

St. Thomas Catholic Elementary School
2017-2018 Parent Student Handbook
Catholic Diocese of Peoria

Mission Statement: Through the highest educational standards that seek to address the intellectual, spiritual, and physical needs of every child, the mission of St. Thomas Catholic School is to guide our students to LIVE as examples of Christ, to LOVE as Christ loves us, and to SERVE as Christ calls us to serve now and throughout their lives.

Pastor: Fr. Keith Walder

Principal: Mrs. Lisa Doughan

Academic Recognition: St. Thomas School is officially recognized by the National Catholic Education Association and the Illinois State Board of Education according to Policy and Guidelines for Registration and Recognition of Nonpublic Elementary and Secondary Schools.

St. Thomas School is accredited by the North Central Association.

Address: 311 East Madison Street
Philo, IL 61864
Phone: (217) 684-2309
Fax: (217) 684-2217
www.stthomasphilo.org

School Hours: Start: 8:15 a.m.
Lunch/Recess: 11:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.
Dismissal: 2:45 p.m.

School Colors: Green and White

School Mascot: St. Thomas Tiger

School Motto: Live, Love, and Serve as Christ

Circumstances may arise in which St. Thomas School determines that changes are required in these guidelines and procedures. For this reason, St. Thomas School reserves the right, at any time, to modify, terminate, rescind or supplement any or all of the guidelines or procedures contained herein, and to take actions which may be contrary to guidelines, benefits, or procedures set forth in this Handbook.

Philosophy of St. Thomas School

We, the principal and faculty of St. Thomas School, believe this Catholic Christian school is an expression of the faith of the parish communities and that Christ is the center and purpose of our school life.

We believe St. Thomas is unique because we witness Christ's presence with us. We meet Him in the Good News, share Him with others in community, and praise Him in worship.

We believe our role as educators is to create an environment conducive to the development of each child's giftedness-spiritually, intellectually, morally, emotionally, socially, and physically.

We believe the strong, quality academic program we offer at St. Thomas must be enriched with Catholic Christian attitudes and values which enable the students to be of service to the community.

We believe the school life we share will prepare our students for the future and enable them to bring the message of hope to a world crying out for peace and justice.

We believe the parents are primary educators of their children, and that our role is one of support and professional service to the family.

We believe these ideals can only be fulfilled through the cooperation of the entire parish community – pastors, administrator, Education Commission, faculty, parents, students, and parishioners with the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Catholic School Statement of Purpose

“From the first moment that a student sets foot in a Catholic School, he or she ought to have the impression of entering a new environment, one illumined by the light of faith and having its own unique characteristics, an environment permeated with the Gospel spirit of love and freedom....”

The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School, #25

Catholic schools in the Diocese of Peoria are established to assist the Bishop and Pastors in the transmission of the Faith to the young people of the Diocese. We welcome non-Catholic students into our schools who wish to take advantage of the opportunities provided by Catholic education. Every school must have as its main goal to help each student develop a personal and ecclesial relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ, who is “the Way, the Truth, and the Life” (John 14:6). The principles, practices, and beliefs of the Catholic Faith must be fully integrated throughout the school's curricula, service projects, co-curricular activities, and culture.

Students in our Catholic schools are reminded of their dignity as children of God through the study of Catholic doctrine, frequent opportunities for personal and communal prayer, and active participation in the sacramental life of the Church. Together with the parents, the primary educators of their children, our Catholic schools pursue academic and spiritual excellence by helping students develop their intellectual abilities, foster wholesome friendships, practice discipleship, strengthen their daily prayer life, grow in virtue, and become leaders through serving others.

All personnel that work in our Catholic schools must have at heart the promotion of the educational mission of the Church, and live as visible role models of faith within the parish/school community. Catholic doctrinal, moral, and social teaching is an integral part of each school. Therefore, all faculty, staff, administrative, and volunteer personnel must support the teachings of the Church, actively practice their faith in daily life, and be loyal to the Church's Magisterium. Our Catholic school personnel share this educational mission and its various commitments and responsibilities with parents and the local Church communities.

“It is crucial that the policies and procedures of Catholic Schools reflect that primary purpose and that the Catholicity of the school and its faithfulness to the teaching authority of the Catholic Church (Magisterium) are not compromised.” *Sister Mary Angela Shaughnessy, SCN, J.D., Ph.D.*

St. Thomas Catholic School Personnel

School Staff

Mrs. Lisa Doughan	Principal
Mrs. Jana Boyer	Secretary/Bookkeeper
Ms. Kathy Thorson	Parish/School Office Manager
Ms. Mesha Ruskin	Preschool Teacher
Ms. Kelly Dively	Preschool Teacher
Mrs. Bridgett Bollman	Preschool Aide/Computer/Library
Mrs. Shannon Reno	Preschool Aide
Mrs. Tina Hughes	Preschool Aide
Mrs. Jhonalyn Toler	Preschool Aide
Mrs. Mindy Calcagno	Grades K/1
Mrs. Tiffany Dodd	Grades K/1
Mrs. Wendy Carmien	Grades 2/3
Mrs. Rita Jackson	Grades 2/3
Mrs. Diane Deters	Grades 4/5
Mrs. Patty Tierney	Grades 4/5
Mrs. Debbie Reinhart	Junior High
Mr. Eric Miller	Junior High
Ms. Tatum Hawkins	Junior High
Mr. Todd Rentschler	Physical Education/Health
Mrs. Pam Krisman	Spanish
Mrs. Regina Lawhead	Resource/Special Education
Mr. Chad Billman	Music/Band/Choir
Mrs. Lois Happ	Athletic Director
Ms. Charlotte Jackson	School Custodian
Ms. Nicole Nussel	Aftercare Aide
Mrs. Christine Happ	Aftercare Aide
Mrs. Valerie Marcotte	Aftercare Aide

Pastors

Fr. Keith Walder	St. Thomas, Philo
Fr. Freddie Gomez Torres	St. Patrick, Tolono

Education Commission Members

Mrs. Mary Hettinger, Chairperson	Mr. Chris Kreps
Mrs. Donica Miller	Mr. Georges LeFavre
Mr. Chris Lueth	Ms. Kathy Painter
Mr. Todd Cler	Mrs. Samantha Herriott
Mrs. Stephanie Hensch	Ms. Kara Hettinger

Ex Officio Education Commission Members

Fr. Keith Walder, Pastor	Mrs. Lisa Doughan, Principal
Mrs. Jana Boyer, Appointed Treasurer	Ms. Kathy Thorson, Appointed Secretary
Dcn. Don Koeberlein, DRE	Mrs. Lois Happ, Athletic Director
Mr. Jim Deters, Trustee	Mrs. Jean Cain, Trustee

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I. Religion

Eucharistic Liturgies

Students are required to attend the student-led Masses which are scheduled throughout the academic year, usually on Fridays at 8:30am. The students plan and participate in these liturgies. All students are required to follow the Mass Attire section in the Dress Code Policy of this handbook. After Mass on First Fridays of each month, junior high students sponsor coffee and donuts in the gym. All parishioners and guests are invited to enjoy this event.

Sacraments/Sacramental Preparation

It is the parents'/guardians' responsibility to ensure that their children participate in the Sacraments of the Eucharist and Reconciliation on a regular basis. Children are expected to attend weekly Mass on Sunday and to participate in the school Mass on each Friday that school is in session. Parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to bring their children for Reconciliation at the regularly scheduled times as published in the church bulletin. Students in grades two through eight will also have the opportunity to participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation at school during Advent and Lent.

