

St. Thomas Aquinas
CATHOLIC SCHOOL
An Independence Mission School

St. Thomas Aquinas School Student-Family Handbook

SCHOOL CONTACTS

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Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Mission, Vision, Accreditation, & History	4
Religious Instruction	4
Family’s Role in Education	5
Faculty and Staff Directory	6
Admissions Policies and Procedures	7
Financial Policies and Procedures and TADS	8
General School Day	9
Academic Policies and Procedures	11
School Culture and Student Conduct	13
Technology Policy	16
Uniform Policy	18
School & Student Safety	19
Student Activities	21

Introduction

This Student-Family Handbook is provided to inform you of rules, policies, procedures, guidelines and other information you may need or for which you are responsible during the school year. Answers to many frequently asked questions may be found herein and we encourage you to not only review the handbook carefully but also keep it readily available for reference throughout the year. If you have questions or concerns that are not addressed in the handbook, you are encouraged to contact the teachers or administrators in your school.

This handbook contains certain policies and procedures of St. Thomas Aquinas School. St. Thomas Aquinas School may change any of its policies and procedures and apply them as circumstances dictate. Families will be notified of major changes through the weekly update or weekly email from the Principal. This handbook may not cover every situation and the Principal will make the final decision when situations arise that are not specifically addressed in this handbook. This handbook will be updated when necessary and reviewed annually by the staff of St. Thomas Aquinas School and Independence Mission Schools.

Students and families must work together with the school and abide by the policies in this handbook. School-to-home cooperation is imperative to the success of the student.

St Thomas Aquinas: Mission, Vision, Accreditation, & History

IMS Mission Statement

Independence Mission Schools provides a transformative Catholic education to children of all faiths across the city of Philadelphia. Unlocking our students' potential starts with a culture of love that values and embraces each child. The promise of God's love, shown by our faculty and staff, is at the very core of the Catholic education our schools deliver. This atmosphere sets our students, from kindergarten to Grade 8, on the path to a promising future confident in their own worth so they can be ready to succeed both in and out of the classroom.

Vision

Through a deliberate approach that combines both our Catholic Values, academic focus, and unwavering faith in the great potential found within each of our students, we aspire to support our students in becoming problem solvers, critical thinkers, and civic-minded citizens who when faced with life's unknown challenges, demonstrate grace and perseverance.

Accreditation

St. Thomas Aquinas School is accredited by the Commission on Elementary Schools of the Middle States Association.

History

St. Thomas Aquinas School opened as an elementary school in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia in 1885. The school celebrated 137 years of Catholic Education in South Philadelphia in 2022. STA became an Independence Mission School in 2013.

Religious Instruction

Religious Instruction

The focus of our work and activity is on God, Scripture, values, and morals from the Catholic perspective. Students participate in religion classes daily and they worship monthly as a school family. Our religion program includes religious education classes, sacramental preparation, liturgical and prayer experiences, and opportunities for Catholic witness and service. We hope to further each child's knowledge and practice of their faith and guide them to serve others through the use of their gifts and talents.

Mass

Our students and teachers attend Mass at least monthly, on Holy Days of Obligation, and on other days of religious celebration. Families are welcome to attend Mass.

Family's Role in Education

At Independence Mission Schools, we consider it a privilege to work with families in the education of children because we believe families are the primary educators of their children. During these formative years, your child needs constant support from both families and faculty in order to develop his or her moral, intellectual, social, cultural, and physical development. Evidence of mutual respect between families and teachers will model good mature behavior and relationships. When concerns arise, please contact your child's teacher or an administrator. Families are expected to support the policies of the school as a condition of enrollment. Just as the family has the right to withdraw a child if desired, the school administration reserves the right to require the withdrawal of a student if the administration determines that the partnership is irretrievably broken.

