

St. Thomas More Catholic School  
Parent – Student Handbook  
2011 – 2012



*Reaching Minds  
Touching Hearts  
Shaping Souls*

The St. Thomas More Catholic School handbook is available online. Parents and students are responsible for reviewing this document on a regular basis. Notices of changes will be announced in the Knight Times and changes will appear online in red.

# Table of Contents

Overview-History-Mission Statement ...	3	Internet (Acceptable Use Policy).....	20
Academic Enrichment.....	4	Iowa Testing .....	21
Accreditation .....	4	Knight Times .....	21
Admissions.....	4	Library .....	21
After School Care Program .....	5	Liturgy .....	21
Arenal Mission .....	6	Lockers .....	21
Arrival and Dismissal Procedures.....	6	Lost and Found .....	22
Attendance .....	7	Lunch and Milk Program .....	22
Books and Supplies .....	8	Medications.....	23
Building Access.....	9	Middle School Electives.....	23
Catholic Schools Week .....	9	Mission Day .....	23
Change of Address/Phone/Email .....	9	Money .....	24
Cell Phones & Electronics .....	9	Orientation Programs .....	24
Child Protection .....	9	Office Hours.....	24
Closing of School-Weather/Emergency .	10	Playground Safety .....	24
Communications .....	10	Progress Reports.....	24
Conduct .....	10	Report Cards.....	25
Conferences .....	12	Sacramental Life .....	25
Counselor.....	13	School Advisory Board .....	25
Crisis Plan.....	13	School Property .....	25
Curriculum .....	13	School Tours .....	25
Diocese Required Testing .....	14	Service Projects.....	26
Directory.....	14	Snacks.....	26
Dress Down Day .....	14	Sports .....	26
Early Dismissal Wednesdays .....	15	Student Council.....	26
Emergency Drills .....	15	Student Permanent Records.....	27
Emergency Forms.....	15	Summer Camps.....	27
Extra-Curricular Activities.....	15	Teacher Gifts.....	27
Family/Custodial Issues .....	16	Telephone Use .....	27
Field Trips .....	16	Transfer of School Records .....	27
Friday Ice Cream Sales.....	16	Tuition .....	27
Grading.....	16	Uniform Code .....	29
Grievance Policy.....	17	Visitors .....	31
Health of Students .....	17	Volunteers .....	32
Home and School Association.....	19	Websites.....	32
Homework Policy .....	19	Yearbook .....	33
Inclement Weather .....	20		

# St. Thomas More Catholic School

## Overview

St. Thomas More Catholic School is located on the campus of The Catholic Community of St. Thomas More in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. St. Thomas More is a Pre-Kindergarten through Eighth Grade school under the Diocese of Raleigh Catholic Schools Office.

The Diocesan curriculum guidelines for secular subject areas are consistent with the State of North Carolina guidelines. Students engage in a core curriculum that includes reading, writing, mathematics, religion, social studies and science. Special subject areas include Spanish, art, music, physical education, library and technology in the middle school grades.

Students will actively prepare and participate in meaningful liturgy and prayer. Students will also engage in age-appropriate community service as a means to develop a life-long commitment to social justice and community service.

## History

Established in 1964, as part of St. Thomas More Catholic Parish, St. Thomas More Catholic School has consistently combined rigorous academics with Christian moral and religious truths, creating a challenging and inspiring educational atmosphere. Led by an outstanding group of teachers and administrators working closely with the pastor, priests, and lay leaders of St. Thomas More Church, the school is energized by a spirit of inquiry that makes every school day a time to explore and grow.

## Mission Statement

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

## Academic Enrichment

Academic Enrichment, or extra-curricular activities are supported by the Home and School Association and through volunteer efforts. Current Academic Enrichment opportunities include: Jr. Great Books, Battle of the Books, Chess Club, Geography Bee and others. Information on these activities is sent home through kidmail and is also available on both the school and HSA websites.

## Accreditation

St. Thomas More Catholic School is accredited through AdvancED Worldwide, the parent organization of Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).

## Admissions

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.

### ***Priority in admissions is given as follows:***

1. Children already in the school who wish to reapply,
2. Siblings of children enrolled in the school as of the 2011 – 2012 school year,
3. Children of registered and contributing St. Thomas More parishioners. To be considered for parish tuition rates for the 2011 – 2012 school year, you must meet the following criteria:
  - a. Registered: Families that have been registered in The Catholic Community of St. Thomas More for one year as of March 15, 2011 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.
  - b. Contributing: Families that have contributed financially to the support of the Church in a regular and identifiable way through parish envelopes or checks since March 15, 2011. Contributions cannot be made in a lump sum and cannot be made retroactive in order to qualify for the parish tuition rate.
4. Other Catholics with supporting documentation of active registration and participation.
5. Other applicants.

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

### ***Student Transfers into St. Thomas More Catholic School***

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 Pre-Kindergarten 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 August 31<sup>st</sup> to enter Pre-Kindergarten, five years old by August 31<sup>st</sup> to enter Kindergarten, and six years old by August 31<sup>st</sup> to enter First Grade.

All new students must present original birth and Baptismal certificates, as well as, a completed record of immunizations. For Pre-Kindergarten, 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 through 8, two teacher recommendations and a copy of at least the last two years report cards are required for registration. Payment of a registration fee is required to complete the registration process.

### ***Re-Enrollment***

Re-enrollment for current students at St. Thomas More Catholic School will occur in early January of each year. If tuition payments have not been kept up-to-date, re-enrollment will not be accepted. If we determine 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-enrollment. We will do all that we can to assist parents in finding an alternative that would best serve the needs of the child.

### ***Enrollment of New Students***

All prospective students must complete a school application and turn in all appropriate forms and fees. Applications for admission will begin to be accepted for the 2012 – 2013 school year in October 2011. The 2012 – 2013 application packages will be available on the school website at <http://school.st-thomasmore.org/> by October 1, 2011. Notification of admission of new students to St. Thomas More School for the 2012 – 2013 school year will begin in February.

## **After School Care Program**

St. Thomas More's After School Care Program is available from 2:45 to 5:45 pm on school days. It is not available on school holidays or teacher workdays. During the After School Care Program, time is given for snack, homework, outdoor play, arts and crafts, movies and holiday festivities. This program ends each day promptly at 5:45 pm.

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. Dismissal from the program is done at the discretion of the After School Care Program Director and the Principal, after having consulted with the parents and child.

After School Care Program fees and enrollment information can be found on the school website at [http://school.st-thomasmore.org/after\\_school](http://school.st-thomasmore.org/after_school). Delinquent fees of more than one month will cause your child to lose the privilege to participate in the After School Care Program. Parents must notify the lower school office two weeks prior to withdrawal from the program.

Parents may contact the After School Director at (919) 967-8561 with any questions or concerns.

## Arenal Mission

The Community of St. Thomas More has had a supportive relationship with a small village in Arenal, Nicaragua since 1994. Since that time, the Community of St. Thomas More School, through the first Friday of the month school mass mission collections, Friday ice cream sales, coffee sales after weekend masses, and parishioner contributions, has raised and sent over \$110,000 to Arenal. For more information, please see the Philanthropy section of the school website.

## Arrival and Dismissal

School hours are from 8:00 am until 2:45 pm. St. Thomas More School does not assume responsibility for students before 7:30 am or after 3:10 pm.

### ***Arrival and Drop-Off***

From 7:30 until 7:55 am, all cars must enter the north driveway (near the brown, A-frame Youth House), proceed around the traffic loop in the side parking lot and around the front of the lower school. Please pull your car up as far as you can in front of the schools before allowing your children to exit the car. Children will be dropped off on the sidewalk of the lower school and proceed into the lower school hall (old gym) and assemble with their class. Cars will continue to the south driveway to exit. At 7:55 am, all assembled middle school students will walk to the middle school and enter their homerooms.