With the cooperation of their parents/guardians, the second graders prepare to receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Eucharist. The first reception of these Sacraments will be in their own parish or, with the permission of their Pastor, at St. Thomas. Eighth grade students are prepared for the Sacrament of Confirmation each year.

II. Academic Policies

Attendance

Regular attendance is required of all students. Students should be in the gym for all-school morning prayer, Monday through Friday, by 8:15 a.m., when the bell rings. Students arriving after the 8:15 a.m. bell are tardy and are to report to the office before going to the gym or classroom. Frequent tardies will be addressed at a parent/guardian conference with the principal on a quarterly basis.

Parents/guardians should monitor the time of their children's arrival at school. If transportation arrangements make it necessary for your child to arrive earlier than 8:00 a.m., he/she should report immediately to the gym. Playing outside before school is not permitted without adult supervision.

If a child has any type of communicable illness or fever/vomiting, the school must be notified. The child is **not to return without a doctor's note or 24 hours after a fever has broken or vomiting has occurred**. If seen by a doctor a *written excuse for a child's absence* is always required upon the student's return to school. If your child will not be in school, call the school office to report the child's absence *before 8:30 a.m.* on the day of the absence. A call from the office will be made to the parents/guardians by 9:00 a.m. if a student has been marked absent and

a parent/guardian has not called to report his/her absence. Phone calls will also be made to a parent/guardian if school notification is made by e-mail or text.

Absences exceeding 10% of a quarter and/or academic year will be addressed at a parent/guardian conference with the principal on a quarterly basis. Absences exceeding the 10% per quarter limit and not resolved after the first conference, could lead to permanent dismissal from St. Thomas School.

Attendance will be recorded as follows:

- Full Day of Attendance - For at least 5 hours 45 minutes of Instructional Time
- 1/2 Day of Attendance - Between 3 hours and 5 hours 44 minutes of Instructional Time
- Full Day Absent - Under 3 hours of Instructional Time

“Absences from school shall be noted on the student’s permanent record even though the absence has been excused. Parents shall be notified in the event a student is sent home during the day or if classes are dismissed at other than the regularly scheduled time.”

Office of Catholic Schools

Administrative Regulation

Issued: 7/91

Reviewed: 1/03; 9/07

No child may leave the school grounds without first obtaining permission from the principal, teacher, or staff. **A parent/guardian is required to sign the student in and/or out in a notebook located in the office.** The school must be notified by a parent/guardian if a child will not be returning that school day.

Vacations during the school year are strongly discouraged. In the event that a vacation is scheduled during the academic period, it is the student’s responsibility to ensure that all school work required during that period of time is completed by the date stated by the classroom teacher. Failure to do so will result in a recorded “0”. Arrangements with the classroom teacher should be made well in advance of the trip. However, teachers will not be required to have individual assignments prepared prior to the absence.

Registration/Book Fee

This fee is intended to include costs related to student registration, textbooks, workbooks, testing materials, art materials, etc. for the school year. The Registration/Book Fee should be paid before June 1, prior to the start of the new school year. This fee is non-refundable.

Each student is responsible for the books/materials assigned to them. Any serious damage or loss must be reported to a teacher immediately. The teacher will report it to the office and an invoice will be issued, payable immediately. No final report cards will be issued with any outstanding debts, fees, or balances due to the school. Books are to be kept covered at all times.

Contact or any kind of sticky paper shall not be used to cover books. Students may not mark, draw, or write anything inside the book.

Homework

Children should have a designated place and time each evening for homework. This time should be used only for studying or reading. This will encourage studying and reading as opposed to simply completing written work. Time should also be set aside for individual and family prayer.

While it is true that some children are able to get most of their written work done in school; longer assignments and studying for tests should be done at home. Parents/guardians are encouraged to review their child's homework, assignment notebooks, folders, and TeacherEase records regularly. A reasonable suggestion of time for homework would be 10 minutes for each grade level. By way of a general example, a fourth grade student should plan on 40 minutes of homework. Allow for evenings requiring more or less homework time.

Assignments should be recorded in student assignment notebooks, but are also available on TeacherEase and/or the school website.

High Honors/Honors

High Honors/Honors are presented quarterly to students in grades five through eight. High Honors requires a minimum grade point average of 3.67, and without a D or F in the core curriculum subjects of Religion, Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, Science, Health/PE, and Music. Honors require a minimum GPA of 3.00, and without a grade of D or F in the core curriculum subjects.

Students achieving Honors or High Honors demonstrate excellence in all things, including academics, behavior, and faith.

Report Cards

Parents have access to their child(ren)'s grades via the online grade book program. Report Cards are issued approximately every nine weeks. All-School Parent/Teacher Conferences are scheduled and required during the fall, with optional Parent/Teacher Conferences scheduled during the second half of the year. **A conference may be arranged with any teacher at any time.**

<i>Grades Three through Eight—Academic Marks</i>			<i>Points</i>
A+	(101 +)	Excellent	4.33
A	(100-96)	Excellent	4.00
A-	(95-94)	Excellent	3.67
B+	(93-91)	Very Good	3.33
B	(90-88)	Very Good	3.00
B-	(87-86)	Very Good	2.67
C+	(85-83)	Satisfactory	2.33
C	(82-79)	Satisfactory	2.00
C-	(78-76)	Satisfactory	1.67
D+	(75-74)	Below Average	1.33

D	(73-71)	Below Average	1.00
D-	(70-68)	Below Average	.67
E	Effort Shown, but Below Grade Level		
F	(Below 68)	Failing	0.00
I		Incomplete	

Multi-Age

Students at St. Thomas may have the opportunity to work above their grade level in an older classroom. The requirements for this are well-above-average scores using AIMSweb data. In addition, the classroom teacher along with the principal must write a letter of approval for movement. Students will only be moved quarterly depending on data.

Retention

If it has been determined by academic conferences between the parents, teacher, and principal that a student is being considered for retention, the parents/guardians will be officially informed by April 15 of the current school year.

Special Needs

The teacher will contact a student's parents/guardians if there are concerns regarding student progress. If, after the conference, it is determined that further academic assessment is needed, the teacher will work in conjunction with the St. Thomas Resource Teacher and the Tolono Unit 7 School District. Parents/Guardians will be notified of the student action plan. Conferences will take place following assessment and additional plans, if needed, will be made. As well, parents/guardians may contact the classroom teacher at any time if they have a concern regarding their child's progress.

III. Code of Conduct

Academic Achievement

Students are expected to complete assignments, cooperate in the school environment, and work to the best of their abilities. Failure to accomplish these stated items will be reflected in student evaluations.

Conflict Resolution

Misunderstandings and confusion can give rise to conflict between the student, parents/guardians, and faculty. The most effective way to avoid such conflict is to contact the individual teacher or staff member directly and as soon as possible. Maintaining an open perspective during the course of this dialog will serve to facilitate resolution of the issue. For the items that cannot be resolved at this initial level, the principal may be included in the discussion, but only after the parents/guardians and the teacher have made their best efforts towards resolution. At the discretion of the principal, the Pastor may also be included. Efforts to avoid the initial steps are strongly discouraged.

Appeal and Review

A review or appeal of any decision concerning policies, procedures, or other serious matters made by the competent authority of any of the schools of the Catholic Diocese of Peoria may be requested by any member of the diocese under the following conditions only:

- The decision violates or is in conflict with the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church;
- The decision violates or is in conflict with an applicable diocesan policy;
- The decision violates or is in conflict with a policy or procedure of the parish, the school, or other entity that takes precedence over the decision in question; or
- The decision violates or is in conflict with an applicable, federal, state, or local civil law.