As partners in the educational process we ask families:

- To set rules, times, and limits so that your child gets to bed early on school nights, arrives at school on time and is picked up on time, and completes homework assignments on time
- To restrict the student from bringing any items unrelated to school to school and to note that the school is not responsible for missing or damaged items
- To ensure the student is dressed according to the school uniform dress code
- To actively participate in school activities such as back-to-school nights, parent/teacher conferences, and family engagement activities
- To notify the school office by 9:00 a.m. when a student is absent and the nature of the absence
- To notify the school office, in writing, of any changes of address or important phone numbers or changes to your child's dismissal routine
- To inform the school of any special situation regarding the student's well-being, safety, and health including, but not limited to, medical conditions and child custody orders
- To complete and return to school any requested information, such as surveys, packets, and required forms, promptly
- To review email regularly to read school notes and newsletters and to show interest in the student's total education
- To inform the administration of concerns that may call for administrative action
- To communicate with school staff in a respectful manner reflective of an effective partnership
- To meet all financial obligations to the school, including tuition, fees, and fines for damage to textbooks or school property
- To follow all health guidance and ensure that their child is up-to-date on their required vaccines and that the school is notified in writing of any health condition or allergy

School Volunteers

Families are encouraged to take an active role in their child's education by volunteering in the school. All volunteers must complete the required clearances and training prior to beginning any volunteer work with the school. All paperwork required as documentation of these clearances and training must be on file with IMS HR. Please contact the school principal for information about completing and submitting these requirements.

The Home and School Association - WE ARE LOOKING TO GROW

The Home and School Association can facilitate many events that greatly enhance the positive atmosphere and school community. Its primary goal is to foster family involvement and to create communication and a sense of cooperation among home, classroom, and administration. The Home and School Association also sponsors fundraisers throughout the year to benefit the school and students. All families are encouraged to join our Home and School Association and participate in events.

Faculty and Staff Directory

Title	Name	Email
Principal	Mrs. Sharon McCloskey	
Secretary	Mrs. Jinet Ocasio	
Tuition Mgr.	Mrs. Yolanda Haynes	
Operations Manager	Mrs. Betzabe Toledo	
Pre-Kindergarten	Mrs. Diane DiTonno	
Kindergarten	Kerrie Jones	
First Grade	Taylor Rucci	
Second Grade	Raquel Robinson	
Third Grade	Kelly Mulderrig	
Fourth Grade	Jessica Stear	
Fifth Grade	Michael Tattersley	
6 th grade	Reuel Robinson	
7 th grade	Matthew Stelmach	
8 th grade	Joanne Gledhill	
Technology Teacher	Rochelle Lacina	
Music	Steven McCormack	
Physical Education	Markel Walker	
Spanish Teacher	Jonathan Delgado	

Admissions Policies and Procedures

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School is committed to advancing the mission of IMS by providing a transformative quality education for our students. We commit to serving the students within our community, and offer admissions to all students we have capacity to serve. St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School endeavors to accommodate students with special needs as the School's resources and capabilities reasonably permit. The School reserves the right to decline admission or impose reasonable conditions of attendance where circumstances indicate. All new students are placed on academic and behavior probation for the first year they are enrolled at STA IMS.

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School follows the School District of Philadelphia's age requirements for admission. A student who is 5 years old by September 1st is eligible for Kindergarten. A student who is 6 years old by September 1st is eligible for first grade. The necessary forms and certificates for admission include:

- Birth Certificate
- Baptismal certificate (if Catholic)
- Immunization record: student(s) must adhere to PA state regulations on student immunization. No exemptions are granted on the basis of religion or otherwise.
- Personal recommendation (from the student's previous teacher, counselor, or principal)
- Copy of the student's most recent report card (or progress report)
- All relevant custody agreements, if applicable

The admittance of students is contingent on the following factors:

- Academic records and/or testing results: Students must submit satisfactory academic records from their previous school; or, if a child has never attended school, the child will be required to demonstrate academic readiness through an appropriate assessment. New students registering for Grades 2-8 must also demonstrate satisfactory skills on placement tests.
- Discipline record: Students must submit evidence of a satisfactory discipline report and the personal recommendation form (provided by STA) from their previous school.
- Agreement for admission: families/guardians must sign a form in which they recognize the obligation for their child to attend all religion classes and to participate in all religious functions offered as part of the school program during the school week; the obligation to pay all required fees and tuition; the obligation to accept and to promote the philosophy, goals, objectives, and regulations of St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School; and the importance which the school places on families worshipping together regularly at their home church (if Catholic).

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School admits students of any race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin to all of the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to its students. St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, its admission policy, or in any school-administered program.

As part of our public relations efforts, we routinely photograph faculty, staff, and students involved in school-related activities. Your (non)consent to have your child photographed is indicated in TADS at the time of registration.