From 7:55 until 8:00 am, all lower school arrivals should follow the above procedure. Middle school students should be dropped off at the middle school entrance and proceed to their homerooms. If no lower school students are in the car, middle school cars may pull through the two-way parking lot in front of the elementary school and proceed directly to the middle school building. All cars will exit through the south driveway.

At 8:00 am the lower school students will pray in the lower school hall and proceed to their homerooms. Middle school students will have prayer in their homerooms.

If a parent needs to enter the school during arrival, parents should never park their car along the sidewalk in the drop-off lane. Parents are to park either in the side parking lot or at the Church.

**Parents may not use cell phones at any time while driving on St. Thomas More School property.**

### ***Dismissal and Pick-Up***

St. Thomas More School faculty and staff are responsible, by national and Diocesan guidelines, for the supervision of children and for ensuring that each child is released to his/her parent or parent designate. For this reason, a dismissal process has been established that closely controls the transfer of students at dismissal. These safe transfer practices include:

- ✓ Walk up parents must wait outside the school to have their children called to the front door of the school.
- ✓ Carpool parents will wait at the stop sign by the Youth House until 2:40 pm before proceeding around the traffic island and to the front of the school.
- ✓ Whenever a child goes home with a person who is not the parent and not listed as an authorized parent designate, the child must show a note from a parent authorizing that the child may go with the specific person.

- ✓ Whenever a person we do not recognize picks up your child, we will check the authorization and may ask to see identification.
- ✓ Parents with children in the After School Care Program must sign out their children.
- ✓ Students cannot wait for a parent, unsupervised, to be picked up from any school event.

The driving pick-up procedure is the same as the drop-off procedure. Cars needing to pick-up both lower and middle school students will first stop at the lower school and then proceed to the middle school. If only a middle school student is needed, middle school parents may use the two-way parking lot in front of the lower school to access the middle school. Please make sure your family/carpool sign can be clearly seen in your front window.

If you wish to walk up to pick-up, please park your car in the Church parking lot and walk to the school entrance. There is to be no parking on the access road. Then place your name on the walk up list and your child will be called to meet you.

If your child is going home with someone other than the regular carpool, please send a note to the teacher informing him/her of the change and be sure your child is aware of the arrangement.

If your student is participating in extracurricular activities/sports and you cannot pick them up by 3:10 pm, you must enroll them in the After School Care Program until their activities begin.

Any child not picked up by 3:10 pm will be taken to the After School Care office. You will need to come into the office and sign your child out of the After School Care Program. There will be a fee of \$10 per 15 minute period beginning at 3:10 pm (or 2:10 pm on early dismissal Wednesday) with no exception.

**Parents may not use cell phones at any time while driving on St. Thomas More School property.**

## Attendance

Students are expected to attend classes every day unless sickness or family emergencies arise which make an absence necessary.

### **Absence**

In case of absence, the parent/guardian **must** call the school by 8:30 am. Lower school parents should call 942-6244 and middle school parents should call 942-6257. The following information is required: student's name, homeroom, reason for absence, and name of caller. Parents should indicate if they would like homework assignments to be collected for the child. Requested homework assignments will be available for pick-up in the school office by 2:45 pm each day. Requested homework will be due the day the child returns to school. The student will have one day per day sick to make-up any quizzes missed during the illness.

Students who are sick may not remain at school. Parents will be notified by the nurse/school office when a student is too sick to remain at school. Any child with a temperature of 100 or above will be sent home. Parents **must** come to the school immediately and take their child home. Students who have had a fever must be fever-free for 24-hours before returning to school. Upon returning to school, students must bring a note explaining the absence. When a child is absent for three consecutive days or more due to illness, a doctor's note is required.

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 the 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. Students who do not receive assignments in advance have one day, per day of absence, to complete and turn in assignments. This policy applies to students who return from illness/family emergency or vacation/other 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 a total of 30 days during the school year.

### ***Tardiness***

The school day begins with prayer at 8:00 am. Students who arrive after 8:00 am are tardy. Parents are **required** to come into the appropriate school office and sign the tardy student into school. Please adhere to this time, as punctuality is an essential component for beginning a successful and productive school day. Parents will be notified if chronic tardiness is a problem. Documentation will be sent home from the school administration when five (5) tardies have accumulated in one quarter. Five (5) tardies will be recorded as a full day's absence. If the tardiness continues, parents will be called to meet with the Principal.

### ***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 from the parent/guardian is required. The written permission should state the exact time and name of the person who is picking up the child and the request should be given to the homeroom teacher. Students will not be allowed to wait in the office for a parent to pick up the student. The authorized adult must report to the appropriate school office to sign out the child from school. When an authorized adult arrives to sign the child out of school, the child will be called to the office. Parents or authorized adults will wait in the office until the child arrives and are not to go to the classrooms to pick up children.

## **Books and Supplies**

Students will be given a list of supplies (pencils, scissors, folders, notebooks, etc.) for the next school year with final report cards. The listing of supplies will also be available on our website at <http://school.st-thomasmore.org>. All supplies should be labeled and brought to school during Meet the Teacher or on the first day of 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 books. Students are expected to use brown or white Kraft paper or similar paper. Book Sox are no longer allowed to cover textbooks. Workbooks also are to be kept in a neat manner and it is suggested that these be covered in clear Contact paper. Families must pay for the replacement of lost or destroyed books.

Backpacks or book bags are necessary to keep books and papers protected while traveling to and from school. Bags with wheels **are not permitted** without official medical documentation.

## Building Access

Parents and students may not enter classrooms without a teacher or administrator. Other staff members, including the After School Care and janitorial staff, are not allowed to open classrooms.

## Catholic Schools Week

Each year in late January/early February, Catholic Schools Week is celebrated through the Diocese. A faculty and staff committee will plan special activities throughout the week, such as crazy hat day, green/yellow day, etc. A special service project is included as part of this week.

## Change of Address/Phone Number/Email

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

## Cell Phones & Electronics

Cell phones, Nintendo games systems, i-Pods, or any other type of electronic should never be sent to school with lower school children. If a middle school student needs a cell phone or other electronic device for use after school due to walking home from school, entering a house where no one is home, or attending sport practices or games, the student must turn off the cell phone or other electronic device when arriving at school and store the phone in their locker until 2:45 pm. Students who disregard this policy will have their cell phone or other electronics taken away and parents will be required to come to the office to pick-up the device.

## Child Protection

The St. Thomas More Catholic School makes a safe environment for children its highest priority. We have implemented the policies of the Diocese of Raleigh in accordance with the US Conference of Bishops *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* ([www.dioceseofraleigh.org](http://www.dioceseofraleigh.org)). The guidelines include conducting criminal background checks for all staff and volunteers; ensuring completion of the Personal Information Sheet by volunteers; training for staff and volunteers on the proper supervision of children and proper conduct with and in the presence of children; education in recognizing the signs of abuse and reporting procedures.

Any adult in this community who becomes aware that a child has been hurt or abused by any school or church personnel or volunteer, has a responsibility to report the incident immediately and directly to the Principal or Pastor. All allegations of abuse should be made in writing and will be reported to civil authorities. In addition, the Bishop has established an office to investigate allegations openly and the Principal and Pastor will follow these guidelines.

If you have been the victim of sexual or physical abuse by school or Church personnel or a volunteer at this school, the Diocese of Raleigh will provide support and counseling. You can find more information at [www.dioceseofraleigh.org](http://www.dioceseofraleigh.org). You can also contact the Guidance Counselor, Principal or Pastor for assistance.

## Closing of School for Weather or Emergency

If the school needs to be closed due to weather or other emergency conditions, St. Thomas More School will announce the information on radio station WCHL (1360) and on television stations WTVD and WRAL. Parents should tune into these stations, or their websites, if there is a question about the opening or closing of school. The ALERT NOW phone messaging system and the HSA General Google Group email system will also be utilized to notify parents of the need to close.