It is to be noted that dissatisfaction with a decision is not a sufficient condition for appeal. The individual or group desiring the appeal of the review must make that request known to the governing Pastor or Board of Pastors responsible for that school in the form of a letter. As a matter of record, a copy of that letter is to be forwarded to the Office of Superintendent of Schools for the Catholic Diocese of Peoria and to the local vicar.

This letter must clearly cover each of the following points:

- The decision that is being questioned, and which competent authority made it;
- The grounds for the appeal or the review with specific reference to one or more of the four conditions listed above; and
- The proposed resolution.

The governing Pastor or Board of Pastors, having received the request for appeal or review, is to respond in writing to those making the request within 30 days of receiving the request. A copy of the response letter is to be forwarded to the Office of the Superintendent of Schools of the Catholic Diocese of Peoria and the local vicar.

In most cases, the decision of the governing Pastor or Board of Pastors is final. However, those who have requested the appeal or review may further appeal to the local vicar, who has the authority to summarily dismiss the case or who may forward the appeal for review to the Office of Catholic Schools and the Vicar General of the Diocese of Peoria.

Bullying

All elementary and secondary schools of the diocese shall actively seek to provide a supportive, caring environment that is safe from all forms of intimidation including bullying. Bullying is repeated behavior involving a deliberate, conscious intent to hurt, threaten, frighten, or humiliate someone. It may include physical and/or verbal intimidation or assault; extortion or taking belongings; oral or written threats; outrageous teasing, mocking, taunting, putdowns, or name-calling; threatening looks, gestures, or actions; cruel rumors; suggestive comments; false accusations, and/or social isolation. Bullying behavior shall not be tolerated in any form at school or school-sponsored programs and activities. Any behavior defined as bullying will be addressed in the following manner:

- Conference with principal and student; with parent/guardian notification of initial conference;

- Conference with principal, student, and parent/guardian;
- If not resolved, conference with Pastor, principal, student, and parent/guardian and could lead to permanent dismissal.

Harassment Policy

The Harassment Policy for the Diocese of Peoria is incorporated by reference into this policy. It is set forth in Appendix A for further reference. Harassment, including sexual harassment, of any student by another student is unethical, illegal, and prohibited. It is the responsibility of the complainant or any witnesses to report incidents of harassment. Students are subject to disciplinary procedures up to and including expulsion.

The term “harassment” includes but is not limited to “slurs, jokes, or any other form of verbal, written, graphic, or physical conduct or advance which reflect (seriously and) adversely on a person’s race, color, sex, religion, national origin, citizenship, or physical or mental condition.” Harassment under this policy includes sexual harassment which means any unwelcome sexual advances or any conduct of a sexual nature when such conduct has the effect of substantially interfering with a student’s performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive school environment even if the actions take place off school property or outside of school hours. The term shall also include any other conduct or actions as defined as harassment under the Illinois Human Rights Act as it is amended from time to time. Further, cases of retaliation against a complainant or witness who initiates a case under this policy are included within the term “harassment” as used herein and shall be handled under this policy.

While intervention strategies are suggested even in the case of what the Supreme Court has called “simple acts of teasing and name-calling among school children,” such acts do not constitute harassment under this policy.

This policy outlines the reporting of harassment by the person harassed or by the parent/legal guardian of the person harassed (the complainant) or any witness to harassment. It includes harassment by a student of the school against another student of the school.

If complainant believes that s/he has been harassed, s/he may first wish to deal with the harassment on an informal basis with the harasser. A witness to harassment may wish to do the same. However, whether a complainant follows that path or not, if harassment continues or if a single instance of harassment is of such magnitude that the complainant or witness feels that such an informal resolution is not feasible for any reason, the harassment should be reported immediately by the complainant or witness to the classroom teacher, activity supervisor, or directly to the principal of the school. A notice of harassment should be given within a reasonable time of the alleged harassment in order to promote a fair, prompt, and appropriate response. For the purposes of this policy, reasonable time shall mean five school days.

When a report is given to a classroom teacher or activity supervisor from a complainant or a witness, this report should be given to the principal who shall have the responsibility to follow up. The principal shall make a written account of what has been reported, the parties involved, the facts alleged, and the date of the report. The Pastor should receive a copy of this report. If it is determined that harassment, as defined in this policy, has occurred then the principal shall take

appropriate action to ensure that the harassment ceases immediately and that appropriate and meaningful counseling takes place. Each school shall determine the appropriate discipline to be assigned to the harasser. This discipline can range from warning to expulsion.

At this time, there is nothing that suggests that schools must notify any other agency if there is an incident of harassment as defined herein. If this position changes as a result of rulings by the courts, state regulatory agencies, or the Diocese of Peoria, the policy will be modified accordingly. If a parent/guardian, for any reason, contacts an agency, such as the police, with a complaint of student-to-student harassment, the school will not be involved except as the law requires or unless the harassment complaint reverts to the school by the outside agency.

Gum Chewing

Gum chewing is not permitted at any time on the premises during school or at any school event.

Language

Inappropriate or disrespectful language will not be tolerated. Parents will be notified if there is more than one occurrence.

Property Damage Policy

Students who damage, break, or destroy school property carelessly are required to pay for, repair, or provide for replacement in full. Behavior resulting in property damage will not be tolerated in any form at school or school-sponsored programs and activities.

Substance Abuse Policy

Student consumption, possession, or distribution of alcoholic beverages, illicit drugs, or look-alikes, and/or tobacco are not permitted in school buildings, on school grounds, or at any school events, at any time. This drug policy extends to all school-sponsored and school-related activities including, but not limited to, field trips and athletic events. Behavior involving consumption or use of these items shall not be tolerated in any form at school or school-sponsored programs and activities.

Weapons Policy

Possession of knives, firearms, explosives, or other types of materials, which may have a strong potential for bodily harm are not permitted in school buildings, on school grounds, or at any school events, at any time. The Diocese of Peoria policy on Possession or Use of Weapons or Look Alike Weapons in School, set forth in Appendix B, is also incorporated herein. Behavior involving weapons shall not be tolerated in any form at school or at school-sponsored programs and activities.

Discipline

Teachers and/or supervisors are responsible for maintaining, in their areas of responsibility, an atmosphere conducive to learning as well as to the safety of each individual. The disciplinary regulations at St. Thomas are intended to:

- Maintain order wherein an atmosphere for learning can prevail;
- Teach respect for the rights of others;

- Develop good character traits;
- Provide opportunities for the development of leadership; and
- Form intelligent and virtuous Catholic citizens.

Each teacher and/or supervisor handles discipline problems. Parents/guardians will be given a written notification of the teacher's expectations of behavior in the classroom at the beginning of the school year. Parents/guardians should be aware that their support and cooperation are needed when their child is having behavior or academic problems at school. The principal will be kept informed.

Any student who engages in conduct, whether inside or outside of school, that is detrimental to the reputation of the school and/or inconsistent with the mission, philosophy, or teachings of the Catholic Church may be subject to disciplinary action including suspension or expulsion. Several examples of prohibited student conduct are set forth in the Code of Conduct section of this handbook.

Certain conduct, while not listed in the Code of Conduct, may still be determined to be inconsistent with the standards of conduct required by St. Thomas. Also, lesser forms of unacceptable conduct, after repeated occurrences, rise to the level of conduct that is also subject to the following levels of anticipated disciplinary consequences. It is assumed that the offending conduct will be remedied by the first application of a disciplinary response. However, if the conduct continues, or a more serious conduct occurs, St. Thomas will proceed to more serious forms of discipline.