Financial Policies and Procedures and TADS

Tuition Payments

Tuition is billed over a 10-month period from August 15-May 15. TADS will assess a \$40 late fee for any payment which is not made within five days of the due date. Late fees will begin in the month of August. Families select the desired payment method for monthly payment in TADS. Payments may be made by automatic withdrawal from your bank account, by credit card (Mastercard, Discover, Visa or American Express), or by check or money order. All payments by check or money order should be sent by mail to: TADS 110 North 5th Street Second Floor, Minneapolis MN 55403.

Tuition Refund Policy

Tuition is non-refundable.

Return Check Policy

Families are responsible to make full financial restitution for any checks that are returned to St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School due to insufficient funds, including all related fees. Families will be responsible to make full restitution for any school-related materials or merchandise given to a student and not returned to the school when due. Failure to comply with this rule will result in the student's privileges being revoked as well as having the report card withheld at the end of the school year.

Office Records

Families are requested to notify the school through email or in writing to the school office of any change of home telephone numbers and/or address, business telephone numbers, and telephone numbers of emergency contacts so that office records may be accurate, complete, and up-to-date.

Transfer of Students

The family/guardian, in writing, should take notice of the withdrawal of a student to the principal in advance of the withdrawal date. This enables the school to prepare the necessary information and settle accounts. No student records may be forwarded to another school until Business Office accounts have been settled and tuition is paid-in-full.

Tuition Policies

Students whose tuition payments are not up to date a week prior to school must contact the school principal. Students with outstanding balances are at risk of not being permitted to attend the first day of school.

If tuition and fee obligations are not paid up to date before school events, (trips, dances, etc.) children may not be permitted to participate in the event. Eighth-grade students will not be permitted to participate in special trips and/or graduation if all tuition and fees due are not paid. Report cards may be held for any student with an outstanding balance.

Students whose tuition is two months late will be excluded from school until the past due balance is paid. Students who are absent ten or more days, due to tuition delinquency, will be dismissed from school.

The school reserves the right to ask families who have patterns of gross delinquency in meeting financial obligations during the school year to find other accommodations for their children's education.

All scholarships and other awards known to the school will be reflected in the tuition agreement. If further awards are made, they will be credited to accounts as they are confirmed by the School. However, families are responsible for maintaining any conditions required for the award and remain financially liable if the grant/scholarship is NOT ultimately paid to the school by the Grantor for any reason.

General School Day

School Hours

School hours for all students (Kindergarten through 8th grade) are:

- Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday from 7:45 a.m. until 3:00 p.m.
- Tuesday from 7:45 a.m. until 1:30 p.m.
- On half-days dismissal will be at 12:00 p.m. for all students unless otherwise notified.

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

Students are to enter the school through the back door that leads into the cafeteria. This door will be open from 7:15 a.m. and 7:45 a.m. families/guardians are not to enter the cafeteria. After 7:50 a.m. students must enter the school through the front door. All students are to be in their homeroom classroom by 7:50 a.m. Students not in their homeroom classroom by 7:50 a.m. must report to the main office and receive a late slip before proceeding to their classroom. Any change to your child's arrival or dismissal procedure must be given in writing to the school. Children will only be released to the people who are on their TADs account or in their emergency contact information. We will also require identification from anyone who picks up your child.

Early Dismissals

In the rare instance you need to pick your child up from school for an early dismissal please be sure to notify the teacher in writing the morning of the dismissal. Also note, that there will be no early dismissals after 1:30 pm (12:30 pm on Tuesdays). If you have an emergency please contact the office for assistance.

Car Line - Parents May Not Enter the Parking Lot to Drop Off or Pick Up their Child

Drop off: Schoolyard. Please pull up in the drop-off lane in order for child(ren) to exit without crossing in front of cars. If you need to help your child or wish to speak to someone, please park next to the retaining wall with the fence.

Pick up: Schoolyard. Please pull up in the pick-up lane in order for child(ren) to exit without crossing in front of cars. Students will remain in the cafeteria and be called as families arrive. Please wait outside until your child exits the school. If you need to help your child please park next to the retaining wall with the fence. If you want to speak with a teacher or the principal please make an appointment. At no time should a child be picked up in front of the school or encouraged to cross the street in front of the school. This is unsafe for children and drivers. After 3:10 p.m. students will be taken to the lobby and families can pick them up from the office. After 3:30 p.m. students will be taken to After Care and a fee will be charged.