## Communications

An electronic school newsletter, *The Knight Times*, is updated every Wednesday during the school year. The newsletter will keep parents informed of all school events so that each family will have a better understanding of what is happening at the school. The newsletter can be accessed at [http://school.st-thomasmore.org/knight\\_times](http://school.st-thomasmore.org/knight_times). Submissions to *The Knight Times* should be emailed to [jfoster@st-thomasmore.org](mailto:jfoster@st-thomasmore.org).

The HSA General Google Group is also to be used to disseminate information and is for school related information only. HSA also sends out the Knight Watch every Sunday through the General Google Group which lists daily activities and reminders for the upcoming week. Every school family is expected to join the General Google Group. Instructions for joining Google groups can be found on the HSA website at <http://www.stmhsa.org/>.

Your homeroom teacher may institute a routine communication procedure, such as a Friday folder. From time to time, other school-wide or grade-specific information may be sent home through the school-wide communication folder or through student backpacks, also known as kidmail. It is the parent's responsibility to check any communication sent home with the child and respond as appropriate.

Party invitations and other personal correspondence **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

Students are expected to behave in a Christian manner. God himself, in the form of Christ on Earth, has given us a model to live by that many people have popularized with the question, "What would Jesus do?" Most conduct questions and concerns can easily be addressed by reflecting on that point. Other behaviors that are encouraged or forbidden have to do with whether those actions or inactions support our school's mission statement and beliefs (please see page 3). Under the jurisdiction of the Diocese of Raleigh, the St. Thomas More Catholic School is at liberty to make reasonable rules for governing the conduct of member students and their guests in support of the school's mission statement. All students are considered to be under the jurisdiction of these rules while on the school

premises or while participating at any school-related activity. In some instances, student behavior and activity outside of school may be covered by this code of conduct.

The following is a short but not comprehensive list of rules that St. Thomas More Catholic School students adhere to in support of the school's mission statement and beliefs. It is not comprehensive, and exists only as a general framework upon which individual classroom teachers construct their own classroom procedures and rules.

Students are prompt and prepared at all times for all situations. This means they arrive to school ready for learning with all assignments complete, all materials present and an appearance appropriate for school (see "uniform code,").

Students demonstrate respect and proper response to adults associated with or guests of the school. This looks and sounds like students answering adult questions clearly and honestly, and promptly obeying requests or directions without discussion or argument.

Students will strive to learn and then exercise self-control. This is an exercise in discipline and sometimes restraint as children keep hands, feet and objects from interfering others. Talking in turn and maintaining behavior appropriate to the indoors (walking, speaking in a normal tone, etc.) are all a part of personal self-discipline. The use of appropriate language, tone and gestures is another demonstration of self-control.

Students will work hard to maintain a safe school environment. This includes personal safety as well as property safety. Children will learn and practice safety drills and procedures as well as seeking adults immediately if they sense an unsafe situation.

Some behaviors are particularly disruptive and even harmful to students and the school community and are addressed specifically below.

### ***Bullying, Cyber-bullying and Blogs***

St. Thomas More School attempts to provide a safe environment for all individuals. Verbal or written threats made against the physical or emotional well-being of any individual are taken very seriously. **Passive forms of bullying are just as harmful, and can include leaving other students out, ignoring someone's presence, or talking about someone else with the intent to gain advantage over that person.** Students engaging in these activities (seriously or in jest; in person or online) face detention, suspension and possible expulsion.

### ***Academic Dishonesty***

**Academic Dishonesty** of any type will not be tolerated. Students who choose to **misrepresent what work they do or help others do the same, will** face a failing grade, detention, suspension, and/or expulsion. A student athlete who is involved will be ineligible the remainder of the school year.

### ***Harassment***

Harassment of any type is not tolerated. The Principal will investigate all complaints of harassment. Students involved in harassing behavior face detention, suspension and/or expulsion.

### ***Prohibited Personal Possessions***

Items such as, but not necessarily limited to, questionable books/pictures, knives, guns, matches/lighters, cigarettes, trading cards, laser lights, CDs, or anything detracting from the learning environment are not allowed on school grounds. Items taken away from students will be returned to the parent/guardian.

### ***Sexting***

Students involved in the possession or transmission of inappropriate photos on their cell phones or other electronic devices, including email, face suspension and/or expulsion.

### ***Conduct Grading***

In addition to assessing how a student is progressing in his/her core and specials/elective courses, teachers will also give students a conduct grade each quarter.

**U – Unacceptable = this student’s behavior in this class or subject has resulted in some form of suspension or change in status. (“U” can be assessed across subject areas with a letter submitted in the student’s file from the principal’s office)**

**NI – Needs Improvement = this student’s behavior has required extra attention and correction from the student average, and continuation of this behavior can result in a future “U.”**

**S – Satisfactory = this student meets regular expectations.**

**O – Outstanding = this student’s behavior in this class or subject has resulted in some form of special recognition, promotion or change in status. (“O” can be assessed across subject areas with a letter submitted in the student’s file from the principal’s office).**

### ***Discipline for Infractions***

Teachers are the first line of disciplinary action. **When student behavior becomes persistent and pervasive in the classroom, the teacher will include the principal in developing disciplinary action.**

## **Conferences**

Parents are encouraged to be involved in their child’s education and to establish communication with the school’s teachers. If a parent wishes to contact a child’s teacher a note should be sent to the teacher. The teacher will contact the parent within 24 hours to discuss the concern and/or set a meeting time.

All parents are required to attend a conference with their child’s teacher(s) on one of the following days, November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, or 4<sup>th</sup>, which follows the first report card period. Spring conferences will be on April 2<sup>nd</sup> and April 3<sup>rd</sup>. Spring conferences may be scheduled at the discretion of the teacher or by parent request.

## **Counselor**

A certified counselor serves the needs of the St. Thomas More Catholic School student body and parents through class and individual consultation. The counselor is on campus two days a week; however, parents or

students may contact the counselor at any time by email. You can access the counselor's contact information on our school website in the *Contact Us* link.

## Crisis Plan

St. Thomas More School has implemented a crisis plan in the case of a lockdown emergency. All teachers and staff are aware of the procedure to follow to keep the students safe. In the event of such emergency, circumstances permitting, the building will be evacuated and students will be moved to the Church or social hall in the community building.

## 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. Each student will be placed in an appropriate classroom as determined by the Principal in collaboration with school faculty. Core courses are taught in religion, language arts, science, math and social studies. Specials, or elective courses, are taught in physical education, technology, library, music, art and Spanish.

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 the student cannot be met, parents will be advised to seek other placement for their child.

### ***Middle School Math Placement***

#### ✓ Geometry Track

Students in this track will complete Pre-Algebra, Algebra I and Geometry. End-of-Course NC State-mandated exams will be taken at the end of Geometry. A student must score as follows for placement in this track:

1. 5<sup>th</sup> Grade, IOWA score (Math Only): 93 or above
2. Diagnostic Test #1 (to be given in the 5<sup>th</sup> Grade spring): 90 or above
3. Diagnostic Test #2 (to be given in the 5<sup>th</sup> Grade spring): 85 or above
4. 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Math average: A
5. 5<sup>th</sup> Grade teacher recommendation

#### ✓ Algebra I Track

Students in this track will complete 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Math, Pre-Algebra and Algebra I. The End-of-Course NC State-mandated exam will be taken at the end of Algebra I. A student must score as follows for placement

1. 5<sup>th</sup> Grade, IOWA score (Math Only): 85 or above
2. Diagnostic Test #1 (to be given in the 5<sup>th</sup> Grade spring): 85 or above
3. 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Math average: A
4. 5<sup>th</sup> Grade teacher recommendation

#### ✓ Pre-Algebra Track

Students in this track will complete 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Math, 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Math and Pre-Algebra.