Detentions: Detentions are disciplinary measures used to give consequences to unacceptable conduct and negligence in class work, classroom management, and/or violations of the Code of Conduct or Dress Code. Detentions will be served at lunch recess or after school for 30 to 60 minutes. Parents/guardians will be notified the day the detention is issued and parents/guardians must arrange for transportation home.

Office Referral: If a student's behavior demands an immediate removal from the classroom, the teacher will send the student to the principal, with an Office Referral, stating the circumstances requiring removal. The principal will discuss the incident with the student and determine what, if any, additional consequences will result. The parent/guardian will receive a phone call notifying them of the Office Referral.

Suspension: Suspension is the temporary termination of a student's enrollment for a serious offense or continued insubordination. The principal has the authority to suspend students upon notification of his/her parents/guardians for a period not to exceed three school days. Suspensions can be *in-school*, whereby a student will be removed from all classes and activities during the school day and may not participate in any after-school activities, including athletic events. The student will be responsible for completing and turning in all assignments assigned during the length of the suspension.

Prior to suspension, the teacher and principal will have pursued other alternatives of discipline, and will have notified the parents/guardians of the student's prior offenses. If

a suspension is issued, the principal shall immediately notify the parents/guardians of the reason(s), and the time period in which it will be enforced. In the case of suspensions longer than three days, a student and his/her parents/guardians are entitled:

- a. to receive a formal hearing by the Education Commission in executive session, with written documentation to be presented at that time; and
- b. to have the charges and/or penalties removed from the record if the Pastor, after taking into consideration the advice from the executive session Education Commission, determines his/her innocence or non-involvement.

Expulsion: Expulsion is the permanent termination of a student's enrollment for a serious offense or continued insubordination, such as:

- Morally delinquent students whose conduct may be detrimental to the safety of other students or pupils, and who will not conform to the school program;
- Violation(s) of the substance abuse and/or weapons policy;
- Physical or threatened violence to self or others or willful destruction of school or parish property; or
- Other serious conduct.

Prior to expulsion, the student and his/her parents/guardians will be granted a conference with the Pastor, principal, and parties involved. If expulsion is still contemplated, the Education Commission chairman will be notified and will call the Education Commission members to meet in executive session to discuss the seriousness of the matter and advise the Pastor the course of action to be pursued. The parents/guardians shall be requested in writing by the Education Commission chairman to be present at this executive session stating the time, place, and purpose of the meeting.

In judging the justification for expulsion, consideration must be given to the extent of the school's previous efforts to remedy the problem, to the legality of the reason for dismissal, and to the maintenance of the school's philosophy and goals. In order to protect the reputation of the person involved, all matters discussed during executive session must be held in strict confidence. If expulsion is determined, the parents/guardians shall be notified of the expulsion by registered letter. The final ruling will be determined by the Pastor.

Corporal Punishment: Corporal punishment shall not be used as a form of discipline.

IV. Dress Code

The Catholic code of modest dress, and the understanding of our human dignity, should guide the choice of clothes and the way they are worn. The dress code is designed to ensure uniformity of acceptable dress and show respect for others and self. These guidelines will assist parents/guardians and children in the choice of appropriate clothing for school days.

Students should come to school in uniforms that are clean, fit appropriately, and follow the dress code guidelines. Student dress must always be conducive to a safe, healthy, non-disruptive learning environment. Parents are encouraged to be aware of these guidelines and see that their children dress accordingly. Teachers will notify the principal of those students who are out of dress code; if deemed necessary, the principal will notify parents. Additional non-listed issues are left up to the discretion of the principal. The final decision regarding the dress code rests with the principal.

A lost and found clothing area is maintained. Students and parents should check it often for missing items.

Dress Down Days may occur occasionally throughout the school year. Dates and guidelines for what to wear will be announced via Tiger Tales, classroom newsletters, and morning school announcements.

Shirts

- Students should wear a solid colored, collared polo shirt, long or short sleeved, with or without the St. Thomas School logo (no other company logos may be worn). No ruffles or other embellishments allowed.
 - Acceptable polo colors are:
 - Evergreen, Maize, and Ice Pink – these colors must be purchased through Lands’ End only; please use preferred school code of 900137209.
 - Navy blue, light blue, and white – these colors may be purchased through any retailer offering school uniforms.
 - Polo shirts should be tucked in at all times.
- An Evergreen polo from Lands’ End with the St. Thomas School logo must be worn on Mass days and field trips.
- Students may wear a solid colored, long sleeved shirt under their polo shirt. These shirts may be navy, black or white. They may not have any visible logos.
- Any St. Thomas Catholic School or High School of St. Thomas More “spirit wear” shirt/sweatshirt or school event shirt/sweatshirt (Jump Rope for Heart, Summer Camp, Schumacher Shuffle, etc.) may be worn on the first school day of each week. These t-shirts and sweatshirts can be purchased throughout the school year.

Pants / Shorts

- Students must wear navy or khaki pants or shorts, or blue denim jeans. Material may be solid twill, cotton blend, or corduroy. Navy and khaki pants may not be jean style.
- Students may wear khaki or navy pants or shorts on Mass days.
- No rhinestones, gems, cargo pockets, painter pants, holes, rips, or frays allowed.

- No jeggings or pants with elastic bands at the ankle allowed.
- Belts must be worn with pants or shorts having belt loops in grades 4-8.
- Shorts and capri pants may be worn August, September, April, and May. This time period may be extended at the discretion of the principal.
- Shorts length should be a minimum of the student's fingertips when arms are down.

Jumpers / Skirts/ Polo Dresses

- Girls may wear navy or khaki jumpers or skirts. Material may be solid twill, cotton blend, or corduroy.
- Girls may wear polo dresses in the same acceptable colors as polo shirts.
- Girls may wear khaki or navy pants, shorts, or skirts on Mass days.
- Girls may wear Evergreen polo dresses from Lands' End with the St. Thomas school logo on Mass days. This is the only acceptable polo dress on Mass days.
- Skirts, jumpers, and polo dresses must be solid in color without designs, embellishments, ruffles, or cargo pockets.
- Shorts and skirt lengths should be a minimum of the student's fingertips when arms are down.

Shoes / Socks/ Tights

- No sandals, flip flops, open-toed shoes, or shoes without backs may be worn.
- Shoes with laces must be tied; mismatched laces are not allowed.
- Boots are not to be worn during the school day.
- Socks must be of matching color. Socks are to be worn at all times. On Mass days, socks must be solid colored and may only be black, gray, white, or navy in color.
- Leg warmers are not allowed.
- Shoes must be of matching color and worn at all times.
- Students must have tennis shoes for PE and indoor recess. These do not need to be a different pair of shoes, if tennis shoes are worn for the entire school day.
- Tights and leggings must be solid colored. Leggings must be ankle-length.
 - Acceptable tights/leggings colors are:
 - black, gray, white, and navy
- Tights and leggings may not be worn alone as pants.

