

St. Thomas More Catholic School
920 Carmichael Street
Chapel Hill, NC 27514
919.929.1546 (PreK-Grade 5) ❖❖❖ 919.929.2241 (Grades 6 - 8)
www.st-thomasmore.org/School

WELCOME!

Dear Parents,

We are happy to welcome you to St. Thomas More Catholic School. As your children begin a new year of educational opportunity and Christian involvement, we ask for your cooperation. Our school philosophy is built on the conviction that you, the parents, are the primary educators. You have entrusted to us a share in this important responsibility. Only by parents and teachers working together and showing mutual respect can we hope to achieve what is best for each child here at St. Thomas More. Please take advantage of every opportunity to work with the school in building positive attitudes toward spiritual and academic endeavors.

This handbook has been compiled to acquaint you with the objectives, policies, and procedures of St. Thomas More Catholic School. Please read it carefully and keep it in a handy place for future reference. Should you have any questions regarding a particular item or something not contained in this booklet, please feel free to call the school.

May the Lord Jesus be with all parents and teachers of St. Thomas More Catholic School as we accept the challenge of Catholic education in the year ahead.

Sincerely,



Sister Catherine Michael, SSJ, Principal
srcatherinefee@st-thomasmore.org

STM Faculty and Staff
2007-2008

St. Thomas More Catholic School is a viable part of the total religious education program of St. Thomas More Parish. The Sisters of St. Joseph of Philadelphia operate this school in accordance with policies established by the Office of Education of the Raleigh Diocese.

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MISSION OF ST. THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Our mission is to provide an education for each child in a God-centered environment.

BELIEFS:

- The principles of Catholic Christianity are the basis of our existence.
- The parents are the primary educators of their children.
- Students should be respected as individuals who learn differently.
- Teachers' reasonable expectations guide students toward developing responsibility, self-discipline, creativity, and compassion.
- Students learn to value the ministry of community service.
- Education encourages teachers, parents, and students to be life-long learners.

ACCREDITATION

St. Thomas More Catholic School is accredited through the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).

ADMISSION POLICIES

Schools in the Diocese of Raleigh, mindful of their primary mission as effective instruments of the educational ministry of the Church and witnesses to the love of Christ for all persons, shall not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, national or ethnic origin in the administration of educational policies, admission policies, scholarship programs, and other school administered programs.

Openings in the school will be filled in the following order:

1. Children already in the school who wish to reapply.
2. Siblings of children enrolled in the school as of June 2006-2007.
3. STM Parishioners - applies to all REGISTERED AND CONTRIBUTING members of the parish.

To be eligible for acceptance and parish tuition rates for the **2007-2008** school year, you must meet the following criteria:

- REGISTERED

Have been registered at St. Thomas More Church for one year as of March 15, 2007 unless you recently moved into the Triangle area. If you have recently moved into this area, documentation **must** be provided by your previous parish verifying that you were a registered, active, and contributing member of that parish.

- CONTRIBUTING

Have contributed financially to the support of the Church in a regular and identifiable way through parish envelopes or checks since March 15, 2007. Contributions cannot be made in a lump sum and cannot be made retroactive in order to qualify for the reduced tuition rate.

If your tuition payments are delinquent for two months, you are in danger of losing your child's eligibility to continue his/her education for the rest of the year.

4. Other Catholics - supporting documentation should be provided.

5. Other applicants.

If there are more applicants in any of the above categories than there are available openings, selections for admittance for future openings will be made from the waiting list.

STUDENTS ENTERING FROM OTHER SCHOOLS:

The Principal or the Administrative Assistant of St. Thomas More Catholic School reserves the right to interview all children transferring from other schools and the parents of those children. We require copies of standardized scores, report cards, teacher recommendations, and any other samples of schoolwork that will help us to assess the child's academic readiness. We reserve the right to test any new applicant to determine his/her grade level, placement and acceptance, and to do screening for PreK applicants. If we determine that we cannot meet the needs of the student, the parents will be advised to seek other placement.

AGE AND REGISTRATION REQUISITES:

Children must be four years old by September 1st to enter pre-kindergarten, five years old by September 1st to enter kindergarten and six years old by September 1st to enter the first grade.

All new students must present original birth and baptismal certificates as well as a complete record of immunizations. For PreK, teacher/parent assessment forms must be filled out and submitted. For kindergarten, a teacher assessment form must be filled out and submitted. For grades 1-8 two teacher recommendations and a copy of at least the last two year's report cards are required for registration. Payment of a registration fee is required to complete the registration process.

