

# PARENT & SCHOLAR HANDBOOK



## SAINT THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC ACADEMY

*Lead. Teach. Inspire*

*Renewed 07/01/2021*

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## OUR MISSION

*A faith-driven school that teaches D.C. youth to become lifelong scholars rooted in faith*

St. Thomas More Academy is a faith-driven elementary and middle school guided by educators who are invested in the current wellbeing and future opportunities of our children. With pre-k through 8th grade education, we provide the children of southeast Washington D.C. the education they need to navigate their lives with understanding rooted in faith, influencing their lives and those around them for good. At St. Thomas More, *we lead, teach, and inspire, reflecting love daily according to the scriptures.*

## OUR HISTORY

In 1955 the St. Thomas More Parish and Parent's Club were determined to obtain a school for school-age children. After raising \$150,000, the new St. Thomas More School was opened on September 9, 1957 and dedicated by the Archbishop in October. Originally staffed by the Congregation of Sisters of St. Felix, known as the Felician Sisters of Lodi, New Jersey. Located in the Bellevue area of Southeast DC, St. Thomas More School has been a part of the beloved community that continues to serve our community and thrives as a part of the Consortium of Catholic Academies and Archdiocese of Washington, D.C.

## **PHILOSOPHY AND BELIEFS**

*A refuge for students who want to transform their narrative, guided by education, faith and community.*

Many of our students come to us from a space where they feel defeated, yearning for understanding and validation. It is our goal to create a welcoming, inclusive atmosphere where all feel valued and are given the tools to make success inevitable.

### **Lead**

The STM Community is committed to leading our scholars and parents through learning and partnership into a world in which they know that they have a voice. By building an active strong community, our families are taught to lead by Christ's example and give back to the community through acts of service.

### **Teach**

Scholars are valued stakeholders within our school community and our educators are committed to bestowing and fostering a love of learning in each of them. We work with scholars no matter their learning styles to promote academic success and rigor.

### **Inspire**

At STM we inspire our scholars to be rooted in Christ by providing a foundation of faith drawn directly from the scriptures.

## **PROFILE OF A GRADUATE**

*STM scholars are faithful role models who;*

- ☐ Use Gospel values to guide decision-making
- ☐ Express gratitude to God through active stewardship
- ☐ Continue to grow in their love for Christ, self, and others
- ☐ Practice empathy and compassion towards all of God's creations
- ☐ Exhibit knowledge of and appreciation for Scripture, liturgy, and the teachings of the Church

*STM scholars are global citizens who:*

- ☐ Listen actively
- ☐ Speak and write with clarity and confidence
- ☐ Demonstrate a spirit of purposeful collaboration
- ☐ Resolve conflicts peacefully
- ☐ Consider the good of others when making choices and decisions
- ☐ Demonstrate good sportsmanship
- ☐ Appreciate the unique gifts and talents of others and approach differences with patience and an open heart
- ☐ Respond to those in need with empathy and responsibility
- ☐ Take action in the spirit of social justice

*STM scholars are lifelong learners who:*

- ☐ Manifest intrinsic motivation to set and accomplish personal goals
- ☐ Possess a strong foundation and appreciation for all areas of study
- ☐ Apply organizational, study, and critical thinking skills
- ☐ Reflect upon and assess personal strengths as self-aware learners

## SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

The School is responsible for upholding all school policies listed here and creating a safe nurturing learning environment. The school is committed to partnering with parents and students to work towards academic success and spiritual formation.

### *Admissions Policy (A.D.W. Reg. 3510)*

We admit scholars of any race, color, national or ethnic origin. We also welcome scholars of all faiths. All scholars must meet the District of Columbia public school health requirements before admission. All scholars must present a birth certificate, social security card, immunization record and a baptismal certificate (if applicable) along with other school records: transcripts, etc.

### *Academic Information*

Daily punctuality is necessary to avoid classroom disruption, maximize scholar learning, and is a basic principle of responsibility and common courtesy. Scholars coming and going throughout the day take away from teaching time and often interrupt the focus of the scholars in the classroom. This policy's goal is to inspire daily punctuality, instilling it as a valuable life skill for our children.

Instructional time is extremely valuable. Punctuality is important to create and maintain a productive learning environment. Scholars are expected to arrive by 7:45 each day. St. Thomas More Catholic Academy begins morning prayer promptly at 8:00 a.m. **Scholars not in class by 8:00 a.m. are considered late. Poor attendance may affect a scholar's promotion to the next grade.**

The school day at St. Thomas More Catholic Academy ends at 3:00 p.m. Scholars are expected to leave the school grounds immediately at dismissal. Scholars who are not picked up by 3:15 p.m. will be escorted to Aftercare for their safety. Aftercare is hosted from 3:15-6:00pm. **Parents will pay a \$20.00 fee for late pick-up.**



### ***Curriculum for Three Year Olds through Kindergarten***

The curriculum at St. Thomas More Catholic Academy is the master plan for learning. The Archdiocese of Washington Curriculum Standards stipulates the courses offered. You can learn more about these standards at [www.adwcatholicschools.org](http://www.adwcatholicschools.org)

The program for three year olds through Kindergarten is designed to lead a child from wonder to discovery, developing and mastering a wide range of skills with which to meet future educational challenges. The curriculum for three year olds consists of a basic religion program, beginning language skills development, math readiness, and motor skills development; library, art and music classes are a regular part of this program as well. At this level of the Early Childhood program, the greatest focus is on personal and social development. Nurturing these skills prepares the child for positive interactions with both family and peers. The curriculum for four year olds focuses on the spiritual, social, emotional, physical and cognitive growth of each child. The curriculum uses a thematic approach to promote the development of the whole child. All subject areas, including religion, language arts, math, science, social studies, motor development, music, art, technology, and physical education are integrated in the curriculum.