Mass Day Attire

BOYS:

- Evergreen polo from Lands' End with the St. Thomas School logo
- Khaki or navy pants or shorts
- Socks must be solid colored and may only be black, gray, white, or navy in color

GIRLS:

- Evergreen polo from Lands' End with the St. Thomas School logo
- Khaki or navy pants, shorts, or skirts OR Evergreen polo dress from Lands' End with the St. Thomas School logo

- Khaki or navy jumper may be worn over the Evergreen polo from Lands' End with the St. Thomas School logo
- Socks must be solid colored and may only be black, gray, white, or navy in color
- Tights and leggings must be solid colored. Leggings must be ankle-length.
 - Acceptable tights/leggings colors are:
 - Black, gray, white, and navy

Spirit Wear Day Attire (first school day of each week)

- Any St. Thomas Catholic School or High School of St. Thomas More “spirit wear” shirt/sweatshirt or school event shirt/sweatshirt (Jump Rope for Heart, Summer Camp, Schumacher Shuffle, etc.)
- Jeans; khaki or navy pants or shorts
- Girls may wear khaki or navy skirts

Other Items

- Girls may wear a single stud earring in each ear. Boys are prohibited from wearing earrings. No other jewelry may be worn by students unless it is of a religious or medical nature.
- Nail polish should be well maintained and one color; girls in grades 6, 7, and 8 may wear black or brown mascara and clear lip gloss.
- Hairstyles must be conservative and of natural color and style; boys’ hair should be no longer than the eyebrow in front, ear lobe on the sides, and the top of the collar in the back. Artificial hair coloring and highlighting are not allowed.
- Tattoos, real or otherwise, are not allowed on students attending St. Thomas School or St. Thomas activities.
- Good personal hygiene, neatness, and cleanliness are required.
- Students may not wear hats in the school building.
- St. Thomas School “spirit wear” hooded sweatshirts are the only hooded sweatshirts allowed and may only be worn on Spirit Days.
- In the classroom for an extra layer of warmth over the approved polo shirt, students may only wear:
 - Evergreen full or half-zip fleece with the St. Thomas School logo purchased through Lands’ End. School-approved Evergreen fleeces purchased through Lands’ End or St. Thomas School in previous years are acceptable.
- For recess, any coat or jacket is sufficient.
- Students may be asked to cease wearing any item that causes a disruption to the learning environment.

The final decision regarding the dress code rests with the principal.

Sporting and Extra-Curricular Events

Mission: Sporting and extra-curricular events are intended to encourage the active participation of all students in events outside of school hours. By way of these opportunities, the students’ Christian values and leadership skills will be incorporated into their daily lives.

Eligibility for Sporting Events

See current St. Thomas Athletic Handbook

Rules for Riding the St. Thomas Bus to Athletic, Extra Curricular, and Field Trip Events

The St. Thomas School bus driver and supervisor/chaperones are in charge of the students. If a student is disrespectful, a written report will be given to the principal by the bus driver and/or supervisor/chaperone by the end of the next school day. A conference will be held as soon as possible to discuss the rider's attitude and lack of respect for the rules and his/her parents/guardians will be notified. Disciplinary actions may result when a student does not abide by the below listed rules.

1. Riders will stay seated at all times.
2. Riders are not to move from seat to seat.
3. Riders are to keep their hands to themselves at all times.
4. Riders are to be silent at all railroad crossings.
5. Riders are not to make gestures, signs, etc. to people outside the bus.
6. Riders must ride the bus both ways unless a parent/guardian contacts the bus driver.
7. Riders are responsible for picking up paper, etc. about the bus.
8. Windows should not be opened unless the driver grants permission.
9. The bus driver or bus supervisor/chaperones have the authority to assign seats at any time.
10. Food items are not to be brought onto the bus without the driver's permission.
11. Riders are never to throw items about the bus.
12. Loud talking is not allowed at any time.
13. The school, bus driver, and supervisor/chaperone will not be responsible for students' or others' lost personal items.

V. School Governance

St. Thomas Catholic School follows the policies of the Diocese of Peoria. These policies are developed by the Diocesan Education Commission. Along with the Diocesan policies, St. Thomas has local policies to further direct St. Thomas Catholic School in carrying out the policies of the Diocese. The governing board of St. Thomas Catholic School is the St. Thomas Education Commission. Local policies are voted on by the St. Thomas Education Commission, and enacted by the Pastor of St. Thomas Parish. The procedures for making policy and revising policy are stated in G-232, P-CDOP, G-232, and AR-OCS, 1/03 of the Catholic Diocese of Peoria Policy Book, Office of Catholic Schools. The St. Thomas Education Commission follows the CDOP Policy Book. The Policy Book of the Catholic Diocese of Peoria is followed if a local policy has not been written for a defined area.

Education Commission

The meetings are held as scheduled on the school calendar, during selected months throughout the year. All are invited to attend unless the Commission is in executive session. Such sessions may be called if areas of discussion include salaries, discipline, teacher conduct, or sensitive issues. Appointment or election of commission members is held yearly.

Members of the Education Commission, elected by the Parish communities or appointed by the Pastor(s), serve on the Commission for a three-year term with an option to run for a second term. The terms of members are staggered so that one-third of the Commission members will be departing each year. An invitation to run for one of the annual vacancies will be announced annually in the St. Thomas Tiger Tales and parish bulletins. All members of St. Thomas School's affiliated parishes and school parents are eligible to be Commission members.

VI. General Policies and Procedures

While the school and the parish wholeheartedly believe in the policies and procedures set forth in this Student Handbook, it reserves the right to alter, modify, or terminate any policy or procedure at any time as the needs of the school or parish may require. Parents will be notified of any modifications.

Parental/guardian cooperation and working in partnership with the mission and policies of St. Thomas Catholic School is a condition for a student's continued enrollment. The school can require participation in all classes, activities, and programs, except for sex education classes.

Parents/guardians are required to read the St. Thomas Catholic School Handbook. Continued enrollment is contingent on the signing and returning of the handbook statement by the end of the first full week of the school year.

Admission Policy and Priority Admissions Procedures

No student shall be refused admission to St. Thomas Catholic School on the basis of race, color, gender, national, or ethnic origin. Students with special needs shall be included whenever possible.

It is understood that all students requesting admission to the school shall meet the age and grade requirements in addition to the stated admissions policy of St. Thomas. Students entering in kindergarten must be five years of age by September 1. For children entering school for the first time, verification of age is necessary (birth certificate). All students currently enrolled will be admitted before any other priorities are considered. This means that a currently enrolled non-Catholic student will not be dismissed to admit a new Catholic student. Students requiring retention shall not be refused a place in a class even if the retention causes the class size to exceed the limit.

If maximum class size of 25 is approached at any multi-age level and there are more applicants than space available, the following admission priority procedures will take effect as follows, in descending order of preference:

1. Children who are currently enrolled;
 2. Children of active¹ parishioners;
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3. Children of active parishioners who recently moved into the parish;
4. Children transferring from a public school whose parents/guardians are active parishioners;
5. Children transferring from a Catholic school whose parents/guardians are Catholic and members of another parish;
6. Children transferring from a public school whose parents/guardians are Catholic and members of another parish; and
7. Children transferring from a public school whose parents/guardians are non-Catholic.

Admission decisions for students transferring from another school or seeking re-entry into St. Thomas School shall be made by the school principal and the Pastor. Students seeking transfer or re-entry admission must provide records of previous academic history, letters of referral from their previous school, and a completed medical record to the St. Thomas School office before acceptance is considered. Requests for transferring between area Catholic schools is strongly discouraged. Conditional admission, such as a probation period of one (1) grading period, will be required for transferring students, dependent upon individual considerations.

After School Care

St. Thomas is fortunate to have an after school care program, referred to as Aftercare, on-site. This program provides a nutritious after-school snack, a supervised homework period, and recreation. Arrangements can be made for your child to attend St. Thomas athletic practices, if scheduled during Aftercare hours. For more information concerning the Aftercare program, please see the Aftercare Handbook, available on the school website. You may also contact the school office.

Asbestos Compliance

St. Thomas is in compliance with all regulations of current law regarding asbestos. The building has been inspected and there is a full report on the “Asbestos Management Plan” for the school. This report is on file in the school office and may be reviewed.