IMMUNIZATIONS:

All students are required to be up-to-date with immunizations. State law requires the following minimum doses:

- 5 DPT Shots (one required dose after 4th birthday)
- 4 ORAL POLIO VACCINE DOSES (one required dose after 4th birthday)
- 2 MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) after 15 months of age.
- 3 HIB Vaccines

RE-ENROLLMENT OF STUDENTS:

Re-enrollment for students currently attending St. Thomas More Catholic School will occur in early January. If tuition payments have not been kept up-to-date, re-enrollment will not be accepted. Registration of new students will occur in February. **If we determine that we cannot meet the needs of a student or if the student is interfering with the education of other students, we reserve the right to refuse re-registration.** We will do all that we can to assist parents in finding an alternative that would best serve the needs of that child.

AFTER SCHOOL CARE PROGRAM

St. Thomas More's After School Care Program is available from 2:45 to 5:45 p.m. on school days. It is not available on school holidays or teacher workdays. You may contact the After School Director at 919.967.8561.

Time is given for snack, homework, outdoor play, arts and crafts, movies, and holiday festivities. This program ends each day promptly at 5:45 p.m.

It is expected that the children obey all of the regular school rules during the After School Care Program. If the child's behavior is a problem and efforts to remedy the situation fail, the child will be dismissed from the program. This will be done at the discretion of the After School Care Program Director and the Principal, after having consulted with the parents and the child.

Delinquent fees of more than one month will cause your child to lose the privilege to participate in After School Care.

Parents must notify the Secretary in the lower school office two weeks prior to withdrawal from this program.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

School is in session from 8:00 a.m. to 2:45 p.m. THE SCHOOL DOES NOT ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY FOR STUDENTS BEFORE 7:40 a.m. OR AFTER 3:10 p.m. When children arrive in the morning, they should go directly to the gym where they will meet their teacher(s).

IF YOU CANNOT PICK-UP YOUR CHILD/CHILDREN BY 3:10 p.m., YOU MUST ENROLL THEM IN THE AFTER SCHOOL CARE PROGRAM. This applies to all students participating in after-school activities.

Any child not picked up by 3:10 p.m. will be taken to the After School Care office. You will need to come in and sign them out. There will be a fee of \$10.00 per 15 minute period beginning at 3:10 p.m./2:10 p.m. (first Wednesdays) with no exception. For example: 3:10 to 3:25 will be \$10.00, and 3:25 to 3:40 will be \$20.00, and so forth.

Entrance to the school grounds for student drop-off and pick-up should be made using the following traffic pattern:

Drop-off: In order to facilitate a courteous and quick drop off each morning, we have **parent volunteers** directing traffic. Please follow their directions regarding traffic flow. In general, all cars must enter the north drive (near the Youth House) and proceed to the back circle near the gym. Continue to the front of the lower school building where you drop off the children, then proceed past the upper school building, and exit out the south drive. No child is to be dropped off at the upper school.

Pick-up: Again, all cars must enter the north drive and proceed to the back circle. If you are picking up Kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd graders only, you may exit back out the north drive. If you are picking up other students continue from the back circle to the front of the lower school building for grades 3, 4, 5, and then proceeding to the church building for grades 6, 7, 8 and exiting out the south drive.

At dismissal, **DO NOT PARK YOUR CAR ON THE ACCESS ROAD. If you park in the church parking lot you must walk down to pick up your child/children and take them to the car.**

For those picking up children in the carpool lines at the rear of the building please do not enter the parking lot area before 2:30 p.m. since students are still outside at this time. Remain at the Youth House until the area is completely vacated by our children.

PLEASE BE SURE THAT YOUR CHILD KNOWS WHERE HE OR SHE IS TO BE PICKED UP. ONCE YOU HAVE CHOSEN A PICK UP SPOT, PLEASE STAY WITH IT FOR THE YEAR. If your child is going home with someone other than the regular driver, please send a note to the teacher informing him/her of this arrangement and be sure your child is aware of the change for that day.

Students are dismissed as follows:

- Pre-Kindergarten.....from the front porch**
- Kdg., 1, 2at the side gym door nearest the playground**
- Grades 3, 4, 5.....in front of the school**
- Grades 6, 7, 8.....in front of the church**

PARKING DURING THE DAY:

During the school day, cars may park on the service road. Do not park along the sidewalk in front of either school because it is a Fire Lane and will block traffic. **Parking spaces in front of the lower school are reserved for faculty and church office use.** Additional parking spaces are available across from the upper school and in the church parking lot. **PLEASE USE THE LOT FARTHEST FROM THE SCHOOL FIRST. IF PARKING IN THE SECOND LOT IS NECESSARY DURING THE SCHOOL DAY, PLEASE AVOID PARKING UNDER THE BASKETBALL NETS.**

BUS TRANSPORTATION:

Bus transportation is available and must be arranged by the parents. Please contact Chapel Hill Transit EZ Ride at 968.2772. This is a free service.