Upon completion of two years of preschool, scholar readiness is gauged based on a set of pre-K non-negotiables to be met prior to moving forward to Kindergarten.

The Kindergarten program builds on the learning readiness fostered in the first two years of the Early Childhood Program. Religion, language arts, and math are developed more extensively in order to prepare the child for the primary grades. Enrichment classes include art, technology, library, music, and physical education. Scholars receive an in-depth training on reading fluency and phonics to prepare them for the academic framework of first grade.

### ***Curriculum for Grades One through Eight***

St. Thomas More offers an excellent course of studies designed to foster the holistic development of the children it serves. Our curriculum includes a framework rooted in using the academic guidelines set by the Archdiocese of Washington. Scholars receive all core curricular subjects including Religious Education, Language Arts/English, Math, Science, Social Studies. Additional electives are offered to scholars including, life skills, library, systems thinking, socioemotional learning, physical education, art, and music.

## ***Spiritual Formation***

In addition to religious education classes, **all** scholars participate in weekly Mass as a part of our Faith Formation programming. Children who are baptized in the Catholic faith, at least 7 years old, and have completed at least one year of religious education are eligible to begin preparing for the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist. Attendance in a Catholic school for one full year prior to the sacrament preparation year fulfills the religious education requirement.

Parents seeking Catholic baptism for themselves or for their children should contact the director of RCIA. If you are not a registered and active member of a parish in the Archdiocese of Washington, you will need to register immediately. ***Optimally, children should prepare for sacraments in the parish community in which their family worships regularly.*** Please contact your home parish for sacrament preparation information. If you are a member of another parish community, you are welcome to prepare with us with written **consent** from your pastor.

## ***Technology in Education***

St. Thomas More Catholic Academy is committed to educating our scholars to become self-directed, continuous learners that are ethical and responsible citizens ready to take on the increasing challenges of the world both locally and globally. Providing access to technology allows our scholars to be prudent in their exploration to seek the knowledge that the internet provides while also providing space for scholars to connect and communicate with people throughout the world. At STM, technology is used as a vehicle of communication and never should be used as a replacement for direct communication and instruction from a living educator. Our school is committed to the curation of lessons that integrate technology and effectively promote critical and visible thinking in our scholars. It is expected that all use of technology, at St. Thomas More Catholic Academy follows the Technology Standards set by the Archdiocese of Washington.

## ***Grading***

Grading serves to measure the degree of success the scholar has achieved in completing the program designed to meet his/her needs. Scholars shall be graded in accordance with their ability and achievement. Each educator will provide parents and scholars with a copy of his/her methods and procedures for grading.

### **PK-3rd Standardized Based**

- follows a standards based report card in which progress towards the ADW standards are measured as below:

-

EE- Exceeds the grade level expectations at this time

ME- Meet the grade level expectations at this time.

AE- Approaching the grade level expectations at this time.

NE- Not approaching the grade level expectations at this time.

X-Not assessed at this time.

### **Grades 4-8**

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Qual.</u>	<u>Pt.</u>	<u>Achievement</u>
93-100	A	4	Excellent
85-92	B	3	Very Good
77-84	C	2	Good
70-76	D	1	Satisfactory
0-69	F	0	Failure

### **Specials (Art, Music, P/E, Systems Thinking, Life Skills, Library, Socioemotional Learning)**

E      Excellent

G      Good

S      Satisfactory

I      Improvement Needed

U      Unsatisfactory

\* - The asterisk indicates on a progress report/report card that the subject taught was done so with accommodations.

### **Report Cards**

Scholars are graded throughout the course of the school year and periodic reports are made available to parents. A Progress Report is generated and sent home mid-quarter twice, and a Report Card generated at the end of each quarter. Parents are required to meet with their child's educator during the First and Third Quarter. Additional conferences will be held as needed. Report cards will be made available to parents who have met their financial and service obligations each quarter. Parents will receive information regarding how to access scholar reports from the online Scholars Information System each generation by the school's Vice-Principal or Academic Dean.

Parent/educator conferences/visits are opportunities for team collaboration, consensus building and information exchange. They are intended to promote the

growth of the child and the enhancement of our curriculum. All conferences should be scheduled directly with the educator. Notices will be given to parents when there are either academic or behavior concerns. **Parents are responsible for communicating at least biweekly with their child's educators during the course of the quarter via email, phone, or in-person.**

### ***Student Records***

St. Thomas More Catholic Academy adheres to the Buckley Amendment (Family Education Rights and Privacy) regarding access to student records. Records of students transferring to other schools will only be sent through the US Mail or emailed directly to the school. No records will be given to parents to transport to the new school.

Students requesting records/transcripts/recommendations must make a five school-day request to the School Office. All forms should be submitted to the School Office for distribution. Completed forms will be sent via the U.S. Mail. Special handling will require that all postal fees be paid by the parents. No records will be sent to transferring schools of students whose financial commitment is not met.

### ***Transfer of Students***

Notice of withdrawal of a student should be made by the parent in writing to the Principal in advance of the withdrawal date. This enables the school to prepare necessary information and settle accounts. No student records will be forwarded to another school until Business Office accounts have been settled. (See previous section on Student Records for transcript information.)

### ***Testing***

The Performance Series Test is administered in grades 2-8 in the fall, winter, and spring each year. This test assesses student achievement and areas of need in reading and mathematics. Fall and winter scores are interpreted carefully by teachers to plan differentiated instruction for students.