Bicycles and Recreational Vehicles

Bicycles are to be parked in the bike racks. They are not to be ridden on the playground. The unauthorized use of another’s bike is prohibited. Bicycle locks are recommended. St. Thomas is not responsible for the loss of or damage to any bicycle. Power driven recreational vehicles (3 and 4 wheelers, motor scooters, motorcycles, snowmobiles, etc.) are prohibited on the school grounds during and after school hours.

Birthday Celebrations/Special Celebrations

Please do not plan a classroom pizza party or other such meal for your child’s classroom to celebrate a student’s birthday or distribute invitations to parties unless everyone in the class is invited. Bringing your child a special birthday lunch just for him/her is permissible. Please check with your child’s teacher before bringing any special treats to the classroom for birthdays or other special celebrations. All special deliveries of flowers, balloons, etc. during school hours will remain in the school office until the students are dismissed at the end of the day.

Bus

St. Thomas students who meet Unit 7 designated criteria are authorized to ride Unit 7 buses. If a student who normally does not ride the bus needs to do so, First Student service must be notified at 485-3400, or by note. The child's teacher should also be made aware of any transportation change a child may need to make at the beginning of a school day.

Calendars

Calendars will be available on our school website.

Child Abuse/Neglect

School personnel, by law, are mandated reporters of allegations/suspicions of child abuse/neglect and must make reports to the Department of Children and Family Services whenever such circumstances should exist. The policies and procedures of the Diocese of Peoria set forth in Appendix C are also incorporated by reference into this provision.

Correspondence

All notes and letters from the school office will be sent home with the *youngest* child in grades K-8. Please check the folder of the youngest child daily to determine if such notices have been sent home. If a note goes home in a sealed envelope, the child will be reminded not to open it.

Emergency Closing

When unforeseen closing of school is necessary, families will be notified by use of the *Remind* system. Please notify the school office of any phone number changes. Closings will also be announced on WDWS (1400 AM) or WHMS (97.5 FM) as well as WCIA and WICD. Closings because of weather or road conditions will always be the same as Unit 7. Please avoid calling the school. The phone lines must be open for emergency situations. If the school has an Emergency Closing, Aftercare will be closed and all scheduled athletic events (except certain IESA games) will be cancelled.

Emergency Contact Information

It is occasionally necessary to have parental/guardian contact during the day. Accurate phone numbers are required. Please advise the school immediately of any change in phone numbers of parents/guardians or other approved individuals. If parents/guardians are planning on being out of town, they should notify the school with alternative contacts during their absence.

Field Trips

Teachers are encouraged to plan educational field trips. The cost of a field trip is divided equally among those attending and shall be paid in advance. Permission forms are sent home before a trip and must be signed and returned to the school. Students not meeting the required deadline for fees and permission forms will have to forfeit the opportunity to accompany the class on this trip. **School staff is unable to accept field trip permission by phone.**

The school requires the students to wear their Evergreen Mass day polo shirt and conduct themselves in an exemplary manner on field trips. On occasion, a teacher or principal may decide that an individual student will not be allowed to participate in a field trip. In the event of such a decision, the parents/guardians of the student will be informed in advance of the trip. On

occasion, chaperones may be needed to assist with a field trip. The responsibilities and expectations of chaperones are set forth in Appendix E.

Health Forms, Physicals and Screenings

1. **Physical Examination/Immunization Record:** All kindergarteners, sixth graders, and all students transferring from another state are required by state law to have a physical examination prior to the start of the school year. A complete immunization record must be on file for each student in the school.
 - For students entering school before October 15 of any given year, the proof of immunization must be presented by this date or the student will be excluded from school until the requirement is met.
 - If, for medical reasons, one or more required immunizations must be given after October 15, then the student shall present, by October 15, a schedule for the administration of the immunizations and a statement of the medical reason for the delay.
 - Students enrolling after October 15 must present the immunizations record and their latest health examination as soon as possible, but no later than two weeks after admission.
 - All records must be completed and returned before the child may be accepted.

2. **Dental Examination:** All Illinois children in kindergarten, second, and sixth grades are required to have an oral health examination. The examination must be performed by a licensed dentist and he/she shall sign the report form. The report form will be uniform for statewide use.
 - Each child in the above listed grades shall present proof of examination by a licensed dentist prior to May 15th of the school year.
 - If a child in kindergarten, second, or sixth grade fails to present proof by May 15th, the school may hold a child's end of year report card until:
 - Child presents proof of dental examination OR
 - Child presents proof that dental examination will take place within 60 days after May 15th.

3. **Eye Examination:** Effective January 1, 2008, children enrolling in kindergarten and any student enrolling in a public or private school for the first time are required to have an eye examination. The exam must be conducted by an optometrist or ophthalmologist and must include history, visual acuity, subjective refraction to best visual acuity near and far, internal and external examination, and a glaucoma evaluation, as well as any other tests or observations that in the professional judgment of the doctors are necessary.

Children required to have an eye exam shall present proof of examination within the previous year before October 15. If a child fails to present proof of examination, the school may hold the child's report card until one of the following occurs:

- Child presents proof of completed eye examination OR

- Child presents proof that an eye examination will take place within 60 days after October 15.

There is a waiver for children who show an undue burden or a lack of access to an eligible physician.

4. **Sports Physicals:** Sports Physical forms are required each year, and must be on file with the school before the first day of practice.
5. **Vision And/Or Hearing Screenings:** The school will set a date each year, with prior notification to parents, to have a Registered Nurse visit the school and perform the following screenings:
 - Vision – Mandated are children in kindergarten (if no eye exam is presently on file), second, and eighth grades; children in all special education classes; children referred by teachers; and transferred children
 - Hearing – Mandated are children in kindergarten, first, second, and third grades; children in all special education classes; children referred by teachers; and transferred children

Lunch/Recess

Milk is available for lunch. No glass bottles are to be brought in a child's lunch. Students are not allowed to bring pop or buy pop from the school pop machine for lunch or at any other time during the school day. Students are encouraged to drink milk, juice, or water with their lunch meal, and should not bring other types of beverages in their school lunch.

Students should bring their lunches each full day of school. If a child forgets to bring a lunch, a lunch will be provided. Periodically, a hot lunch will be offered or provided to all of the school children. Most of the hot lunches will be offered to the children at cost. Information about the hot lunch program will be sent home during the school year.

Recess will be from 11:30-11:50 a.m. Lunch will be from 11:55-12:15 p.m. If a student plans to eat lunch any place other than school, a parental/guardian note must be presented to the teacher *before* lunch. Students who go to their own home for lunch on a regular basis will need to bring a parent/guardian note at the beginning of the school year. Students may not leave until 11:50am and must return by 12:15 p.m. They need to sign out and in on a notebook found in the office.

Medication

Parents/guardians may come to school at any time to dispense medication to their child. If it is necessary for a child to take medication during school hours and a parent/guardian is unavailable to dispense the medicine, the principal and/or designated staff will dispense medication only under the following conditions:

- **Prescription Drugs:** If medications can safely be given outside of school hours, please do this. However, if your child's condition requires that medication be given at school, it is necessary that we have "Required Medications During School Hours" form completed and signed by the parent/guardian and the child's physician, and returned to the school

office. No medication can be given at school until the completed form is on file. Medication must be sent in appropriately labeled pharmacy containers as prescribed by law. The container must indicate the name of the pharmacy, the prescription number, the child's name, the name of the drug, and the dosage.