### ***Academic Probation***

A student whose academic performance indicates serious deficiencies may be placed on academic probation. Students on academic probation will be placed on a two-week improvement plan. At the end of the two week period, the student's academic progress will be assessed. A student whose grade average is in the below average (D) or failing (F) ranges will not be allowed to participate in any sport, extra-curricular activity or academic competition until the grade has improved to a C average.

### ***Policy for Students Failing Courses in Middle School***

Students who fail core courses during a year must go to summer school at the Hill Center, Sylvan Learning Center or an equivalent option. Documentation of the material covered during the summer must be provided. If a student fails two core subjects, the student will not be permitted to return to our school.

If a student attends summer school for math, the student will be placed in the lower math track the coming school year. If the student does not successfully complete a summer school math program, the student will repeat the failed math level at our school the upcoming school year.

## **Diocese-Required Testing**

Students in the Fourth and Seventh grades will take the Diocesan Writing Test in the spring of that year.

## **Directory**

A school directory is distributed at the Meet the Teacher event at the beginning of each school year. The directory is to be used for **school business only**. The directory is not to be used for any type of solicitation or given to anyone outside of this school community.

## **Dress Down Day**

On the first Wednesday of each month (except for Ash Wednesday), Student Council sponsors a \$1 Dress Down Day. Students who participate in the Dress Down Day should turn in \$1 to their homeroom teacher at the beginning of the school day. Student Council activities and projects are funded through the monthly Dress Down Day. Additional "free" Dress Down Days may be added throughout the year for special events such as Catholic Schools Week. These days will be announced through the *Knight Times*.

Students must follow the rules for Dress Down Day and dress in a way that is appropriate for a learning and Christian environment. Students who violate the rules of Dress down Day or do not bring their \$1 for the Student Council fund will be required to change into a uniform and may lose the privilege of participating in future Dress Down Days. Please see the Uniform Code for specific Dress Down Day information.

## **Early Dismissal Wednesdays**

The first Wednesday of every month the school dismisses at 1:45 pm which allows for the school staff to engage in curriculum planning and school improvement efforts. The After School Care Program operates on these days.

## Emergency Drills

State Law requires that fire drills be held monthly. In the event of a fire, students should:

- ✓ Rise in silence when the alarm sounds;
- ✓ Close windows and doors;
- ✓ Walk to the assigned place briskly, in single file at all times, and in silence;
- ✓ Return to building when signal is given.

Tornado drills are held periodically. In the event of a tornado students should:

- ✓ Rise in silence when the alarm sounds;
- ✓ Walk briskly to the assigned place in single file;
- ✓ Sit, face wall, and put hands over head;
- ✓ Return to classroom when signal is given.

## Emergency Forms

### ***New families:***

Emergency forms are given to new families at the beginning of the school year. Please fill in the names, addresses and phone numbers of the responsible adults who can be contacted in case of any emergency or if a child becomes ill during the school day. Please keep all addresses, phone numbers, including cell phones, and email addresses up-to-date by notifying the office immediately of any changes. It is extremely important, to promote the welfare of the children, that the school office can reach a designated adult.

### ***Re-Enrolling families:***

Emergency forms are sent home in the spring with each child to be updated and are to be returned to the lower school office before the end of the school year.

## Extra-Curricular Activities

Extra-curricular activities are supported by the Home and School Association and through volunteer efforts. In addition to Academic Enrichment opportunities provided through Chess Club, Geography Bee and reading clubs, other opportunities exist for students to be involved in self-discovery and enrichment, such as drama club.

The St. Thomas More Catholic School community has both Cub/Boy Scouting and Daisy/Brownie/Girl Scouting troops. The troops and packs form during the first weeks of school each year. For more information, please visit the information table during Meet the Teacher Night or contact Harvey Portwood at [hdport@verizon.net](mailto:hdport@verizon.net) for the Boy Scouting program, or Anne Marie Clifford at [mclifford@mindspring.com](mailto:mclifford@mindspring.com) for the Girl Scouting Program.

Parents and teachers interested in developing new clubs and extra-curricular opportunities are encouraged to contact the HSA Academic Enrichment Coordinator. Information on all extra-curricular activities will be sent home through kidmail and is also available on both the school and HSA websites.

## **Family/Custodial Issues**

In cases of joint or separate custody, a copy of the court decree bearing the case number, pages referring to child custody as it relates to school, and the page bearing the judge's signature are to be submitted to the Principal for the child's confidential file.

## **Field Trips**

Field trips are designed to correlate with teaching units and to achieve curricular goals. A school-issued field trip permission slip must be signed by the parent or guardian and received prior to the trip. Any required fee, which is non-refundable, should be received with the returned permission slip. Verbal permission will not be accepted. Parents may elect to not permit their child to participate in a field trip. Students who do not attend a field trip will be required to remain at home and will be marked absent for that day.

Due to Diocesan policy, St. Thomas More Catholic School does not arrange transportation for off campus activities such as field trips, clubs and athletics. Parents have the responsibility of coordinating carpools and transportation with guidance from teachers and coaches.

On field trips, chaperones will be given a list of 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 parent chaperone from properly monitoring the children in their charge.

Any student, involved in inappropriate behavior while on a field trip will lose future field trip privileges. In addition, other disciplinary actions may be taken as deemed necessary by the Principal.

## **Friday Ice Cream Sales**

In order to help support our Mission in Arenal, Nicaragua, the mission committee sponsors a weekly ice cream sale. Ice cream is sold for \$1 in both the lower and middle school. Parent volunteers are needed to assist with sales.

## **Grading**

Beginning in Kindergarten, students receive progress reports and/or report cards. The grading scale in Kindergarten assesses the student's ability to perform skills. Students in Kindergarten will receive an (S) for a Secure skill, an (E) for an Emerging skill, a (D) when difficulty with a task is observed, and a check mark for a skill or concept that needs improvement.

Students in grades 1 through 3 receive grades of Very good (VG), Good (G), Satisfactory (S), and Needs improvement (N).

Students in grades 4 through 8 receive letter grades for assignments, quizzes and tests in core courses (Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies, Religion and Spanish). Letter grades will be awarded as follows:

<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>Point Scale</b>
A	100 – 93
B	92 – 85
C	84 – 78
D	77 – 70
F	69 or below

## **Grievance Policy**

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

1. A concerned parent should contact the teacher directly with concerns.
2. If a resolution is not reached, an in-person conference between the parent(s) and teacher may be scheduled.
3. If a resolution is not agreed upon by the teacher and parent(s), a conference should be scheduled involving the teacher, parent(s), and Principal.
4. If a suitable resolution is not obtained, the matter may be directed to the Pastor.
5. Should further consultation be needed, the matter may be directed to the Superintendent of Catholic School in the Diocese of Raleigh.

## **Health of Students**

Keeping children home when they are not feeling well is good for both your child and the school community. When children become ill or injured, they need rest and they need to be able to maneuver safely at school before returning. St. Thomas More School requires that families follow these guidelines:

- ✓ A child should be fever free for at least 24 hours before returning to school.
- ✓ A child should be free from vomiting or diarrhea for 24 hours before returning to school.
- ✓ A child should not return to school until they have been able to eat and drink.
- ✓ A child being treated with antibiotics for something like strep or pick eye should be on the medication for at least 24 hours before returning to school.
- ✓ A child who requires crutches or any special physical accommodation must have a note from a doctor indicating the need and the length of time accommodations will be required.

### ***Food Allergies***

Parents are required to notify St. Thomas More School administration of any allergies suffered by children enrolled in our school. Our community may include students who have severe food allergies. Common food allergies include sensitivity to shellfish, wheat, ground nuts (e.g. peanuts) and tree nuts (e.g. almonds). Often peanut allergies pose the greatest challenge because peanut butter is sticky and “travels” with children from place to place. If a child with a severe food allergy is in your child’s class, you will be notified by letter and asked to observe some simple safe practices.