ATTENDANCE

Parents are to call the appropriate school office by 9:00 am if their child will not be attending school. Lower school (grades K-5) call 929-1546 and Upper school (grades 6-8) call 929.2241.

To achieve Perfect Attendance a student must be in attendance all day, every day with no tardys.

The State of North Carolina requires students to attend classes 180 days per year. Students are expected to attend classes every day unless sickness or family emergencies arise which make absence necessary. In case of absence, the parents or guardian must call the school and give the following information: the child's name, his or her class, the reason for his or her absence, and the name of the person calling. **Upon returning to school, the student must bring a note explaining the absence. When a child is absent for three consecutive days or more, a doctor's note is required for readmission. The school has a legal obligation to keep these notes until the end of the school year.** Excessive absences may result in the need to make up portions of missed work.

Parents who wish to take their child out of school for personal reasons should consider that their child is missing daily classroom instruction and the introduction of new concepts. The parents and child assume responsibility for any work that is missed due to vacations or other personal absences. **Teachers are NOT required to provide homework in advance for the convenience of families going on trips during the regular school year. If a teacher agrees to give homework in advance these assignments must be completed and handed in THE DAY THE STUDENT RETURNS TO SCHOOL. Failure to turn in assignments will result in no credit.**

Students who do not receive assignments in advance have one day per absence to complete and turn in assignments. Example: If a student is absent three days, then the student has three days to complete and turn in all homework and assignments. This policy applies to illness as well as personal absences.

The St. Thomas More Catholic School Administration reserves the right to re-evaluate a student's eligibility for re-enrollment or promotion if absences exceed 30 days during the school year.

TARDY REGULATIONS

We begin our day with prayer and announcements in the gym at **8:00 a.m.** Please adhere to this time, as punctuality is an **essential** component for beginning a successful and productive

school day. Students who arrive after **8:00 a.m.** will be marked tardy. Parents will be notified if chronic tardiness is a problem. Documentation will be sent home from the personnel in the offices when five tardies have accumulated in one grading period. If the tardiness continues, parents will be called in to meet with the principal. When a child arrives late, the parent **must** come to the office to sign in the child.

RELEASE DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

We discourage doctor and dental appointments during school hours unless absolutely necessary. EARLY DISMISSAL FOR EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES IS UNACCEPTABLE. When a child does need to leave early, **written permission** is required. Phone calls are not permitted. This written request should state the exact time and name of the person who is to come for the child and this request should be given to the homeroom teacher. Students will not be allowed to wait in the office for a parent to pick them up. **WHEN AN AUTHORIZED ADULT IS THERE TO SIGN HIM / HER OUT, THE CHILD WILL BE CALLED TO THE OFFICE. Parents or designated adults are not to go to classrooms to pick up children.** No child will be permitted to leave the school premises without written permission. **CHILDREN MAY NOT BE PICKED UP OUTSIDE THE BUILDING.** If the custody or guardianship of the child is in question, please notify the principal so that special arrangements can be made.

BOOKS AND SUPPLIES

Students will be given a list of supplies (crayons, pencils, scissors, etc.) at the beginning and end of the school year. School supply listings are also available on our website-www.st-thomasmore.org/School. Some supplies are bought by the school in bulk and sold to the students so that there is uniformity for organizational reasons (assignment books, for example).

All textbooks are to be neatly **covered** during the entire school year to protect the life of the book. We expect workbooks and consumable books to be kept in a neat manner. Damaged covers are to be replaced immediately. The student must pay for the replacement of lost or destroyed books. School bags are necessary to keep books and papers protected while traveling to and from school. School bags with **wheels are not permitted** without official medical documentation.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS AND/OR PHONE NUMBER

The school office and the homeroom teacher should be given written notice immediately of any change of address and/or phone number so that the student's records can be kept current. The office should also be notified if there is a change in the person who is to be contacted in case of an emergency. Complete home addresses and phone numbers are necessary for every student enrolled in our school.

CLOSING OF SCHOOL (EMERGENCY OR INCLEMENT WEATHER)

If the school needs to be closed due to weather or emergency conditions, St. Thomas More will announce the particulars on the radio stations WCHL (1360) and the TV stations WTVD and channel WRAL. Tune into these stations, or check their websites, if there is a question about the **opening or closing** of school.