- **Over-the-Counter Drugs:** If medications can safely be given outside of school hours, please do this. However, if your child's condition requires that medication be given at school, it is necessary that we have "Required Medications During School Hours" form completed and signed by the parent/guardian and the child's physician, and returned to the school office. No medication can be given at school until the completed form is on file. Parent/guardian notes are not acceptable for permission to dispense medication. The medication must be in the bottle or container purchased at the store.
- **Self Administration of Medication:** Beginning with the 2006-07 school year, the law allows students to self-administer both asthma medication and certain allergy medication (epinephrine). Prerequisites for self-administration of these medications are: (1) parent permission; (2) prescription information provided by a doctor; (3) written notification to parents that the school shall not incur liability; and (4) parent sign-off acknowledging the liability waiver. The above information must be obtained each school year.

Money for Student Charges

Any money sent to school with a child must be sent in a sealed envelope with the child's name, the grade, the amount of money, and the purpose of the money written on the outside.

Non-Custodial Parents

The school abides by the provision of the Buckley Amendment with respect to the rights of non-custodial parents. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, St. Thomas is required to provide the non-custodial parent with access to the academic records and to other school-related information regarding the child. If there is a court order specifying that there is to be no information given, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide St. Thomas with an official copy of the court order.

Parent/Teacher Organization ("PTO")

Communication between the parents/guardians, teachers, and administrators is an integral part of the educator process and our goal is to promote this concept. The objectives of this organization are: to provide parents/guardians and teachers with the information needed to aid in all aspects of education, growth, and development; to promote good-will and cooperation among all aspects of the school; and give support to St. Thomas School through assistance with activities, social functions, and fundraisers.

PTO meets regularly and has its own by-laws. Meeting dates are posted on the school calendar. The officers may bring recommendations to the Education Commission meetings. All parents of school children at St. Thomas are automatically members of the PTO and are encouraged to take part in the activities planned by the organization.

Playground

Every child, unless excused by reason of health, is expected to participate with his/her own class at recess. Students may not leave the assigned area without the permission of the faculty/staff member on duty. In bad weather, all children will remain indoors. If snow is on the ground, students are to wear boots or have a change of shoes available. In winter weather, hats, gloves, and scarves are highly recommended. Whenever possible, students will go outside during recess.

Throwing rocks, sand, snowballs, or other similar objects is strictly forbidden. Wrestling is not allowed. Hard balls are prohibited at all times.

Phone Calls

Teachers and students will not be called to the phone during school hours unless there is an emergency. Phone messages should be limited only to necessary information.

Use of cell phones during school hours is prohibited. Students will be sent to the school office to make phone calls.

Snacks

Students will have an opportunity to eat a nutritious snack each day. Each homeroom teacher will coordinate how snacks are to be provided for his/her students.

Student Records/Confidentiality

Students and their families will be afforded the necessary and expected confidentiality for their student records and all matters involving their academic and social conduct. The following are established guidelines for school records:

- *Right to Inspect:* You have the right to look at your child's permanent record, which includes report cards, health records, accident reports, attendance records, and biographical information.
- *Right to Prevent Disclosure:* The school will not disclose anything to third parties from your child's record unless you consent in writing prior to the disclosure, or the information is part of the Family Address List in which the information has been approved for publication.

Student Safety

Any student injured in the classroom, gym, playground, or other school area must report the injury to his/her teacher or supervisor immediately. The safety of children is ensured by organized drills, posted EXIT/Emergency signs, posted procedures, and the St. Thomas School Crisis Plan.

Tuition Policy

Even with the established tuition, our affiliated parishes subsidize a large portion of Catholic education at St. Thomas Catholic School. This is especially true when families have more than one child in the school. In all cases, the parishes pay more than half the actual cost to educate each child.

In order to receive a subsidy from the parish (St. Thomas Philo, St. Mary's Pesotum, St. Patrick's Tolono, St. Joseph's Ivesdale and St. Patrick's Urbana) for the cost of your child(ren)'s education at St. Thomas School, parents must be registered with their respective parish and be active members in good standing. If a child is a member of any other Catholic parish, parents must receive permission from their Pastor to receive a subsidy from their respective parish. If a child's family is non-Catholic, parents are obligated to pay the full tuition amount set by the Pastor, unless other arrangements have been made with the Pastor.

It is the policy of St. Thomas Catholic School that parishioners will not be denied access to a Catholic School education based on an inability to pay. Should the payment of tuition cause any family financial hardship, they are to obtain an application for tuition assistance from the school. A professional service, FACTS, will evaluate a family's ability to pay tuition, and let the Pastor know how much the family can afford to pay (the parish never sees the financial records). At the discretion of the Pastor and based on available funds, the parish may pay some or all of the balance of tuition. The hardship of tuition should not be the sole cause of not attending St. Thomas Catholic School. Every family is given the opportunity to apply for tuition assistance. Each family is highly encouraged to apply for the Diocese of Peoria's John Lancaster Spalding Scholarship Fund each year.

Tuition payments can be paid in full in July, quarterly, or monthly. Tuition and fees are non-refundable. If a family is unable to pay on time, a parent/guardian must inform the Pastor. Failure to pay the full amount by June 15th, without exemptions made by the Pastor, will result in the child's name being removed from the class list for the following year. Re-entry will depend on full payment and available room. No end of year report cards will be issued with any outstanding debts, fees, or balances due to the school, with the exception of the June 15th payment.

Tuition charges are assessed at the beginning of each month, beginning in July and ending in June. July and August tuition payments must be current by August 15 in order to complete registration for the upcoming school year. With any attendance during a particular month, the tuition for the month will be assessed. Annual fees, including, but not limited to, book fees, foreign language programs, hot lunch, milk/juice, athletic fees, etc. are assessed at registration and are non-refundable.

Visitors

For the safety of all children, all visitors must sign the Visitor's Log at the office upon arrival and sign out upon departure. If it is necessary to take a child home due to illness or family matters, the student must remain in the school office until a parent/guardian arrives to sign out the student. It is also necessary to sign in when a student arrives late or returns to school after an outside appointment.

Volunteers

All school volunteers and staff must have completed the State of Illinois background check and must be fingerprinted. It is also diocesan policy that volunteers and staff must attend our *Safe Environment* program; this includes any parent or grandparent wishing to attend classroom parties and/or field trips.

Water Bottles

Students will have St. Thomas School water bottles to use throughout the day. Students should bring the empty water bottles to school each Monday. They will have opportunities throughout the day to refill the bottles using the school water fountains. The water bottles will be sent home with students on the last day of the school week for cleaning. If students need to replace their water bottle, a new one may be purchased for \$1 from the school office.

VII. Internet Usage Policy

Making Internet access available to students carries with it the potential that some students might encounter information that some have identified as controversial and of potential harm to students. Because information on the Internet appears, disappears, and changes, it is not possible to predict or control what information students may access. St. Thomas educators will take an active role in restricting student access to controversial material. However, on a global network it is impossible to control all materials an industrious user may discover.

The use of the Internet is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use will result in a cancellation of those privileges. In order for a student to enjoy the privilege of Internet usage, the student and their parents/guardians must sign and return the Internet Usage Agreement form. The administration and faculty of St. Thomas reserve the right to deny, revoke, or suspend specific user privileges. **No student is allowed Internet access without an adult staff member being present in the room housing the computer and supervising the student(s) at all times.** All Internet users are expected to abide by the generally accepted rules of computer and network etiquette and student conduct.