### ***Head Lice***

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the prevention and control of head lice in the students and staff. At any time during the school year the school nurse or other designated school staff may inspect any student for head lice. If nits or lice are identified during inspection the following procedure will be implemented:

- ✓ The student will be removed from the classroom.
- ✓ The parent or guardian will be called to come to the school to pick up the student. It will be documented in the main office. It will be the responsibility of the parent or guardian to transport the student home before the end of the school day. The student will not be permitted to attend any school related activities scheduled for after school that day due to added risk of other students acquiring lice.
- ✓ Verbal instructions, as well as, written instructions will be given to the parent and student (depending on the age of the student) before the student leaves the building. It is the parents' responsibility to follow these instructions and rid the student of nits or lice so that the student may be re-admitted to school. These instructions will include treatment, as well as, management of the student's environment and prevention.

Parents are able to accomplish the treatment in one day. The student will be expected to report to the main office 24 hours from the time of treatment/application for re-inspection.

After treatment has been completed and **all** nits have been removed from the head, the student should be accompanied by the parent or guardian to the school and remain until the child is rechecked by school staff. If upon re-inspection the student is found to still have nits or lice, the student will be denied admission to the school until all nits are removed.

After the student has been cleared to return to classes, school staff will continue to check for nits because of the risk of re-infestation if the student's environment was not properly treated. The student will be checked as often as deemed necessary by the school staff.

### ***Immunizations***

All students attending St. Thomas More School must be in compliance with North Carolina State law and regulations regarding immunizations. Immunizations are generally due for Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students.

### ***Special Health Needs***

Parents should inform the school office and teacher of any special health needs. If your child has special health needs, including food allergies, list them on the medical form for your child, and talk with your child's teachers.

### ***Student Illness/Injuries While at School***

In case of an accident or illness suffered by a child during the school day, every attempt will be made to notify the parent/guardian. If parents/guardians cannot be reached, one of the emergency contacts designated on the emergency release form will be contacted.

If first aid is required for an injury, the child will be sent to the nurse's office for assistance. The nurse will clean minor injuries with soap and water and will place an adhesive bandage, if necessary. If a doctor's attention is indicated and parents are not available, school personnel will use the

authorization given on the emergency release form in order to ensure that the child receives necessary emergency care. This authorization needs to be completed by the parents and returned on the first day of school, and must be updated throughout the year for any changes.

## Home and School Association (HSA)

The Home and School Association provides a framework whereby parents and school personnel work together to (1) promote and enrich school curriculum, (2) provide extra-curricular activities, (3) create school community and spirit, (4) promote social justice through charitable works and (5) provide opportunities for parents to be engaged in the process of educating our children.

All parents are members of the HSA and are encouraged to share their Time, Talent and Treasure with the school and HSA. Parent volunteers are essential to the success of the school and HSA activities. Parents can volunteer as a Room Parent, a lunch volunteer, auction and carnival committee members, uniform re-sale sorters, and so much more!

HSA's primary responsibility is creating and enriching a school environment to allow each child to reach his/her full potential. In order to accomplish the mission, the HSA does fundraise periodically throughout the school year. The largest fundraiser is the annual auction which is traditionally held in the spring semester. All money raised by HSA directly benefits the students and school staff by enriching existing programs, providing various teaching aids for the school (such as SmartBoards for the 2010 school year and the Wilson Spelling program currently in use in the lower School), providing community building events, providing extra-curricular clubs (Chess Club, Jr. Great Books, etc.), and staff appreciation events.

The HSA Board meets monthly, throughout the school year, on the second Tuesday of the month. The meetings are held in the school library at 7:00 pm and all parents are welcome to attend. The HSA will sponsor at least two general meetings a year and all families should make plans to attend these meetings. The meetings will focus on community building, fellowship and updates on HSA programs and activities. The HSA will also continue the *Parents As Partners* meetings, with a session in the late fall/early winter and again in the late spring prior to the end of school. The dates for all of these meetings will be announced in *The Knight Times*.

## Homework

Homework is assigned to reinforce concepts and curriculum taught in class. It is also valuable for learning self-discipline, personal responsibility, and time management. Homework will be assigned at the discretion of the teacher beginning in Kindergarten. In general, families should expect 10 minutes of nightly homework per grade level, excluding reading and/or special projects. For instance, a Kindergarten student would have approximately 10 minutes of homework, a 1<sup>st</sup> Grade student would have 20 minutes nightly, a 5<sup>th</sup> Grade student would have 60 minutes and an 8<sup>th</sup> Grade student would have approximately 90 minutes of homework nightly. Incomplete or late homework assignments will result in a lower score. Each teacher will inform parents and students of his/her policy regarding parent signatures on tests or other school work.

Teachers are not required to provide homework in advance for families going on trips during the regular school year. Students who do not receive assignments in advance have one day per day of absence to complete and turn in assignments.

## **Inclement Weather**

If it should be necessary to close the school because of weather conditions, an announcement will be made over local television and radio stations, and will be posted on the school website. An ALERT NOW message will also be sent to parent/guardians via phone. The HSA General Google Group email listing will also be notified in cases of inclement weather.

Please note that St. Thomas More School does not follow the Chapel Hill/Carrboro school system closing or delay schedule, and is often in school when the public schools have closed due to their bus routes.

## **Internet**

During the course of the school year, your student will have supervised access to the Internet. The Internet will be used to fulfill education objectives and/or for research related to coursework. Any use of the Internet that violates the spirit of Catholic ethics or school rules will result in disciplinary action. The following is the Acceptable Use Policy. Please read and discuss this with your child. You and your child will be required to initial a Computer/Web Consent form (which includes this agreement.) The Consent/Web form will be included in the beginning of the year packet. Please initial and return to your homeroom teacher.

### ***Acceptable Use Policy***

In general, students are responsible for good behavior on the school computer network just as they are anywhere on campus. Network communications are often public in nature, so general school rules for behavior and communications apply. The network is provided for students to conduct research and type reports and/or papers. Access to network services will be provided only to those students who agree to act in a considerate and responsible manner. This access is a privilege-not a right.

1. Students are to take good care of all computer equipment and property.
2. Students are to show respect for their classmates' work saved onto hard drives, disks and the server files. Students will not alter another students' computer work.
3. Students must abide by the AUP in order to access the internet at school.
4. Students are not to collect personal e-mail or log-on to any social networking site.
5. The teacher will make the final decision on whether a child has intentionally entered an inappropriate web site.
6. Students are not to alter control panels.
7. Students are to listen and follow teacher's instructions.
8. Students are not allowed to create, forward, or save malicious programs, applications, scripts, or software.

Parents are encouraged to monitor home use of the Internet, email, instant messaging, social network sites, and virtual reality sites. Children should be taught that the values you expect from them in the "real world" are the same values that they are to live by in cyberspace.

Any student who uses the St. Thomas More School name or the names of students on the Internet in a manner that violates the school rules or principles of Catholic ethics will be subject to disciplinary action. Under no circumstance will a student use another student's first and last name on the Internet.

## IOWA Testing

The *IOWA Test of Basic Skills* is administered in grades 3 through 8 each fall. The *Cognitive Abilities Test* is also given to students in the Fifth Grade as part of the IOWA testing. The results of these tests are sent home when the testing company returns the scores to the school.

## Knight Times

The *Knight Times* is published every Wednesday during the school year and can be viewed on the school website. Parents should refer to the *Knight Times* for upcoming events and important information regarding the school. To submit an article for consideration, please contact Ms. Judy Foster at [jfoster@st-thomasmore.org](mailto:jfoster@st-thomasmore.org).