Buses

To ride a school bus, students must be assigned and registered through the school district transportation authority in which he/she resides. A code of bus behavior is issued through the school district. Courtesy, good manners, and promptness are required. The children must behave in an orderly fashion and follow the instructions of the bus driver. Students who misbehave will be subject to disciplinary action and loss of riding privileges. The school principal and families/guardians are notified through a written referral from the school district if a student's behavior is to be modified. Consistent failure to adhere to bus regulations warrants suspension or expulsion from the use of school transportation. Improper behavior on the school bus could lead to after-school detention or suspension from school. Information concerning pick-up times and stops is determined and provided by the individual district.

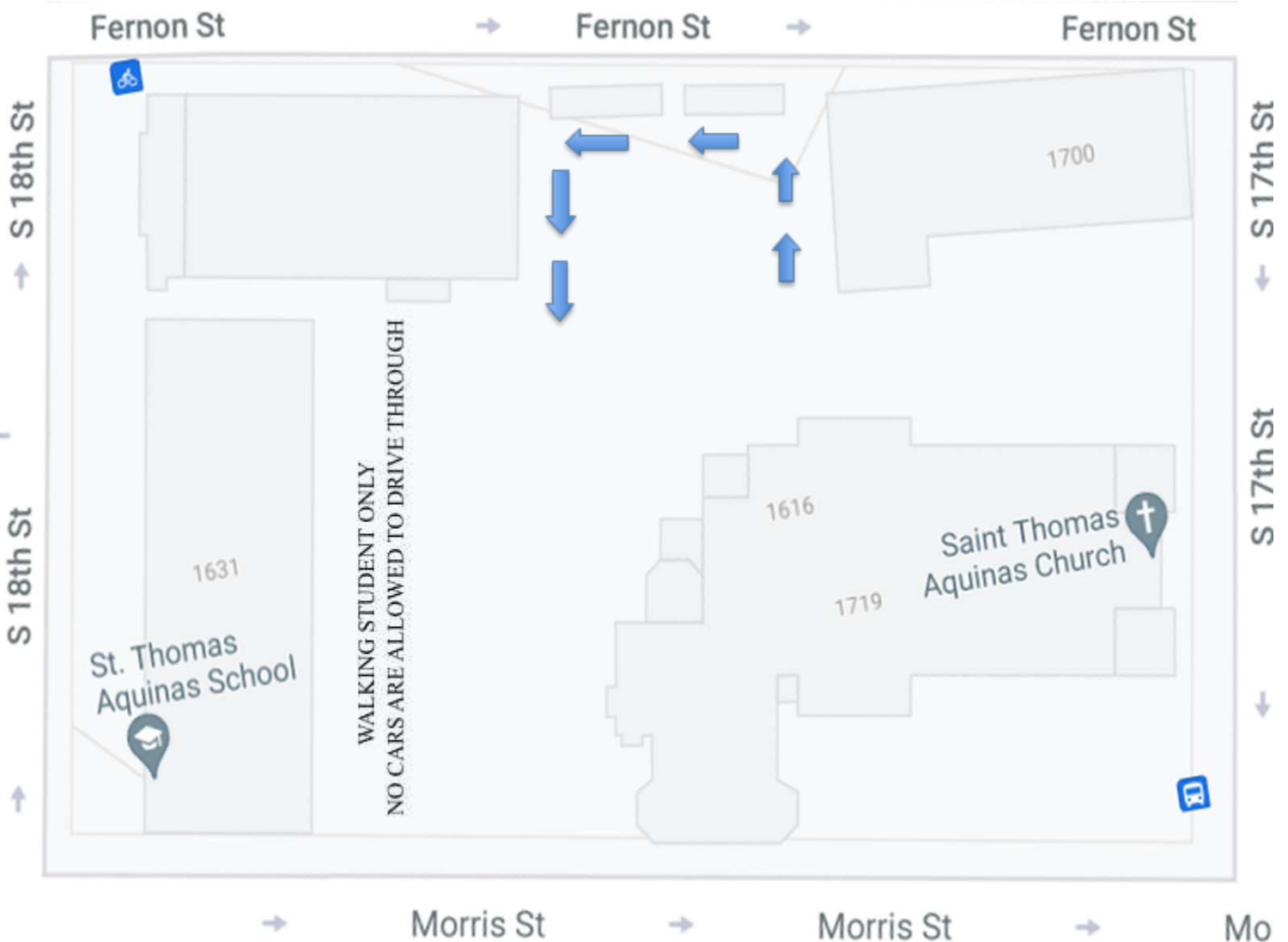
Walking

Crossing Guards: To ensure their safety, all students must obey the crossing guards and only cross at the corner of Morris street and 18th street or the corner of 17th street and Morris street STA families/Guardians

must also obey the crossing guards and wait until the crossing guard allows the child to cross the street. This is to ensure that the child is safely escorted onto and off of school property.