Students will also be assessed in literacy development at the beginning and end of the school year using the Fountas and Pinnell Assessment. In addition, in 2021-2022 school year, students will pilot, the MAP assessment.

## ***Homework***

Formal homework is assigned to help students become self-reliant and self-directed. Assignments are designed to reinforce daily lessons, to supplement and enrich class work, and to prepare for certain lessons through various experiences.

Considering each student has different capabilities and interests, it would be difficult to denote the specific amount of time to be spent on an assignment. If a problem arises, the teacher should be contacted.

While homework may not be assigned nightly for specific classes, scholars should spend no more than an hour to two hours completing homework, reading, writing, or reviewing class notes after school.

## ***Promotion Policy and Retention Policy***

Advancement to the next grade at St. Thomas More Catholic Academy is based on a scholar's daily performance, test results, recommendations of educators, and the scholar's ability to complete work successfully on or above grade level.

Promotion to the next grade depends on successful completion of all subject areas. The Administration may recommend the repetition of a grade, tutoring, or summer school classes as requirements for promotion when, after conferences with educators and parents, it is believed that such action will better prepare the scholar academically or emotionally for the next grade.

## ***Retention***

Recommendation for retention of students is made by the teacher in consultation with the principal and the parents and, if appropriate, with other advisory staff. This decision is based on the total evaluation of a student's growth in all areas of development. Consideration may be given in special circumstances, and will be decided upon by principal, parents, and advisory staff. In all cases, the final decision for retention rests with the principal.

## ***Graduation***

St. Thomas More Catholic Academy honors its graduates each year with a Mass and special ceremony, where an award will be given to scholars who successfully complete their course of study. Special awards for outstanding performance will be given to members of the graduating class.

- **GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS:** Upon satisfactorily completing their course of study, our school accords the privilege of graduation, honoring those who have met and maintained the high standards for which our school stands. Prior to graduating, a student must:
  - Complete 75 service hours outside of school hours.
  - Maintain an overall “C” average and “B” in core subjects.
- Have a conduct record that is free of suspension during the graduating year

## Code of Behavior and Discipline

St. Thomas More Catholic Academy will use two frameworks to support the well-being and development of scholars within our care. With the use of Restorative Justice Practices and the Collaborative for Academic and Social and Emotional Learning, St. Thomas More is committed to developing young scholars with a deep awareness of self and respect for others and their community.

Details on the Restorative Justice and Social Emotional Learning Framework will be discussed throughout the course of the year with all stakeholders.

### *School Wide Expectations:*

1. Scholars will engage in productive work throughout the school year.
2. Scholars will show respect to self and others, and the environment.
3. Scholars will maintain a safe and clean environment and share space effectively.
4. Scholars will come to school professionally dressed.

### *Three Golden Norms:*

- ☐ **Lead** by positive example
- ☐ **Teach** with Conviction and Love
- ☐ **Inspire** others to do the right/just thing

## Conduct

The purpose of discipline in a Catholic School is to bring about the self-discipline of each scholar and of the school community as a whole in order to promote the Christian development of each member and thereby enhance the community as the People of God. *The scholar is a St. Thomas More Catholic Academy scholar at all times.* A scholar who engages in conduct that is detrimental to the reputation of the school may be disciplined (suspension/expulsion) by school officials.

The pastor, president, vice-principal and principal are the final recourse in all disciplinary situations and may waive any disciplinary expectation for just cause at their discretion.

Items that distract from the learning situation are not allowed at any time. The School Administration, in accordance with District laws, will determine the appropriate disciplinary measures to be taken concerning the presence of these items in the school. Items taken away from students will be returned to the parent(s)/guardian(s) on the last day of school or at the discretion of the administration.

***Liability Notification: St. Thomas More Catholic Academy will not be responsible for any lost, damaged and/or stolen items.***

### ***Cheating***

Cheating of any type will not be tolerated. Students who choose to cheat face a failing grade, detention, or more serious consequences as the circumstances require.

### ***Detention***

Detention is when a student is detained after school as a consequence for violation of classroom and/or school rules. Teachers assign and monitor students during detention. Parents are notified of the day, date, and time of the detention at the discretion of the teacher. Detention takes precedence over appointments, practices, lessons, tutoring, ball games, etc.

### ***Harassment/Bullying***

As a Catholic school, St. Thomas More Catholic Academy believes and teaches that each of us is called to love our neighbor and to treat them with respect. St. Thomas More Catholic Academy is committed to providing a physically safe and emotionally secure learning environment that is free from bullying, harassment, and intimidation in any form, including cyberbullying. Bullying, harassment, and intimidation of any member of the school community is prohibited. All reports of bullying, harassment, and intimidation will be treated seriously and or the reprisal or retaliation against anyone who reports acts of bullying, harassment, and/or intimidation is strictly prohibited and will be treated seriously. The principal's review and investigation of a credible allegation will be done in a prompt, confidential, and thorough manner.

Bullying, harassment, and intimidation mean any intentional written, verbal, or physical act, including electronic communication (telephone, cellular phone, computer, iPod, etc.), that:

1. Physically harms an individual; damages an individual's property; substantially

interferes with an individual's education or learning environment; or places an individual in reasonable fear of harm to the individual's person or property; and

2. Occurs on school property; at a school activity or event; on a school transportation vehicle or bus; while wearing STMCA uniform or substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a school.