COMMUNICATIONS

A school newsletter, *The Knight Times*, is published on the first and third Wednesdays of each month. The intent of these newsletters is to keep parents informed of all school events so that each family will have a better understanding of what is happening at school. The newsletter is available online at www.st-thomasmore.org/School. Submissions to *The Knight Times* are to be e-mailed to jfoster@st-thomasmore.org no later than the Thursday before publication.

Internal class email addresses are to be used for school related functions only. H S A General email is for school related information only.

Early dismissal policy: When it is necessary for your child/ren to leave school prior to dismissal, please send in written communication to classroom teachers. Additionally, if your ordinary pick-up plans are changed, a note must be given to the homeroom teacher, regarding that change. Please do not call this information into the office.

Office personnel will not be responsible for delivering messages to students regarding change in plans that are received after 2:00 p.m.

Party invitations, etc. **may not** be distributed at school. All school communications must be approved by the principal prior to forwarding to the teacher. Please be sure the **sender's** name is on the communication and that the teacher receives a copy in advance.

CONDUCT CODE

St. Thomas More Catholic School has the authority to make reasonable and necessary rules governing the conduct of students in school. All students are considered to be under the jurisdiction of these regulations while on the school premises or while participating at any school-related activity.

Students whose conduct is unsatisfactory and who violate good order and common sense are subject to disciplinary action.

Students in grades 6-8 will be following a demerit system for policy infractions. Students are notified upon receiving a demerit and the total will be recorded on progress reports and report cards. Students receiving 7 or more demerits in a quarter are automatically disqualified from honors.

The grading scale for demerits (accumulated per grading period) is as follows:

0-3 demerits= 1
4-6 demerits= 2
7-9 demerits= 3
10-12 demerits= 4
13 or more demerits=5

Demerits will be given for consistent disregard for uniform policy and gum chewing. Classroom teachers have the prerogative to set their classroom rules.

If students violate school policies, rules, or regulations, they will be subject to the following disciplinary actions as determined by the Principal/Administrative Assistant/teacher.

1. **Denial of Privileges:**

Students may be excluded from school sponsored activities and otherwise denied privileges that are normally afforded them.

2. **Detention:**

If corrective discipline or detention is warranted, that decision will be made by the Principal/Administrative Assistant/teacher. If an after school detention is assigned, it will be served at school Thursday afternoon, from 3:00 – 4:30. Parents will be notified in advance if a detention is to be served.

3. **Suspension, Expulsion and Dismissal Policy and Procedure:**

A student's suspension or expulsion is dependent ultimately on the decision of the Principal.

Serious offenses may accrue multiple demerits. They include the following:

Bullying
Fighting
Lying
Verbal harassment
Cheating
Vandalism
Defiant actions
Littering school property
Disrupting class
Using profane or inappropriate language or gestures

In more serious cases where weapons or illegal substances are involved, police will be notified immediately and the student will be subject to suspension or possible expulsion by the Principal.

CONFERENCES

All parents are invited to attend a conference with their child's teacher(s) at the end of the first report card period. These conferences are assigned by the school with preference given to families with more than one child. If a parent wishes to contact the child's teacher, at any time, a note should be sent to the teacher and the parent will be contacted in return. Third quarter conferences are optional and are initiated by either the teacher or at a parent's request.

CURRICULUM

St. Thomas More offers its students an excellent curriculum based on the Diocesan Curriculum Guides, the Standard Course of Study of the State of North Carolina, and National Standards. Curriculum modification will be made for students only after collaboration with the school's Principal, the child's teacher, and a consulting professional. If the school administration determines that the needs of a student cannot be met, parents will be advised to seek other placement.

Each student will be placed in an appropriate classroom as determined by the Principal in collaboration with school faculty.

MATH PLACEMENT

The following is a list of criteria that we consider in placing a 6th grade student into 7th grade Math or Pre-Algebra and placing a 7th grade student into an 8th grade Introduction to Algebra or 8th grade Algebra 1.

1. A student must have a National Stanine of 7 or above in Math total on the IOWA Test of Basic Skills in grades 5, 6, and 7.
2. A student's grade average and test average must be at least 90% for the entire year in grades 5 or 6 to qualify for 7th grade Pre-Algebra.
3. A student must be consistent with daily assignments and homework and be self-motivated. The Algebra 1 program's pace is much quicker than these students have experienced in the last two years (they are expected to cover 11 chapters as opposed to 5 or 6 chapters during the past two years). Completing Pre-Algebra in one year in 7th grade will also require a much quicker pace than that experienced in the 6th grade.
4. A student must be recommended by both 6th and 7th grade teachers for placement into Algebra 1 in 8th grade and for placement into 7th grade Pre-Algebra. The final decision lies with the Principal.

