE IS PERMITTED TO GO DIRECTLY TO A CLASSROOM without first signing in.** If you drop off forgotten lunches, etc., they are to be brought to the School Office, NOT to the classroom. If you wish to speak with your child's teacher, please schedule an appointment by emailing the teacher.

If you are here to assist at lunchtime, in the library, science lab, or with an activity, you are expected to sign in when entering the lobby of school and then will be buzzed in to go to your designated area. This ensures the safety, security and respect for the schedule and all members of the school.