The following guidelines are the minimum taught to St. Thomas students:

- Do not reveal your personal address, phone numbers, or addresses of students or colleagues.
- Be aware that e-mail is not guaranteed to be private. Messages relating to or in support of illegal activities may be reported to the authorities.
- Be polite. Do not get abusive in your messages to others.
- Use appropriate language. Do not swear, use vulgarities, or any other inappropriate language.

Unacceptable use of the Internet:

- Using the network for any illegal activity including violations of copyright or other laws;
- Using the network in ways that violate school policies and behavior standards;
- Using the network for financial or commercial gain;
- Degrading, disrupting equipment, or system performance;
- Invading the privacy of other individuals by accessing and/or vandalizing their computerized data;
- Wasting technology resources, including bandwidth, file space, and printers;
- Gaining unauthorized access to resources or entities;
- Using an account by another user, with or without their permission; and

- Posting personal communications without the author's consent.

Vandalism is defined as any malicious attempt to harm or destroy data of another user, Internet, or other networks that are connected. This includes, but is not limited to, the uploading or creation of computer viruses. Vandalism will result in cancellation of privileges and restitution will be expected.

VIII. School Events

The school year at St. Thomas is filled with a number of exciting activities and events. Occasionally, classroom or school needs might require a change or give new direction to a "traditional" event. Many times, events need parental/guardian assistance and participation to ensure that St. Thomas Catholic School and the students benefit from these wide varieties of experiences.

Fee Day: All parents and students are encouraged to attend Fee Day in early August. On this day, tuition payment arrangements may be made, Spirit Wear may be purchased, parents and students may "shop" for free donated uniform items, parents may register their children for the Aftercare and Hot Lunch programs, parents may learn more about our PTO and Grand People's volunteer organizations, Unit 7 bussing arrangements may be made, and more. This is also the day K-8 students may bring their classroom supplies and meet their teacher.

Preschool Parent Information Night: In early August, a Preschool Parent Information Night will be held at the school. Parents will have the chance to meet the preschool teachers, Pastor, and Principal, visit their child's classroom, hear an overview of plans for the school year, learn more about classroom and school policies, and ask any questions they may have. Parents may also bring their children's school supplies on this night.

K-8 Meet and Greet Night: Shortly after the start of the school year, a K-8 Parent Information Night will be held at the school. On this night, parents can meet the teachers, Pastor, and Principal and learn about the plans for the school year. This night may also include an opportunity for students interested in the band program to try out musical instruments and meet the band teacher as well as a chance for new parents and grandparents to be fingerprinted as part of the background check required to volunteer within the school. Parents of students participating in Speech may also have a brief meeting before the main program begins.

Parent/Teacher Conferences: Parent/teacher conferences for all students are held in the fall of each school year. Whenever possible, conferences will be student-led. Parents/guardians are encouraged to request meetings with their child's teacher at any time throughout the year. A time for Optional Parent/Teacher Conferences will be available during the second semester of each school year.

Book Fairs: This fundraiser gives students and parents/guardians opportunities to purchase a variety of books at the Scholastic rate. All proceeds go towards replenishing library books and classroom libraries.

Friends of St. Thomas: The gifting tree, located at the entrance of the school, highlights those who remember St. Thomas through their gifts. Contributions may be made in one donation of \$1,000.00 or more, monthly giving of \$10.00 or more, or through a specific memorial fund. All contributions are tax deductible.

Catechetical Testing: The Office of Catholic Schools has chosen the NCEA ACRE (Assessment of Catechesis/Religious Education), which is based on the Four Pillars of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

Standardized Testing: Grades two through eight will participate in the Iowa Test of Basic Skills Achievement Test and the Cognitive Test of Abilities in September. Notice will be given to families prior to the test dates in September. Parents/guardians are asked to see that their child eats a well-balanced breakfast and gets plenty of rest throughout the testing period. Results are normally given out at the parent/teacher conferences.

Advent & Lent Prayer Services: During advent and lent, weekly prayer services will be prepared by the students. This provides an opportunity for students to learn how to plan and implement a para-liturgy.

Christmas Program: Students will participate in Advent and Christmas activities in the weeks leading up to Christmas Break. An evening Christmas program will be held.

Pancake and Sausage Breakfast: Junior High students hold a bake sale and raffle during this St. Thomas parish sponsored breakfast. Junior High parents are asked to volunteer and assist the students in preparing for this event, and during the event itself.

Catholic Schools Week: This is held the last week of January. Many special events will be planned for that week, with Mass being the highlight of the week. Students go by bus to a special activity toward the end of the week.

Athletic Awards: Usually held in April, students are recognized for their participation and accomplishments in the St. Thomas Catholic School Athletics Program.

Special All-School Event: A special all-school event will be held in the spring, such as: Spring Concert, Musical, Talent Show, or Academic Showcase/Academic Fair.

Grandpeople's Day: The students honor their grandparents or a close family friend by inviting them to share a special morning with them. The day includes classroom visits, Mass, and refreshments.

May Crowning: May Crowning is held the first Friday of May. The eighth and second grade students prepare the Mass for May Crowning. All students are asked to bring a fresh cut flower with them to church that morning. Coffee and donuts follow Mass in the school gym.

Kindergarten Visit Day: An open-visit will be scheduled each spring for upcoming kindergarten students. Everyone is welcome. Parents/guardians will have an opportunity to visit the kindergarten/first grade room, meet the teacher, and get to know more about St. Thomas Catholic School. The purpose of the session is to allow the parents/guardians and students to meet school staff and be exposed to how we “Live, Love, and Serve as Christ” at St. Thomas Catholic School.

Graduation Banquet: This banquet is hosted by sixth and seventh grade students and their parents/guardians to honor the eighth grade students and their parents/guardians. This event is for the parents/guardians, students, teachers/staff, and Education Commission members. The students, principal and eighth grade teacher put together a special program.

Junior High Trip: Junior High students attend a trip to places like St. Louis, Chicago, Springfield, or Indianapolis. Eighth grade parents/guardians are also invited to attend. The students will help choose the location. Payment is covered by the class with money earned throughout the year. Eighth grade parents/guardians are asked to contribute toward costs if necessary. The rest of the class money is given to the school as a gift from the graduating class.

Funeral Honor Guard: As a way to show respect and honor our Parish community members, some St. Thomas School students may be asked to participate as a Funeral Honor Guard member for funerals held at St. Thomas Church on a school day during the school year. These students wear their Mass day uniform and stand silently and respectfully at the edge of the church’s entrance as funeral attendees enter the church for a funeral. When this need arises, parents will be informed and asked to give permission for their child to participate. Participation is voluntary and is not required.

Graduation: The Graduation Mass will take place at St. Thomas Church no sooner than five school days prior to the last scheduled day of school for the year.

Work Day: In addition to regular maintenance throughout the year, parents/guardians are asked to give a few hours of their time on days designated to help clean the school and make minor repairs.

Appendix A Harassment Policy

Please Refer to:

www.cdop.org

Click on Education Tab

Click on Office of Catholic Schools

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Click on Policy Book

Click on C-401

Appendix B Possession or Use of Weapons or Look Alike Weapons in School

Please Refer to:

www.cdop.org

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Click on Office of Catholic Schools

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Click on Policy Book

Click on D-150

Appendix C Policies and Procedures Relating to Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacons, or by Lay Employees or Volunteers

Please Refer to:

www.cdop.org

Click on Education Tab

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Appendix D Safe Environment Program

Please Refer to:

www.cdop.org

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Click on Forms-General

Click on Safe Environment Annual Update

Appendix E Roles and Expectations of Chaperones

Please Refer to:

www.cdop.org

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Appendix F Student Wellness Plan

Please Refer to:

www.cdop.org

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