## Library

Library and media services are designed to support, complement, and enhance the religious philosophy, educational philosophy, goals and objects of St. Thomas More Catholic School.

Students in Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade may check out books for one week at a time and may visit the library at any time allowed by the teacher. Overdue notices will be given out quarterly and an email will be sent to parents if the book is not returned within one week of the notice.

Ebooks (electronic books) may be checked out for a 3-day viewing period. The procedure for accessing and checking out ebooks will be discussed in your child's classroom.

Volunteer opportunities exist within the library as either a Library Media Advisory Committee member or assisting the library staff with shelving. If you are interested in volunteering in the library, please contact Mrs. Williams at [jwilliams@st-thomasmore.org](mailto:jwilliams@st-thomasmore.org).

## Liturgy

Our children prepare the liturgies which are celebrated most Friday mornings during the school year at **8:20 am**. Liturgy celebrations may be moved for Holy Days of Obligation or other special occasions. Parents are encouraged to attend the weekly liturgy. Flash photography is not permitted during the liturgy.

## Lockers

Each middle school student is assigned a locker with a school issued lock. Personal locks or exterior decorations are not to be placed on lockers. The school reserves the right to inspect lockers at any time. Lower school students will have a cubby provided inside the classroom to store school supplies.

## Lost and Found

All items should be labeled with the child's name. Found items that are labeled will be returned to the student. Items found that are not labeled will be placed in the Lost and Found bin in the lower school hallway. On the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month, the contents of the Lost and Found bin will be given to a local charity.

## Lunch & Milk Program

All of the information for the St. Thomas More Lunch Program can now be found on line. Please go to the HSA Home Page at [www.stmhhsa.org](http://www.stmhhsa.org). From there you can click on the STM Hot Lunch Ordering System to enter the ordering site, or Lunch Program, which will give you more information. To see how to use the website, click on FAQ's How to Use. You can also locate our menu on this website.

Your password to enter the Lunch ordering system is your last name + the last four digits of your phone number (smith1234) and your initial password is "appletree." It will prompt you to choose your new password and verify your contact information the first time you order. If you have forgotten your password, please use the prompt to have it sent to you.

It is VERY important that you sign up for the email lists on the HSA website (google groups) every year. Please make sure you are signed up to receive STM General emails as well as your class emails. This is how I will notify you of the dates to place orders and other changes that may occur with the lunch program. If you volunteer for the lunch program (not the classroom's individual lunch coverage), please sign up for the STM Lunch group. That site is for getting information out to the volunteers, and allows volunteers to communicate with each other.

For the 2011-2012 school year, the lunches will begin on September 6<sup>th</sup>, following Labor Day. All orders will open on August 22 and will close on August 28. **YOU MUST PLACE YOUR ORDER BY AUG. 28. NO LATE ORDERS WILL BE ACCEPTED.** Following the initial order, all orders will be taken the 10<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> of each month for the next month (order Sept. 10-20<sup>th</sup> for October lunches). Please use Paypal or send in your payment by check to STM Lunch by the first of the month. You will not be able to order if you have an outstanding balance. Any questions or concerns, please contact Dori Mikszta at [stmlunch@gmail.com](mailto:stmlunch@gmail.com) or 419-9019.

Student lunches brought from home should provide a balanced meal and should not include excessive sweets or candy. We do not allow carbonated beverages or any glass containers. Forgotten lunches may be dropped off in the appropriate school office. Parents **should not** take lunches directly to the classroom.

If a child has not ordered a lunch and forgets his/her lunch, the lunch volunteers will determine if the student is allergic to nuts. For students with peanut allergies, the parent will be contacted to bring a lunch to the student. A student who is not allergic to peanuts will be served a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, Sunchips and applesauce. A \$5 charge will be placed on the family's next lunch order. Due to potential food allergies, students are not allowed to swap or share food.

Each fall, every student is given the opportunity to purchase milk for lunch for the entire year. Milk order forms should be completed and returned, with payment, as directed. Please make sure your student(s) know if they are to get milk daily.

## Medications

Children may need prescribed medication 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/or after school hours. If this is not possible, it is the parent's responsibility to provide the school approved medication administration form 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. The label must include the child's name, the medication name, 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 be administered by the school nurse during school hours. No student is allowed to self-medicate. The school nurse will not administer any medications without the proper form signed by a parent/guardian. If your child has allergies that are life threatening, the nurse, your child's teacher(s), and the school administration should be notified in writing.

From time to time, students may need an "over the counter" medication such as cough drops, Advil, etc. If a parent believes a child is in need of such medication, a *Request for Medication* form must be completed. This form will allow the nurse to provide "over the counter" medications listed, on an occasional basis, to your child. Please provide the listed "over the counter" medication, in the original container with the student's full name written on the container. Parents are to understand that the school assumes no responsibility for the effects of this medication when it has been properly administered, and, with the completion of the form, releases St. Thomas More School and their employees and agents from any and all liability that may result from a child taking the named medication, according to the written instructions given by the parent.

## Middle School Electives

In addition to core curriculum middle school students will select two electives per quarter. Electives meet three times per week and change quarterly. Students in each grade will complete specific "required electives" during the course of each year, which will include two quarters of physical education. All students will be required to complete one (1) art and (1) music elective during the three years of middle school.

All 7<sup>th</sup> graders will receive a survey in the spring to select electives for their 8<sup>th</sup> grade year. After the 7<sup>th</sup> grade selection period is completed, the 6<sup>th</sup> grade students will be allowed to select from the remaining open electives for their 7<sup>th</sup> grade studies. Finally, 5<sup>th</sup> grade students will select electives for their 6<sup>th</sup> grade schedule. Please refer to the *Course of Study Guide* for a full listing and description of middle school electives.

## Mission Day

On the first Friday of each month, a collection is taken up during the school Mass to support our Mission in Arenal, Nicaragua. Each family is asked to consider making a consistent financial donation to our Mission.

## Money

Whenever it is necessary to send money to school, please enclose the money in a **sealed** envelope with your child's name, homeroom, amount enclosed and the purpose of the money clearly marked on the outside of the envelope. Checks are preferred to cash. All checks are to be made out to St. Thomas More School, unless otherwise noted. Please note the reason for the check in the memo line of your check.

## Orientation Programs

### ***Meet the Teacher***

Before the beginning of each school year there will be a Meet the Teacher event for all students. Students will find out homeroom class assignments and may bring in school supplies at this event. Homeroom teachers will give students any special instructions for the first day of school.

### ***Kindergarten Orientation***

All Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten parents will be invited to a Kindergarten Orientation during the first week of school, prior to these students reporting to school. The orientation meeting will begin in the lower school hall (old gym) and then move to specific classrooms. This is a **parent only** orientation.

### ***Back to School Night***

Back to School Nights will be held for the lower school (grades 1 through 5) and for the middle school (grades 6 – 8). Back to School Nights will be held in the first few weeks of the school year. Parents will gather together to hear an overview of the school year, what is expected of students and upcoming activities. Parents will then be dismissed to the student's homeroom(s) where teachers will give presentations in their classrooms on what to expect in the grade level for the year. Middle school parents will have an opportunity to hear presentations from our core curriculum teachers. These events are **parent only** informational sessions.

## Office Hours

During the school year, both the lower and middle school offices are open from 8:00 am until 3:30 pm. The lower school office will be open during the summer from 9:00 am until 1:00 pm Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday.

## Playground Safety

Teachers will instruct students and parent volunteers on the safe use of playground equipment. Teachers and parent volunteers will supervise students on the playground. The playground is not open after school to children not enrolled in the After School Care Program.

## Progress Reports

Progress reports for students in grades 1 – 8 will be available online halfway through each quarter for the first three quarters. Failure notices will be sent home halfway through the fourth quarter.

Kindergarten students receive two Progress Reports one in January and one in June.