In the event of an accusation of harassment or bullying, the school will take the following steps:

- The Catholic Schools Office requires the principal and/ or principal's designee at St. Thomas More to be responsible for receiving and investigating complaints of bullying.
- Members of the School community, including students, parents, volunteers, and visitors are encouraged to report any act that violates the School's Code of Conduct. Students may report bullying to any member of the School staff. Reports may be made anonymously, but formal disciplinary action may not be based solely on the basis of an anonymous report.
- The Catholic Schools Office requires the principal and or/ the principal's designee to be responsible for determining whether an alleged act constitutes bullying. In so doing, the principal and /or principal's designee shall conduct a prompt, thorough, and complete investigation of each alleged incident. The investigation should be completed immediately, but in no case later than two school days after the report or complaint is made. The investigation must be fully documented. The principal shall speak with every student, teacher, volunteer, or parent involved in the incident, and completes the Bullying Incident Report Form. Based on the discussions, the principal shall:
  1. Make the determination of whether bullying or harassment occurred;
  2. Assess the nature, severity, and circumstances of the act;
  3. Determine and administer the appropriate disciplinary action;
  4. Complete the Bullying Incident Report Form and retain it on file.

### ***Threats***

In the event of any actual or perceived threat of violence or other inappropriate/illegal behavior, St. Thomas More Catholic Academy reserves its right to take any and all actions it deems necessary for the health and safety of its school



community, including the individual(s) making the threat. These actions may include contacting law enforcement offices, mental health professionals and/or any other outside experts as the school official(s) deems necessary.

St. Thomas More Catholic Academy continues to explore and implement a preventive bullying program that promotes and develops awareness among staff, faculty and students. The School Program promotes a safe environment in accordance with the Child Protection Policy of the Archdioceses of Washington. St. Thomas More continues to update and review frameworks that support the ongoing mission of preventing and eliminating bullying within our school.

### *Suspension and Expulsion*

Scholars in breach of the St. Thomas More Attendance Contract, Attendance Policies, Code of Conduct, Dress Code, Technology Agreement, classroom behavior policies, and or Prevention Programming policies may be suspended or expelled from the school. Decisions regarding suspensions and expulsions shall be made in consultation with the Pastor, the President of the CCA, and the Catholic Schools Office.

Prior to events leading up to suspension or expulsion delegations, scholars will be placed into the restorative justice framework. This program will include the use of mediation circles and an opportunity for the scholar to repair the harm done in not following school-wide or classroom expectations. Parents will also be involved in the process to have scholars return to school. Suspension and expulsion will be used after all social and emotional routes have been taken.

### **Student Activities and Services**

STMCA provides programs to develop, nurture, and hone our scholars' leadership skills. There are a variety of activities offered to our scholars, listed below are a few:

- Chess
- Robotics
- Yoga
- Soccer
- Basketball
- Track
- Music/Band/Choir
- Art Club
- Making Tech Club

St. Thomas More Catholic Academy makes every effort to provide our school community with services to round out our curriculum.

**Counseling** services are available to all scholars. Our counseling program aims to assist our youth in dealing with the many and varied stresses of life and maturation. In the event of an emergency or crisis, the Archdiocese of Washington may send a team of school counseling professionals to St. Thomas More. One-time, initial counseling services may be rendered to scholars by school or archdiocesan counseling staff in the event of a crisis or emergency.

**Instrumental Music:** Our school provides an instrumental music program sponsored by the Archdiocese of Washington. Scholars may receive instruction in percussion, woodwind, string, or keyboard.

- **Extended Care:** Our school provides a Before and Aftercare program to assist our families in caring for our children outside of regular school times. Before and Aftercare services are provided daily from 6:30 a.m.– 7:30 a.m., and 3:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. respectively. Breakfast and a light snack are served during these programs. *Aftercare is provided during 12:30 dismissal days, excluding those days prior to three day weekends, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter Breaks.*
- **After School Tutoring** is available, free of cost. Educators will provide a schedule of tutoring days.

### **Students with Special Needs**

At the time of admission, parents/guardians must make available to the Principal and Director of Admissions any of the following documents, should they exist: Psycho-Educational testing, Individual Educational Plans (IEP), 504 Plan, Speech and Language Testing, or any other comprehensive testing or documents written to describe the child's specific educational needs. Submitting documentation of a disability is in no way obligating St. Thomas More Catholic Academy to fulfill the student's documented needs. Documentation is requested and required only to enable St Thomas More Catholic Academy to determine if reasonable accommodations are possible.

If an administrator(s): Principal, Director of Admission and Educational Specialist/Coordinator of Special Education, determines that St, Thomas More Catholic Academy is able to meet the child needs, the Administrator will provide the parent with a draft of a Catholic Accommodation Plan (CAP form 10) or a draft of an Individual Catholic Education Plan (ICEP form 11) to indicate the type(s) of support

that St. Thomas More Catholic Academy may be able to offer the student. Parents/guardians must review and sign the draft CAP and ICEP. The final CAP or ICEP will be written within six week of the child's admission to St Thomas More Catholic Academy.

## **Title I**

Title I is a federally funded program that provides English language and Math support for students who reside in Washington D.C. Title I services will be available for all students attending St. Thomas More Catholic Academy who qualify and or already receive services. It is offered during the school day.

## **Field Trips**

The following rules will be followed with regards to field trips:

1. Field trips are designed to correlate with teaching units and to achieve curricular goals.
2. Field trips are re-evaluated each year to determine the trips compatibility with curricular goals.
3. A field trip is a privilege and not a right.
4. There are no "traditional" field trips. Class participation in a particular field trip over consecutive years does not mean that this trip has become a school tradition.
5. Field trips are permissible for all grades when advanced planning, location, and the experience ensure a successful learning opportunity.
6. Individual teachers, in consultation with the Administration, reserve the right to restrict or deny student participation on any field trip due to, but not limited to, poor academic performance and/or poor conduct.
7. A written official permission slip, completed on both sides and signed by the parent, is required before a child will be permitted to attend a field trip activity. Verbal permission cannot be accepted. Permission slips are due in the office 24 hours prior to the field trip. Note: a fax does not take the place of an original signature.
8. A telephone call will not be accepted in lieu of the proper field trip permission slip.
9. Parents may refuse to permit their child from participating in a field trip by stating so on the proper form. Students who do not attend a field trip will remain at home with the parent and will be marked absent for the day.
10. Students who are participating in the field trip must ride to and from the field trip with their class.