Three of the above four requirements are need for placement into Pre-Algebra in 7th grade or Algebra 1 in 8th grade.

Our criteria are in keeping with the latest, "Council of Teachers of Mathematics, which focuses guidelines that describe the crucial skills and content students should master in that subject in elementary and middle school. The Councils new standards focus upon a return to basics.

NCTM released its Curriculum Focal Points, which identifies three important mathematical topics at each level, pre-kindergarten through grade 8. Critics of how math is taught in the United States have long derided what they call the mile wide, inch deep approach to the subject, in which teachers bounce from topic to topic, without encouraging mastery of the most important concepts.” (Education Week notes) For a full copy of the report go to <http://www.nctm.org/focalpoints/>

POLICY FOR STUDENTS FAILING COURSES IN GRADE 6-8

A child must go to summer school, or an equivalent, such as the Hill Center or Sylvan Learning Center and provide documentation of the material covered during the summer. If an individual attends summer school, that individual will still be placed in the slower-paced math group for the upcoming year.

If the student does not successfully complete a summer school math program, that student will repeat the failed Math level at our school next year (even if it is with a class that is younger).

If a student fails two core subjects, he/she will not be permitted to return to our school.

Parents **should not** make requests for class or teacher preferences to the Principal or to any faculty member.

DIRECTORY

A school directory is distributed in the fall. This is for **SCHOOL BUSINESS ONLY**. **It is not to be used for any type of solicitation or given to anyone else.**

EMERGENCY FORMS

Emergency forms are sent home at the beginning of the school year. Please fill in the names, addresses, and phone numbers of responsible adults who can be contacted in case of an emergency or if a child becomes ill during the school day. **PLEASE KEEP ALL ADDRESSES, PHONE NUMBERS...including cell phones, and e-mail addresses UP TO DATE.** It is extremely important that we can reach a designated adult.

FIELD TRIPS

Diocesan policy states that St. Thomas More Catholic School does not arrange transportation for field trips. Parents will have the responsibility of coordinating car pools and transportation. Each homeroom teacher will require a parent to fill this position. This policy also holds true when athletic teams play off campus.

Chaperones will be given a list of the students in their assigned group and will be instructed to report all incidents of misconduct to the teacher in charge. The teacher will then report to the Principal. When driving on a field trip, it is important to adhere to the schedule as directed by

the teacher and not to make any other stops. Siblings are not to be brought on field trips since this distracts the parents from properly monitoring the children in their charge.

Any issues involving inappropriate behavior will result in **loss of field trip privileges** or other disciplinary measures deemed necessary by the Principal.

Permission slips must be signed by the parent or guardian and received prior to the trip. A school form will be sent home prior to the trip for this purpose. VERBAL PERMISSION IS NOT ACCEPTABLE.

GRIEVANCE POLICY

In order to secure an equitable solution to complaints or school-related problems, the following procedure should be taken:

1. A concerned parent should contact the teacher directly with concerns in written form.
2. A conference between parent(s) and the teacher may be scheduled after initial contact.
3. If agreement on a solution is not reached, a conference should be scheduled involving the teacher, parent(s), and school administrator.

HOME AND SCHOOL ASSOCIATION (H S A)

This organization functions to provide a framework whereby parents and school personnel can share in the process of educating our children. Its purpose is to provide continued communication between the home and school.

H S A raises funds primarily through wrapping paper sales and an annual auction. All money raised by this organization directly benefits the students by enriching existing programs, providing various teaching aids for the school, helping with the playground expansion, funding Enrichment Committees, and carrying out other projects which help maintain a pleasant atmosphere for all students, faculty and staff.

The H S A sponsors four general meetings a year. Meetings are for fun, fellowship, and updates on H S A activities. The dates of these meetings are on the monthly calendar and are also announced in *The Knight Times*. Information about H S A committees is sent home at the beginning of each school year.

All parents are considered members of this Association. Parent volunteers are needed throughout the year as grade parents, lunch program workers, library aides, field trip chaperones, art helpers, playground supervisors, and lab assistants. Volunteer help is vital to the operation of our school community, and there is a place for every person to help.

The Parents as Partners Program (PPP) is sponsored by the H S A. All families are encouraged to participate by giving thirty hours of service per year to the various activities throughout the school. Single-parent families are encouraged to participate in fifteen hours of service. These hours are tracked through the use of individual spread sheets. Coupons are available at both upper and lower schools for the convenience of tracking your hours. A family may keep records of volunteer activities on a single sheet of paper which must include dates, hours served and activity and turn this in to the office each semester if they choose.