## Report Cards

Report cards are issued four times each year for students in grades 1 through 8. Report cards will be sent home with students approximately one week after the end of the grading period for each of the first three quarters. Parents should keep the report cards, but must sign and return the report card envelope. Report card grades are also accessible through Headmaster online.

Students in grades 1 – 5 will have their final report cards distributed on the final day of school. Students in grades 6 – 8 will receive their final report cards via U.S. mail.

## Sacramental Life

The sacramental life of Catholic children is an important component of the religion program at St. Thomas More School. Preparation for two sacraments, Reconciliation and Eucharist, is a core component of the Second Grade curriculum. Parents are required to be active partners in the preparation of their children for these sacraments and must attend, with their child, the sacramental retreats. The sacraments are only conferred to students Baptized in the Roman Catholic tradition.

Families who are interested in joining the Catholic faith should contact the RCIA for Children coordinator at the parish. The parish office may be reached at 942-1040.

## School Advisory Board

The School Advisory Board is designed to assist and advise the principal, who in turn is accountable to the pastor.

The School Advisory Board:

- ✓ creates a better understanding of Catholic education,
- ✓ cooperates with and supports the Principal in his/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 evaluation of 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 the endowment fund.

## School Property

The parents of a student who carelessly destroys or damages any furniture, equipment, buildings, or anyone's personal property will be obligated to pay the full amount of repairs, labor and/or replacement.

## School Tours

Tours of the school are given to interested candidates and families on the first **Thursday** of each month from October through May. Tours begin at **9 am.** in the Parish Center and are guided by the Principal.

## Service Projects

Each homeroom will complete service projects throughout the year to provide the students with the opportunity to make a difference in our Church and the community at-large. A parent coordinator is needed for each homeroom to assist the teacher in coordinating the projects throughout the year.

The entire school community participates in supporting our mission in Arenal, Nicaragua through Mission Day, coffee sales and ice cream sales. The entire school community will also participate in other school-wide projects throughout the year.

## Snacks

All lower school students should bring a morning snack. We ask that morning snacks be nutritious, such as fruits, vegetables, bagels, yogurt, cheese or crackers. Please do not send candy and follow specific guidelines that your teacher may have regarding snacks. Middle school students do not have a snack period.

## Sports

St. Thomas More School participates in the Triangle Catholic School Athletic Conference. Students in grades 6 through 8 are eligible to participate in sports programs. Information will be sent home with students regarding team formation. The following sports teams or clubs are available:

<b>Sport</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>
Volleyball (fall)		✓
Cross Country (fall)	✓	✓
Soccer (fall)	✓	
Basketball (winter)	✓	✓
Soccer (spring)		✓
Golf (club/spring)	✓	✓
Baseball (spring)	✓	
Lacrosse (club/spring)	✓	

All students who participate in athletics and their parents are required to read, consider and agree to abide by the expectations, rules and responsibilities specified. Each year student athletes must submit a current physical prior to participating in a sport.

The St. Thomas More Booster Club exists to help promote the development of student athletes and the school's athletics program. The Booster Club holds an annual golf tournament each spring as their main fundraiser with proceeds going to the on-going support and development of the school teams and facilities. For more information about the Booster Club, please contact Mr. Tyll, physical education teacher.

## Student Council

Students in grades 4 through 8 have the opportunity to serve on the Student Council. The Student Council meets twice per month during lunch/recess periods and is supervised by a teacher.

In the fall of each year, homeroom classes in grades 4 through 8 will elect a representative, and an alternate, to the Student Council. The executive body is elected each spring with the President selected from the rising 8<sup>th</sup> grade class and the Vice President from the rising 7<sup>th</sup> grade class. The Secretary and Treasurer may either be in the 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade the following fall.

## **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 24-hours in advance.

## **Summer Camps**

Each year several of our teaching faculty provides summer camps for the children. Each camp is one week in length and consists of a half day of instruction. Camp offerings have included technology, movie making, arts and music. Summer camp offerings, along with associated fees, will be advertised through *The Knight Times* each spring.

## **Teacher Gifts**

The faculty and staff at St. Thomas More Catholic School are a great asset and parents often want to express gratitude for the enduring services of the staff. Each year the HSA coordinates a Christmas collection for the teaching staff and support personnel. This is the only monetary contribution for staff each year and family participation, while encouraged, is not mandatory.

The HSA also hosts two appreciation luncheons for the staff. The first is a back-to-school luncheon and another is held during Catholic Schools Week.

## **Telephone Use**

Parents/guardians can reach the lower school by calling 942-6244 and the middle school by calling 942-6257. School office hours are 8:00 am and 3:30 pm. We will be happy to help you with any questions or requests.

Students may use the phone for emergency purposes only. Forgotten items (lunches and homework) are not considered emergencies.

## **Transfer of School Records**

When a student transfers from St. Thomas More Catholic School, including matriculation into high 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 Finance Committee of the St. Thomas More Catholic School Advisory Board in collaboration with the Principal. The tuition scale receives final approval from the Parish Administrator and Parish Finance Council.

**Tuition Model**

	St. Thomas More Parish Families	All Other Families
Pre-Kindergarten	\$5,390.00	\$5,390.00
Grades Kindergarten through 8 <sup>th</sup>	\$6340.00	\$8240.00

**Tuition Payment**

St. Thomas More School uses the FACTS Management Company to manage our tuition payments for all families. Three payment options are available:

1. Tuition may be paid in full directly to the school. There is no FACTS fee assessed and tuition is reduced by \$60 per student.
2. Semi-annual payments may be made through FACTS. The FACTS fee for semi-annual payments is \$15 per family and tuition is reduced by \$25 per child.
3. Twelve monthly payments may be made through FACTS. The FACTS fee will be \$38 per family for this option.

For families enrolled in the FACTS payment program, tuition will be automatically withdrawn from your designated account on the 5<sup>th</sup> or the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month. You may choose which date better suits your family’s schedule.

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

**Tuition Assistance**

All families who desire a catholic education for their child(ren) but who are worried about their ability to fully pay the yearly tuition are encouraged to apply for financial assistance. Financial assistance is awarded annually through a confidential process managed through FACTS. The link to the financial aid application is located on the school website during re-enrollment in January and February each year. Families receiving assistance will be notified in mid to late March.

If unforeseen financial difficulty arises during the school year, you are encouraged to talk to the Principal as soon as possible.

**Tuition Refund Policy**

Families must notify the school in writing if a student is to be withdrawn from the school. Full tuition for the current month is required if a student attends school any part of the month. All other tuition payments and fees are non-refundable except as stated below:

1. If tuition has been pre-paid for either semester or the full year, and if the student withdraws 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.
2. If tuition is being paid via FACTS on a monthly basis, there will be no refund. 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.

# Uniform Code

St. Thomas More School has established a uniform dress policy to identify us as a community, focus our attention on the inner qualities of students, and to contribute to a climate of discipline and modesty.