After Care Program

The After-Care Program runs from dismissal until 6:00 p.m. on regular school days. There is no After-Care Program on noon dismissal days. The After-Care schedule consists of times for snacks, homework, and outside play (weather permitting). Rates and the After-Care Handbook will be provided upon registration.



Academic Policies and Procedures

Student Records

Records will only be released with written permission from a student's family/guardian. Academic

records are the property of STA.

Progress Reports

Progress reports are available at the mid-trimester point each trimester. Families can always review their child's academic progress through Educate.

Report Card Policies

Report cards are issued three times per year to students in Kindergarten through Grade 8.

Family-Teacher Conferences

Planned conferences will be offered at least once a year. If a family/guardian would like to schedule a family-teacher conference at any other point during the year, they must contact the teacher.

Standardized Testing

The Terra Nova Test is administered each year to students in grades 6 and 7. The results are communicated to families and are utilized by the school for curriculum planning.

MAP Testing is administered to all students in kindergarten through 8th grade. It is given three times during the school year for reading and math and charts your child's growth.

Curriculum

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School curriculum from Kindergarten through Grade Eight includes Religion, Integrated Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Art, Computer Literacy, Music, and Physical Education. The curriculum guidelines for each subject were developed by Independence Mission Schools.

Homework Assignments

Homework is an extension of the learning that takes place in school. Homework provides practice and drills that reinforce classroom learning and provides opportunities for independent study, research, and creative thinking. Homework includes both study and written assignments which students are expected to complete independently. While the assignments should not require undue family assistance or supervision, families can help their children by arranging a quiet, comfortable place to work, checking that assignments are completed, and signing homework (if required by the teachers). Since ample time is allowed for the completion of research and long-term assignments or projects, students should pace themselves by spending additional time each night so that these assignments are completed on time.

Homework can be obtained from students' homework books or Google Classroom.

Graduation

Eighth-grade students who have completed the prescribed course of study and maintained a suitable conduct record are eligible for graduation if all financial obligations have been met. Procedures for graduation are determined by the principal and the eighth-grade teachers. The principal reserves the right to deny the privilege of graduating and/or participating in graduation exercises to any student who does not meet the academic or behavioral expectations of the school or whose family has not met their financial obligations to the school.

Field Trips, Extracurricular Events, and School Spirit Celebrations

Throughout the year, the school may offer students opportunities to participate in community building and school spirit events, which may include but are not limited to pep rallies, field days, and clubs. Participation in these activities is a privilege, not a right. The principal has the right to deny any student from participating in field trips, extracurriculars, or school spirit celebrations if, in their view, the student's conduct, academic or disciplinary record indicates that the privilege should not be extended.

Books

All textbooks are the property of St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School. The school issues textbooks to each student for his/her use. Each textbook must be returned to the teacher at the end of the school year. If a student's book is lost or destroyed, payment must be made in full. The charge for a lost or destroyed textbook will be the retail cost to replace the book.

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty is defined as any cooperative or solitary attempt to represent the work of any other person as one's own. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Copying any portion of another student's assignment or test
- Looking at any material not provided or directed by the teacher during a test.
- Giving answers to others on a test.
- Informing others of test items before they take the test
- Reporting inaccurate grades
- Use of any electronic device (cell phone, smartwatch, etc.) to give or obtain answers on a test.

Both the student who copies and the student who offered materials for copying will receive consequences. Students who are found to be academically dishonest may receive a zero on that assignment/test as well as additional disciplinary consequences.

School Culture and Student Conduct

St. Thomas Aquinas exists to create a positive, structured, and loving atmosphere in which each student can learn and thrive, while exhibiting proper behavior and self-control. In order to provide a successful learning experience, it is important to establish consistent classroom procedures and clear guidelines around behavioral expectations, using a proactive, preventative approach that keeps our love for our students at the forefront. Each teacher will have consistent expectations for their classroom that will be explained, taught, and modeled. These behaviors will be reinforced throughout the school year. Students are expected to exemplify positive behaviors on school grounds and anywhere students represent St. Thomas Aquinas. Students should be aware that there are consequences for failure to observe behavior expectations; all consequences should be logical and appropriate and all adults, especially the classroom teacher, share in the responsibility of consistently responding with logical and appropriate consequences.