HOMWORK POLICY

Homework will be assigned at the discretion of the teacher. In general, the rule of thumb for homework is 10 minutes for each year of school:

10 minutes for Kindergarten

20 minutes for First graders

30 minutes for Second graders

40 minutes for Third graders

50 minutes for Fourth graders

60 minutes for Fifth graders

70 minutes for Sixth graders

80 minutes for Seventh graders

90 minutes for Eighth graders

10 minute increments per grade level beginning at the kindergarten level through 8th grade which would equal 90 minutes. Incomplete or late homework assignments will result in a lower grade. Each teacher will inform the parents of his/her policy regarding parent signatures on tests or any other schoolwork. In cases of emergencies or sickness, parents must provide a note for extensions on assignment deadlines. **Teachers are NOT required to provide homework in advance for the convenience of families going on trips during the regular school year. If a teacher agrees to give homework in advance, these assignments must be completed and handed in THE DAY THE STUDENT RETURNS TO SCHOOL. Failure to turn in assignments on that day will result in no credit.**

Students who do not receive assignments in advance have one day per absence to complete and turn in assignments. Example: If a student is absent three days, then the student has three days to complete and turn in the homework and assignments. This policy applies to illness as well as personal absences.

It is a parent's responsibility to inform the office of a student's absence. This notification must be received by **9:00 a.m.** If homework is requested, it will be ready for pick-up at **3:00 p.m.** in the appropriate school office.

LITURGY

Our children prepare the liturgies which are celebrated most Fridays at 10:30 a.m. during the school year, with the exception of holy days and school breaks. Parents are welcome to attend these weekly liturgies. Cameras and videos are not permitted at these services.

LUNCHES

Students may bring a lunch from home or purchase lunch each day. Order forms are available on our school website: <http://school.st-thomasmore.org> through the H S A link. Participation in the federally-funded milk program may be arranged at the beginning of the school year. We do not allow carbonated beverages and/or drinks in glass containers. Forgotten lunches are to be brought to the office. Parents please DO NOT take them directly to the classroom.

MEDICATIONS

Children may need medication for short periods of time to enable them to remain in school. Every effort should be made by the parent to secure the physician's permission to adjust the prescribed dosage so it can be given at home before and after school hours. If this is not possible, it is the parent's responsibility to provide a written communication (a form is available in the school office) stating when and how to administer the medication.

When the school has the parent's request to administer medication, it is the parent's responsibility to provide the medication in the original labeled container. This includes the child's name, the name of the medication, the unit dosage to be given, the time the medication is to be given, and how it is to be administered.

Physician prescribed medications will only be administered by the school nurse during school hours. NO CHILD MAY SELF-MEDICATE. The school will not accept responsibility for students who do. The school will not administer any medications without the proper form signed by a parent. If your child has allergies that are life threatening, the nurse, your child's teacher(s), and the school administration/staff should be notified.

STUDENTS WHO ARE SICK MAY NOT REMAIN AT SCHOOL. Parents will be notified by the nurse/office when a student is too sick to remain at school. Any child with a temperature at 100 or above may not remain at school. Parents **MUST** come to the school immediately and take their child home. A child must be fever-free for 24 hours before returning to school.

MONEY

Whenever it is necessary to send money to school, please put it in a **SEALED ENVELOPE** with your child's name, homeroom, amount enclosed, and purpose clearly marked on the front. CHECKS ARE PREFERABLE AND SHOULD BE MADE OUT TO ST. THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC SCHOOL UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED.

REPORT CARDS

Midway through the first three marking periods, Progress Reports are sent home. Midway through the fourth marking period **failure notices** will be sent home.

Report cards are issued four times each year for students in grades 1 through 8.

The evaluations in kindergarten are called progress reports sent home in January and June.

TIME, TALENT, AND TREASURE

At the end of each quarter, there is a celebration following the weekly 8:30 a.m. school Mass, in which students are recognized for various school sponsored activities.

At the same time children in grades 4*- 8 are recognized for their academic achievement and character formation. Students are eligible to receive academic honors under the following conditions:

First Honors

- 93 or above in all academic subjects
- One or two in all other areas

Second Honors

- 85 or above in all academic subjects
- One or two in all other areas

***Fourth graders will be eligible to receive academic honors at the end of the third quarter.**

SCHOOL ADVISORY BOARD

The School Advisory Board is designed to assist and advise the Principal, who in turn is accountable to the Pastor. The Principal, with the Advisory Board's assistance, will be better able to provide quality Catholic education.