11. All monies collected for the field trip are non-refundable.
12. Monies for field trips should be sent in a labeled, sealed envelope.
13. Cell phones are not allowed on field trips unless otherwise directed by the teacher and/or administration.
14. Parents who are official chaperones must be VIRTUS certified through the Archdiocese.
15. Parents who chaperone a field trip may not bring pre-school or school-age siblings on the field trip.
16. All chaperones must be 25 years of age or older.

### ***Safety Management***

#### **Child Abuse Laws**

St. Thomas More Catholic Academy abides by the Child Abuse laws of the District of Columbia and the Archdiocese of Washington D.C. This law mandates that all cases of suspected abuse and/or neglect be reported to Child Protective Services.

### ***EMERGENCY CLOSING OF SCHOOL***

St. Thomas More Catholic Academy will follow Prince George's County School System in closures and delays due to inclement weather.

In case of inclement weather, parents should listen to the local radio and television stations for updates. You will also receive a message from the school via "School Messenger" regarding closings, delayed openings, or early dismissals.

#### **We follow PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS for weather related emergencies.**

***When St. Thomas More Catholic Academy is scheduled for a 12:30 P.M. dismissal the following will be in effect:***

If **Prince George's County Public Schools** open two hours late due to inclement weather, St. Thomas More Catholic Academy will be closed.

If **Prince George's County Public Schools** have a previously scheduled teacher in-service/ "no school for scholars" day, during weather related emergencies, St. Thomas More Catholic Academy will follow the announcement of the Archdiocese of Washington.

On days of delayed openings due to inclement weather, Before Care is not available.

School may open late or close early due to inclement weather or other emergencies. It is important that the school has current emergency contact information to reach parents/guardians or other designated persons when there are early closings. Please be advised that during such emergencies, the Extended Care Program will not be offered.

### ***Non-Discrimination Policy***

St. Thomas More Catholic Academy adheres to the tenets of Title IX: "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participating in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance."

### ***DRESS CODE (ADW Reg. 3580)***

All scholars in grades PK-8 are required to be in full uniform each school day (except special days announced throughout the school year). The uniform must be worn properly pressed, sized, cleaned and without visible damage. It is strongly advised that every article of clothing be clearly labeled with the child's name and grade. **All scholars must adhere to the dress code policy from the first day of school until the last day of school.**

**\*Please see attached uniform list for detailed uniforms and schedule for wearing them.**

### ***Uniform Infractions:***

**Failure of scholars to comply with uniform and grooming policies will result in corrective actions, which may include denial of admission to class, a uniform infraction fee, and/or the student being sent home. The Principal reserves the right to make all final decisions regarding uniforms, make-up and grooming.**

### ***Dress Down "TAG" Days/Picture Day:***

On scheduled dress down "Tag" or picture days, scholars should dress in clothes appropriate for the learning environment. Should an educator or administrator determine that a scholar's attire is inappropriate; the parents will be called to bring a change of clothing for the scholar.

### ***Indoor/Outdoor Recess***

If it is raining, snowing, or the temperature drops below 32 degrees recess will be moved indoors. Otherwise students will play outside for recess. Students must participate outside with their class during recess unless a doctor's not specifies that they must stay in for medical reasons. Parents are responsible for ensuring that students are prepared for outdoor recess every day. Students should come to school with a coat, winter hat, and gloves or mittens every day during the cold season. For recess, scholars in grades Pre-K through 4th grade should bring a pair of outdoor shoes/sneakers for recess that can stay at school. For younger scholars, velcro shoes are appreciated.

### ***Telephone Use***

Permission to use the telephone must be obtained from the school secretary. The phone may be used only in cases of emergency.

### ***Visitors***

School visitors (volunteers, parents, etc.) must come to the main office. For safety and security reasons, each person is required to sign in at the office when he/she enters the building for any reason. All visitors and/or volunteers are required to wear a designated badge that may be picked up in the office. Visitors and/or volunteers are to sign out at the time of departure. Visitors who have not been fingerprinted and completed VIRTUS certification through the Archdiocese may not walk unescorted through the school building.

### ***School/Classroom Visits***

The School reserves the right to determine if and when a parent can visit a classroom. Parent visits violate the privacy rights of other students. If permission is granted, parents' visits will be limited for periods of time. Parents must schedule an appointment ahead of time, not visiting during testing or not staying longer than a specified time. There may be no more than one or two visitors at a time. Parents who fail to adhere to schools' visitation rules or who repeatedly cause disruptions can be restricted from the classroom.

### ***Volunteers***

All individuals who volunteer in the school must complete the Volunteer Sign-Up sheet and will be asked to complete VIRTUS certification. All volunteers are expected to dress appropriately. Clothing should be modest and neat. The main responsibility of a volunteer is to assist the administration or teachers.

## **Office Hours**

The Administration has set aside time from 8:00-9:00 am and 2:30-3:15 pm for designated office hours. The Administration will meet with parents on a first come, first serve basis. Preference will be given to parents who have called ahead and set up an appointment with the Office Secretary.

## **SCHOLAR RESPONSIBILITIES**

Scholars are to be committed and active members of the school community. Scholars demonstrate and show their commitment to learning by following all of the school policies and expectations including the following.