St. Thomas More School uniforms are mandatory for every student Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Uniform pieces are to be purchased directly through Educational Outfitters or through the school re-sale program. ***Look-alike clothing pieces purchased at other retailers are not acceptable and constitute a student being out of uniform.***

## ***Daily Dress Uniform for the Lower School***

	Boys	Girls
White golf shirt with logo Short or long-sleeve	✓	✓
White banded polo shirt with logo	✓	✓
White turtleneck (under approved uniform shirt)	✓	✓
White Peter Pan collared shirt		K – 3 only With jumper
Navy walking shorts or pants	✓	✓
Plaid jumper		K – 3 only
Navy skort		✓
Navy crewneck sweatshirt with logo	✓	✓
Navy fleece vest or jacket with logo	✓	✓
White or navy ankle socks	✓	✓
White or navy tights or knee-highs		✓
Athletic shoes (tie or Velcro)	✓	✓
Rubber soled, closed toe “Mary Jane” style shoes		✓

## ***Daily Dress Uniform for the Middle School***

	Boys	Girls
Hunter green golf shirt with logo Short or long-sleeve	✓	✓
Navy walking shorts or pants	✓	✓
Navy skort		✓
Navy crewneck sweatshirt with logo		✓
Navy hooded “Knights” sweatshirt	✓	✓
Navy fleece vest or jacket with logo	✓	✓
White or navy ankle socks	✓	✓
White or navy tights or knee-highs	✓	✓
Athletic shoes (tie or Velcro)		✓

***Gym Uniform for the Lower School***

	Boys	Girls
Gray PE shirt with logo	✓	✓
Navy gym shorts with logo	✓	✓
Navy sweatpants with logo	✓	✓
Navy crewneck sweatshirt with logo	✓	✓
White ankle socks	✓	✓
Athletic shoes (tie or Velcro)	✓	✓

***Gym Uniform for the Middle School***

	Boys	Girls
Gray PE shirt with logo	✓	✓
Navy gym shorts with logo	✓	✓
Navy mini-mesh shorts with logo	✓	✓
Navy crewneck sweatshirt with logo	✓	✓
Navy “Knights” hooded sweatshirt	✓	✓
Navy warm up jacket with logo	✓	✓
Navy leg-zip sweatpants with logo	✓	✓
Navy sweatpants with logo	✓	✓
White ankle socks	✓	✓
Athletic shoes (tie or Velcro)	✓	✓

***Additional Uniform Guidelines for ALL Students***

- ✓ ***Beginning in the 2010 – 2011 school year, all golf shirts must have the St. Thomas More School logo. Plain white golf shirts will no longer be allowed.***
- ✓ Shorts, skorts and jumpers are to be no shorter than 3” above the knee. Shorts, skorts and jumpers may not be rolled at the waist or bottom.
- ✓ Non-banded shirts must be tucked in at all times.
- ✓ Non-STM outerwear (e.g. jackets, sweatshirts) is not allowed to be worn in the classroom, between classes or during transitional times. These items may only be worn at arrival, recess and dismissal.
- ✓ PE attire is allowed only on the assigned PE day(s).
- ✓ Make-up, colored lip-gloss, and nail polish are not permitted.
- ✓ Girls may wear one pair of small post earrings (one in each ear). Boys are not permitted to wear earrings.
- ✓ Small simple chains with a cross or religious medal are permitted.
- ✓ One watch and one bracelet may be worn.
- ✓ Hats are not to be worn in the buildings.
- ✓ Hair will be neat and well groomed. Boy’s hair should be no longer than the shirt collar. Hair will be kept out of the eyes. Extreme hair styles (such as Mohawks), extreme colored, or bleached hair is not permitted.
- ✓ All clothing should be labeled with the child’s name.
- ✓ Athletic shoes are to be worn daily. Sandals, Wheelies, Uggs, Crocs, clogs and boots are not approved footwear. Shoes with laces are to have the laces tied at all times.

- ✓ Students are not allowed to change out of uniform during the school day unless they are involved in school related activities.
- ✓ Students may not wear colored shirts or shirts with logos under their uniform.
- ✓ Substitutions in style, retailer and/or color of uniform items are not acceptable.
- ✓ Brownie/Scout uniforms may be worn on meeting days.
- ✓ As approved by the Principal and Coach, student athletes and club participants may be allowed to wear team apparel for certain events. Parents will receive notification of any such occasion.

Educational Outfitters is the only approved retail option for St. Thomas More School uniforms and is located at 1331 Buck Jones Road in Raleigh. The store may be contacted by phone 919-804-5437 or you may visit their website at [www.educationaloutfitters.com](http://www.educationaloutfitters.com). Our school code is NC045. Three percent of all uniform sales at Educational Outfitters return to the school to fund faculty development and continuing education.

### ***Dress Down Days***

On the first Wednesday of each month (except Ash Wednesday) students may pay \$1 for the privilege of participating in Dress Down Day. On these days, students are not required to wear the school uniform. However, they may not wear baggy clothing, tight clothing or clothing with inappropriate slogans or images. Girls may not wear halter tops, spaghetti straps, bare mid-drifts, short-shorts. If a Dress Down Day falls on your PE day, athletic shoes must be worn.

### ***Discipline for Uniform Infractions***

Students who are out of uniform or inappropriately dressed down will have to change into clothes borrowed from the uniform resale bins. If appropriate sizes or pieces are not available, the parents will be notified to bring the appropriate clothing to school.

Students wearing make-up, nail polish, inappropriate jewelry, etc. will be required to remove the violations. If jewelry is involved, the items will be held in the school office until the end of the school day when a parent/guardian may pick up the item. In addition, middle school students will serve a recess detention for any uniform violation. Any student, lower or middle school age, will lose the privilege of participating in Dress Down Days for repeated violations of the uniform dress code.

## **Visitors**

All visitors to the school, including parents, must sign-in when entering either the lower or middle school buildings. Lower school visitors will sign-in at the computer kiosk in the entry hallway of the lower school. Middle school visitors will sign-in the visitor log in the middle school lobby. All visitors will wear a visitor name tag while on school property.

Lunches and other forgotten items should be left in the office. School personnel will deliver the items to the classroom to avoid unnecessary interruption and provide greater safety to the entire student population.

## **Volunteers**

Each family should contribute as many volunteer hours as is reasonable. Guidelines and expectations expressed in the past range from 10 hours to 30 hours per year. Although there is no set hour

“requirement,” a lack of volunteer time in the building can be interpreted by the school administration as an unwillingness to participate in the education of a child. The Principal and Pastor, after consultation with the Diocesan Superintendent, reserve the right to dismiss a family if a pattern of low involvement and participation persists.

All volunteers are required to complete and submit a Diocesan background check form which can be obtained from the middle school office. Volunteers must also attend one Child Safety Training workshop which is offered each fall. To obtain a current listing of dates and time for upcoming training sessions, please call 942-6258. The training and background check must be updated every five (5) years.

**Volunteers will:**

- ✓ respect the confidentiality of all faculty, staff and students,
- ✓ sign-in and wear a visitor/volunteer name badge,
- ✓ remain in the designated work area,
- ✓ dress appropriately,
- ✓ be aware, and adhere to, classroom/playground rules and expectations, and
- ✓ notify the office/teacher if you cannot come as expected.

**Volunteers will not:**

- ✓ work in the Teacher’s Lounge,
- ✓ conference with teachers unexpectedly,
- ✓ visit their child’s classroom unannounced,
- ✓ bring siblings to the activity unless approved ahead of time, and
- ✓ use cell phones when supervising children in the classroom or on the playground.

## Websites

The St. Thomas More Catholic School website is to be your primary source for information. The website contains news, school forms, enrollment information, up-to-date event calendars, *The Knight Times*, sports information, as well as, individual teacher pages with homework and class-specific information. Parents should visit the website often at <http://school.st-thomasmore.org/>.

The Home and School Association also maintains a website with information regarding the HSA activities and upcoming events. Please refer to the HSA website often at [www.stmhsa.org](http://www.stmhsa.org).

The Diocese of Raleigh oversees the Catholic education provided at St. Thomas More Catholic School. Information about Catholic education in the Diocese, including curriculum and Superintendent contact information, can be found at <http://www.dioceseofraleigh.org/where/schools/index.aspx>.

The Catholic Community of St. Thomas More Church website may be accessed at <http://church.st-thomasmore.org/>.

## Yearbook

The Yearbook is published by 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students under the direction of Mrs. Natalie Dekle. The Yearbook pre-order period is held each fall, and parents may also purchase advertising at that time. Yearbooks are distributed in late May/early June of each year. A limited number of yearbooks may be available for sale at that time.

***The St. Thomas More Catholic School Administration reserves the right to amend this Handbook for just cause.***

***REVISED  
August 8, 2011***