The School Advisory Board:

- creates better understanding of Catholic education,
- cooperates with and supports the principal in her role as defined by the diocese,
- assists the principal in formulating the annual budget,
- promotes positive relationships between the school and the community,
- assists the principal in evaluating the maintenance of the school facilities,

- promotes the school through media and publications,
- supports the school through the writing of grants,
- establishes an Alumni Association,
- and publicizes Endowment Funds.

The School Advisory Board meets each month. The date is printed in *The Knight Times* and on the monthly calendar. Minutes of the school board meetings are available in the school office. Parents are welcome to come and observe the meetings.

STUDENT PERMANENT RECORDS

Parents have the right to access their child's records. If a parent wishes to review the records, a request must be made in writing to the principal twenty-four hours in advance.

TELEPHONE USE

You can reach the lower school by calling 929.1546 and the upper school by calling 929.2241. Please call between 8:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m., which are the school office hours. We will be happy to help you with any questions or requests. Students may use the phone for emergency purposes only. **Forgotten items (i.e. lunches or homework) are not considered an emergency.**

Students who bring cell phones to school, must turn them off when they arrive on school premises and keep them turned off until 2:45 p.m. Students who disregard this policy will have their cell phone taken away. They will lose the privilege of having their cell phone at school for one month. Parents will be required to come to the office to retrieve the phone.

TESTING

The **Iowa Test of Basic Skills** is administered in grades 3-8 in the fall. The **Cognitive Abilities Test** is also given to students in grade 5 as part of the Iowa testing. The results of these tests are sent home when the testing company returns them. The Writing Test is administered to students in grades 4 and 7 later in the year. The 8th graders will take **The Computer Literacy Test** as designated by the State of North Carolina. **The Algebra I Exam** will also be administered.

TRANSFER OF SCHOOL RECORDS

When a student transfers from St. Thomas More Catholic School, a written request to release the records must be presented to the school office. The student's records are then mailed to the new school.

TUITION

The tuition scale is prepared by the financial committee of the St. Thomas More Catholic School Advisory Board in collaboration with the Principal with final approval by the Parish Administrator and the Finance Council of the Church.

We are using FACTS Management Company to manage our tuition payment for all families. Three payment options are available.

1. Tuition may be paid in full directly to St. Thomas More Catholic School. There is no fee to FACTS and tuition is reduced by \$60.00 per child.
2. Semi-annual payments may be chosen. The FACTS fee for this choice is \$15.00 per family and tuition is reduced by \$25.00 per child.
3. If monthly payments are made (over 12 months), the yearly FACTS enrollment fee is \$38.00 per family. There is no reduction in tuition.

Tuition will be automatically withdrawn from accounts on the 5th or the 20th of the month.

TUITION REFUND POLICY:

1. All tuition/fees are non-refundable except as stated hereafter.
2. Full tuition for the current month is required if a student attends school any part of a month.
3. If tuition has been pre-paid for either the semester or for the full year, and if the student is forced to withdraw from St. Thomas More, pre-paid tuition minus the current month will be refunded. If the withdrawal is before the start of the school year, any tuition greater than two months will be refunded.
4. If tuition is being paid via FACTS on a monthly basis, there will be no refund. Exceptionally, as in item 3 above, if a transfer out of the area is required before the start of the school year, any tuition greater than two monthly payments will be refunded.

Additional policies pertaining to tuition are as follows:

- You will be in danger of losing your place in school if you are two months delinquent in tuition payments.
- No child shall be re-admitted to the school if there is outstanding tuition due from a previous semester, nor will transcripts or grades be furnished until all indebtedness is paid.

UNIFORM CODE

Students in grades K through 8 are **required** to wear the school uniform which **must be** purchased through:

- **Educational Outfitters**
250 Nottingham Drive
Cary, NC,
Telephone – 919.804.5437

The STM uniform consists of the following articles:

GRADES K-8

BOYS:

Navy walking shorts or long pants
White golf shirts, long or short sleeve
White turtleneck shirts
STM sweat shirt
White or navy socks
STM navy fleece vests and jackets
Hooded “Knight” sweatshirts are only for Upper School (6-8 grades)
and may be worn in school

GIRLS:

Navy walking shorts or long pants
White golf shirts, long or short sleeve
White turtleneck shirts
Plaid jumper (optional K-3)
Plaid skirt (optional 6-8)
Navy skort (optional)
STM sweat shirt
Choice of navy or white tights, knee-highs or anklet socks
STM navy fleece vests and jackets
Hooded “Knight” sweatshirts are only for Upper School (6-8 grades)
and may be worn in school

GYM UNIFORMS:

STM Navy sweat pants and STM sweat shirts
STM Navy gym shorts, STM gray t-shirts
STM Navy mini-mesh shorts (grades 6, 7, 8 only)
STM Leg zippered sweat pants are for Upper school (6-8 grades)
and may be worn on gym days
Tennis shoes

EACH CHILD'S NAME MUST BE PLACED ON ALL HIS/HER CLOTHING!