### *Uniforms and Dress Code*

*All students must be in uniform every day. There will be out-of-uniform days which will be announced during the course of the school year (a dress code for such days is included in this section). If there is a time when the prescribed uniform cannot for some legitimate reason be worn, a note from the parent/guardian must be written to the Principal. Students who are out of uniform without this excuse will be sent to the office and the parent will be called to bring the proper clothing.*

### **FALL/SPRING/WINTER UNIFORM (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday)**

\* students can wear any version of the uniform items listed below; all items must be a part of the uniform; **students must wear Flynn O Hara Khaki twill pants only.**

### **Pre-K- 2nd Grade**

Grey/Black short sleeve polo shirt w/school logo  
Flynn O Hara Khaki shorts or Khaki Twill Pants  
White Crew Socks (Boys); Red, Blk, white knee hi socks (Girls)  
Sperrys/Boat Shoes or Dirty Bucks/Oxford)  
Solid Black or Brown Belt  
Grey Plaid skirt or split front jumper  
Black cardigan sweater w/school logo  
White short/long sleeve blouse or shirt with button-down collar  
Red criss-cross tie (Girls) or Striped red/black tie (Unisex)

### **3rd-5th Grade**

Red short sleeve polo shirt w/school logo  
 Flynn O Hara Khaki shorts or Khaki Twill Pants  
 White Crew Socks (Boys); Red, Blk, white knee hi socks (Girls)  
 Sperrys/Boat Shoes or Dirty Bucks/Oxford)  
 Solid Black or Brown Belt  
 Grey Plaid skirt or split front jumper  
 Black cardigan sweater w/school logo  
 White short/long sleeve blouse or shirt with button-down collar  
 Red criss-cross tie (Girls) or Striped red/black tie (Unisex)

### **6th-8th Grade**

Black or Gold short sleeve polo shirt w/school logo  
 Flynn O Hara Khaki shorts or Khaki Twill Pants  
 White Crew Socks (Boys); Red, Blk, white knee hi socks (Girls)  
 Sperrys/Boat Shoes or Dirty Bucks/Oxford)  
 Solid Black or Brown Belt  
 Grey Plaid skirt or split front jumper  
 Black cardigan or V-neck sweater w/school logo  
 White short/long sleeve blouse or shirt with button-down collar  
 Red criss-cross tie (Girls) or Striped red/black tie (Unisex)

### **FALL/SPRING/WINTER UNIFORM (Wednesday ONIY)**

On Wednesdays scholars must be in **full professional uniform** which includes the following:

### **Grade Pre-K to 8th**

<b><u>Girls</u></b>	<b><u>Boys</u></b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Grey Plaid Skirt or Jumper <input type="checkbox"/> White short/long sleeve oxford button-down shirt <input type="checkbox"/> Flynn O Hara Khaki Twill Pants or Khaki Shorts <input type="checkbox"/> Black cardigan or V-Neck sweater w/school logo <input type="checkbox"/> Striped red, black tie <input type="checkbox"/> Black or white crew socks	<input type="checkbox"/> White short/long sleeve oxford button-down shirt <input type="checkbox"/> Flynn O Hara Khaki Twill Pants or Khaki Shorts <input type="checkbox"/> Black cardigan or V-Neck sweater w/school logo <input type="checkbox"/> Striped red, black tie <input type="checkbox"/> Black or white crew socks



<input type="checkbox"/> Sperrys/boat shoes or Dirty Bucks/Oxfords <input type="checkbox"/> Solid black or brown belt	<input type="checkbox"/> Sperrys/boat shoes or Dirty Bucks/Oxfords <input type="checkbox"/> Solid black or brown belt
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**FALL/WINTER PHYSICAL EDUCATION UNIFORM (WORN MONDAYS AND TUESDAYS for specific grades)**

- **Scholars only wear the PE uniform when they have GYM!!!**

**Girls and Boys (Grades Pre-K to 8th)**

<b><u>GIRLS</u></b>	<b><u>BOYS</u></b>
Red sweatshirt w/school logo Red sweatpants w/school logo Red micromesh nylon gym shorts w/school logo Grey shirt w/school logo Black or white CREW socks Athletic shoes	Black sweatshirt w/school logo Black sweatpants w/school logo Grey shirt w/school logo Black or white Crew Socks Athletic shoes Black micromesh nylon gym shorts w/school logo

+STM Sweatshirts can be worn over white shirts **(All Grades)**

+ Fleece jacket embroidered with School logo is all an option for **All Scholars**

+ Pants can be worn by all scholars but must be purchased from Flynn O Hara

- **Girls and Boys may wear clean and neatly kept hairstyles. Hair must be maintained with consistent healthy maintenance and care according to hair type.**
- **Girls may wear nails that are natural in color or any of the school uniform colors; they should be short to moderate in length and may be polished with school colors. Girls may wear small stud-style earrings and wristwatches. No other jewelry is to be worn with the St. Thomas More Catholic Academy uniform at any time. Additionally, no make up is permitted to be worn nor body art.**
- **Boys must wear a tie with their collared shirts year around. All students are expected to wear belts with shorts/pants and have their shirts tucked in neatly at all times. Boys may wear wristwatches, and jewelry worn must be small stud styles.**

Modesty and professionalism should guide all uniform decisions and hairstyles. Clothing should never detract from the learning experience and environment. All uniform regulations and guidelines are subject to the discretion of the principal and assistant principal.