Students MAY NOT wear SANDALS/CLOGS/Wheelies/ or Croc style footwear to school. Tennis shoes are the preferred shoe for daily wear. All other shoes must be rubber soled. This is for the children's safety on the playground.

We ask that all parents ensure that their children are dressed correctly each day for school. Substitutions in style and/or color are **NOT** acceptable. Sweatshirts and sweaters, other than listed above, are to be worn as outerwear **ONLY**. Classroom attire must be the school uniform. Students may not wear colored shirts or shirts with logos under their uniform shirt. Girls may wear small post earrings and only one pair of earrings may be worn at one time. **Make-up, nail polish, dangling earrings, and necklaces/chokers are not appropriate to wear to school.** Small simple chains with a cross are permitted. **Boys are not permitted to wear earrings, except on dress down days.** Only one watch and one bracelet may be worn. Consistent disregard of the dress code will be reported to the Principal and students in grades 6-8 will receive demerits.

In this case, parents will be notified and may be asked to bring to the student the proper attire for school.

Children are not considered in proper attire unless they are in the uniform selected by the school. If for some reason your child cannot be in uniform, a note must be sent to the office of the Principal or Administrative Assistant.

Students may not change out of uniform during the school day unless they are involved in school related activities.

Severe or extreme styles of hair are not acceptable. Boy's hair should be no longer than the shirt collar and their eyes should be unincumbered by dangling hair.

Dress Down Days will occur on the first Wednesday of each month except for Ash Wednesday. On these days students are not required to wear the school uniform. However, they may not wear baggy clothing or shirts with inappropriate slogans. Girls may not wear halter tops, spaghetti straps, or short shorts. Parents will be notified of dress down days in *The Knight Times* where they will be reminded of these regulations.

VISITORS

ALL VISITORS, INCLUDING PARENTS, MUST SIGN-IN when entering either the upper or lower schools. The sign-in sheets can be found outside the nurse's office in the lower school or in the lobby of the upper school. Lunches and other forgotten items should be left in the office, and school personnel will take them to the classroom. This avoids unnecessary interruption and provides greater safety for all the children. Visitors are expected to wear a visitor's badge.

VOLUNTEERS

All volunteers are required to complete and submit a Diocesan background check form which can be obtained from the secretary in the lower school. Volunteers must also attend a Child Safety Training Workshop. Call 929.1546 for listings of dates and times of workshops.

Workshops for 2007-2008 are as follows:

August 22 from 6:30 p.m. until 9:00 p.m. in the school gym

September 22 from 9:30 a.m. until 12:00 noon in the school gym

November 14 from 6:30 p.m. until 9:00 p.m. in the school gym

Each family is encouraged to contribute at least thirty volunteer hours per year. Families are asked to report their volunteer hours in order that we may track parent involvement. While the importance of volunteers cannot be underestimated, it is also a privilege to work at STM. Please adhere to these guidelines to enhance the time spent volunteering.

Volunteers will:

- Respect the confidentiality of all faculty, staff and students
- Not share information and behaviors with anyone else
- Sign in outside the nurse's office at the lower school and in the entrance hallway at the upper school and wear a visitor's badge
- Remain in the designated work area
- Dress appropriately for activity
- Be aware of, and adhere to, classroom/playground rules and expectations
- Notify office/teacher if you cannot come when expected

Volunteers will not:

- Work in the Teachers' Lounges
- Conference with teachers unexpectedly
- Visit their child's classroom unannounced
- Bring siblings to the activity unless approved ahead of time
- Use cell phones when supervising children in the classroom or on the playground.

It is expected that all families attending St. Thomas More School comply with all guidelines and school requirements set forth by the administration.

It is also expected that all families show mutual respect towards the administration, staff and all other St. Thomas More School families.

The Principal and Pastor, after consultation with the superintendent, reserve the right to dismiss a family if the above guidelines and school requirements, coupled with respect, do not prevail.

The STM Administration reserves the right to amend this Handbook for just cause.