Uniforms can be purchased at:

Flynn & O'Hara Uniforms  
Lanham Crossing Shopping Center  
8807 Annapolis Road  
Lanham, Maryland 20706  
Phone: (240)-764-4545

Order Online:

[www.flynnohara.com](http://www.flynnohara.com)

Curbside shopping is available and free shipping for online orders

## ***Technology***

### *Blogs and Social Media*

Engagement in online blogs and social media such as Facebook®, Instagram®, Twitter®, Snapchat®, KIK® etc. may result in disciplinary actions if the content of the student's blog includes defamatory comments regarding the school, the faculty, other students or the parish. All behavior that falls into the category of cyberbullying as is referenced in the ADW policies may result in disciplinary actions

### *Cell Phones*

If a scholar needs a cell phone after school due to walking home from school, entering a house where no one is home, or attending sport practices or games, he/she must turn their cell phones into the main office upon entering the school where they will remain until 3:30 or they are dismissed. Cell phones may be used for **instructional purposes with permission from the teacher starting in fifth grade.** No scholar is permitted to carry a cell phone on his or her person. Items taken away from scholars will be returned to the parent(s)/guardian(s) at the discretion of the administration and for a fee of \$25.

### *Usage*

*Acceptable Use of Technology and Internet by Scholars in Catholic Schools: Scholars*

*shall use all Technology Equipment, including, but not limited to computers, networking systems, Internet, mobile devices, communication devices, cell phones, email, social networking sites, calculators, DVD players, and cameras ("Technology Equipment") with care and respect, whether at school, at home, or elsewhere. Scholars shall not type, send or otherwise use any inappropriate or offensive words, or display, send, or otherwise use inappropriate or offensive images, sounds or messages from or on Technology Equipment. Scholars shall not use Technology Equipment in a manner which violates any local, state or federal laws. Scholars shall immediately report to a teacher or supervising staff member any inappropriate material or misuse of Technology Equipment of which the scholar becomes aware. Scholars shall not use Technology Equipment in any way to engage in cyberbullying behavior. Any scholar use of cell phones and mobile devices during school hours is prohibited, with the exception of medical emergencies.*

*When using the School's Technology Equipment, all scholar: shall not reconfigure any school hardware, software, or network settings; shall print, download, or otherwise transfer only that information approved by the teacher or supervisor; shall obtain the permission of a educator or supervisor before loading a file or disk onto a school computer; shall not use any school Technology Equipment to create, store, transfer or use software or electronic content in a manner which violates the rights of the holder of copyright in the software or the content; shall not plagiarize works on the Internet; shall not load any software onto school computers without first obtaining the educator's permission; shall only use the Internet for school-related projects and shall visit only the sites assigned by the educator; shall not "surf" the Internet or visit "Facebook," or any other social networking websites while at school; shall not log-on to the Internet without permission from a educator or supervising staff member; shall not give out, post, or otherwise distribute personal information such as photographs, home addresses, telephone numbers, parents work addresses or telephone numbers or the name and location of the school.*

*Each scholar's parent/guardian must review the Technology and Internet Usage Agreement with the scholar and sign and return the Agreement during the first week of each school year.*

### *Equipment Fines*

The following fees will be applied to accounts of parents if the scholar(s) damages any school property:

1. Technology Damage Fee: \$125

2. Lost or Damage Book Fee: \$75 per book
3. School Property: \$50

### *Gum*

Scholars should not chew gum at school at any time. This includes before and after, as well as during school. Disciplinary action will occur for any scholar chewing gum during the course of the school day.

### *Library*

Scholars are encouraged to check books out of our school library; there are some books on sharing shelves that can be taken for your at home library as well. Scholars must return books back to school by their due dates or they will incur late fees for borrowed books.

## **PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

### *GOVERNANCE*

St. Thomas More Catholic Academy is governed by an **Advisory Board** that operates together with our **Administrative Team** under the aegis of the **Archdiocese of Washington** and the direction of the **Consortium of Catholic Academies** and the **Home School Association (HSA)**.

- **The Advisory Board** provides advice and assistance to the school's administrative team, to aid in its mission on behalf of St. Thomas More Catholic Academy, to integrate Catholic philosophy and teaching with academic excellence. In performing its advisory function, the Board respects the established policies and practices as set forth by the Archdiocesan Office of Education, the Pastor and School Principal, and the **Consortium of Catholic Academies**. The Advisory Board meets monthly.
- **The Archdiocese of Washington** sets and evaluates the school's policies and mode of operation.
- **The Consortium of Catholic Academies** provides property development, staff training, and fiscal oversight for school operations.
- **The Administrative Team** is composed of the Principal and the Pastor of St. Thomas More parish. It is responsible for the day-to-day running of the school and implementation of its policies and procedures.

- **The Home School Association (HSA)** provides advice and assistance to the school's administrative team in the daily operations of the school. Its singular purpose is to foster collaboration between parents and educators and promote the well-being of St. Thomas More Catholic Academy. The HSA meets a minimum of four times a year; meetings are called by the members of the Executive Committee comprising the President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Hospitality Chairperson, Educator Representative Community Liaison, Pastor and Principal. **Parents are required to attend at least 3 HSA meetings.**

The HSA shall:

1. Provide accurate and up-to-date information to the school's administrative team on all matters aimed at improving the school.
2. Recommend, promote, and coordinate fundraising activities to support the operation expenses of the school.
3. Make positive suggestions to the school's administrative team, to promote the growth of the school.

### **SERVICE CREDIT PROGRAM (SCP)**

We believe that parent/educator involvement is the cornerstone of an effective school. Active parent participation builds community between families and the school, thereby providing Christian role models, academic excellence, an arena for support, and a forum for clarifying Christian values. Therefore, all families, including any adult family members, are required to earn a minimum of 75 service credits each school year. Families who are unable to meet this obligation will pay \$1.00 for every service credit not served, not to exceed \$75.00 per school year.

The school registrar tracks service credits. Parents must sign in with this person to receive credit. A booklet outlining service definitions will be available in September.

### **PARENT EXPECTATIONS**

Make tuition payments in full for ten consecutive months, by the tenth of each month starting July 2018.

Make arrangements to have your child (ren) picked up after school or before. Extended care service closes at 6:00 p.m. daily.

Pay all late fees associated with Aftercare Service, if your child is not picked up within the specified timeframe.

Pay Scholar Activity Fee. A \$200 fee per scholar payable throughout the course of the school year.

Schedule a conference with your child's educator at least twice each year.

Update your child's medical records each year.

## **PARENT/GUARDIAN COOPERATION**

**Parents/Guardians and scholars understand and acknowledge the Roman Catholic religious nature of St. Thomas More Catholic Academy.**

**Parents/Guardians and scholars agree and support the unique identity that St. Thomas More Catholic Academy derives from its Catholic faith.**

**Parents/Guardians shall cooperate fully with the school and the scholars shall participate in all required school programming, including instruction in the Catholic faith and attendance at Mass. As the primary educators of the scholars, parents/guardians agree to act in ways that promote the best interests of the church and school and will comply with the policies of the Archdiocese of Washington and St. Thomas More Catholic Academy.**

## **PARENTS AS PARTNERS**

### **Lines of Communication (ADW Reg. 2500)**

**Archdiocesan Catholic schools communities, with regard to all school-related matters, shall communicate within a prescribed sequence, based on levels of responsibility consistent with canon law and in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity:**

- 1. Scholar/parent;**
- 2. Educator;**
- 3. Principal;**
- 4. President of the CCA;**
- 5. Pastor;**
- 6. Catholic Schools Office;**
- 7. Superintendent;**
- 8. Secretary of Education.**

As partners in the educational process at St. Thomas More Catholic Academy, we ask parents:

To set rules, times, and limits so that your child:

- Gets to bed early on school nights;
- Arrives at school on time and is picked up on time at the end of the day;
- Is dressed according to the school dress code;
- Completes assignments on time; and
- Has lunch money or nutritional sack lunch every day.

To actively participate in school activities such as Parent-Educator Conferences;

To see that the scholar pays for any damage to school books or property due to carelessness or neglect on the part of the scholar;

To notify the school with a written note when the scholar has been absent or tardy;

To notify the school office of any changes of address or important phone numbers;

To meet all financial obligations to the school **No records will be sent to transferring schools of scholars' whose financial commitment is in arrears. All scholars' record requests must come with a completed St. Thomas More Records Release form. (ADW Reg. 3591);**

To inform the school of any special situation regarding the scholar's well-being, educational needs, safety, and health;

To complete and return to school any requested information promptly;

To read school notes and newsletters and to show interest in the scholar's total education;

To support the religious and educational goals of the school;

To attend Mass/Church and teach the Catholic/Christian faith by word and example;

To support and cooperate with the discipline policy of the school;

To treat educators with respect and courtesy in discussing scholar problems.

### **Parent's Role in Education**

We, at St. Thomas More Catholic Academy, consider it a privilege to work with parents in the education of children because we believe parents are the primary

educators of their children. Therefore, it is your right and your duty to become the primary role models for the development of your child's life---physically, mentally, spiritually, emotionally, and psychologically. Your choice of St. Thomas More Catholic Academy involves a commitment and exhibits a concern for helping your child to recognize God as the greatest good in his/her life.

Good example is the strongest educator. Your personal relationship with God, with each other, and with the Church community will affect the way your child relates to God and others. Ideals taught in school are not well rooted in the child unless these are nurtured by the example of good Catholic/Christian morality and by an honest personal relationship with God in your family life.

Once you have chosen to enter into a partnership with us at St. Thomas More Catholic Academy, we trust you will be loyal to this commitment. During these formative years (Pre-K3 to 8), your child needs constant support from both parents and faculty in order to develop his/her moral, intellectual, social, cultural, and physical endowment. Neither parents nor educators can afford to doubt the sincerity of the efforts of their educational partner in the quest of challenging, yet nourishing, the scholar to reach his/her potential. It is vital that both parents and educators remember that allowing oneself to be caught between the scholar and the other partner will never have positive results. To divide authority between school and home or within the home will only teach disrespect of all authority. If there is an incident at school, you as parents must make investigation of the complete story your first step. Evidence of mutual respect between parents and educators will model good mature behavior and relationships.

Educators are naturally eager to grow and learn. However, sometimes in the process of maturation new interests may cause them to lose focus. As this natural process occurs, the scholar needs both understanding and discipline. At times, your child may perceive discipline as restrictive. However, it is boundaries and limits which provide a young person with both guidance and security.

It is essential that a child take responsibility for grades he/she has earned and be accountable for homework, long-term assignments, major tests, service projects, and all other assignments. This responsibility also extends to times of absence.

Together, let us begin this year with a commitment to partnership as we support one another in helping your child to become the best person he/she is capable of becoming.

St. Thomas More Catholic Academy reserves the right to amend this Handbook.  
Notice of amendments will be sent to parents in writing.  
Final decisions regarding all policies will be at the discretion of the school administration.

### **POINTS OF CONTACT**



The School: 202.561.1189  
Website: [www.stmdc.org](http://www.stmdc.org)  
School email: [stm@catholicacademies.org](mailto:stm@catholicacademies.org)

### **Parent Acknowledgement**

All parents must sign off in TADS that they have read the handbook and are willing to support the school's mission, beliefs, and policies. If there are any questions, please contact Principal Gerald D. Smith Jr.