Attendance

Our families are aware of the strong relationship between school success and a good record of attendance. Students are expected to be punctual. Families are asked to schedule trips and vacations around the school calendar. Families should encourage good habits of attendance and punctuality in their children. Whenever a student must be absent from school, a family or guardian must notify the school of the reason before 9:00 a.m. *If we have not received a call by 9:30 am we will contact you. Please respond so we know your child is safe.*

Students who are too ill or otherwise incapacitated to attend classes and participate fully in class activities may not participate in activities scheduled for the afternoon or evening of that day. Students must attend five (5) sequential class periods to participate in an afterschool activity.

Consistent attendance concerns will result in interventions or disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the school for the following year.

Regular and consistent attendance at school is the biggest indicator of student success.

Therefore, STA is committed to working with our students and parents/guardians to ensure

Each student has a consistent attendance record. Supports can be put in place for students who may need them.

For the school year 2022-23, STA will follow the Pennsylvania State Department of Education Attendance Guidelines concerning attendance and truancy. The PA School Code makes it mandatory for all children of compulsory school age having a legal residence in Pennsylvania to attend a day school.

Important Points

In line with the PA School Code, all absences will be treated as unlawful until the school receives a written excuse explaining the reason(s) for an absence.

Parents/guardians and students should submit the written explanation within three calendar days of the absence. Failure to do so will result in the absence being permanently counted as unlawful.

After 3 unlawful absences, the parent/guardian will be invited to a Student Attendance Improvement Plan meeting.

If parent/guardian does not attend the meeting, and an additional 3 unlawful absences occur, referral to youth services or magisterial court may occur.

After 10 consecutive unlawful absences, the student will be dropped from the roll.

A maximum of ten days of cumulative lawful absences verified by parental notification may be permitted during a school year.

Attendance Goal

Our goal is for students to attend school 95% of the time or more. In order to achieve this rate, would mean that a student would miss no more than nine days of school over the course of the school year.

Late Arrivals

A student who arrives late for school must sign in at the school office and present a note from her/his family/guardian explaining the reason for the lateness (Students who are late because the school bus on which they were riding was late do not need to present a note). Lateness, of course, impacts a perfect attendance record and constitutes a serious infraction because it disrupts class and causes a loss of instructional time for all students in the class. In addition, students who are often or excessively late to school may not be allowed to return to St. Thomas Aquinas the following school year.

Student Expectations

Students attend and participate in the school program so that they may develop to their fullest potential. Students are expected to act in such a fashion that their behavior reflects favorably on themselves and the school. Students are expected to:

- respect all other persons by the way they speak to and act toward them
- respect the rights of others, including the right to secure an education in an environment that is orderly and disciplined
- contribute toward establishing and maintaining an atmosphere that generates mutual respect and dignity for all
- behave appropriately in all situations in keeping with the Catholic principles which the school espouses
- be punctual and attend school on a regular basis
- come prepared for class with required supplies and assignments
- make an earnest effort to do their best work
- assist in the efforts of teachers and families to communicate about a student's progress by presenting to families all test papers and other documents requiring signatures of families and returning such to school
- deliver other forms of communication between families and teacher
- observe the approved school dress code
- respect school property and help keep it free from damage

- accept responsibility for his/her actions and commit to consequences with an intent to grow and learn

Discipline Policy and Procedures

The school's main objective is to create a positive, structured, and loving atmosphere in which each student can thrive and exhibit proper behavior and self-control. In order to provide a successful learning experience, it is important to establish consistent classroom procedures and clear guidelines for behavioral expectations. A fair, consistent discipline policy is an integral part of a sound educational program. Discipline reflects the philosophy of a Catholic school that strives to develop students committed to the observance of just rules and regulations and to assist individuals in responding to their responsibilities and obligations to themselves and others. The philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas School supports the belief that each child deserves to be guided and encouraged so that proper attitudes toward self and others are fostered.

Students are considered representatives of their school at all times, including on the bus, at school-sponsored functions, and on social media. Inappropriate behavior outside of the school day may still result in disciplinary action.

Minor infractions that cause distractions and interruptions in the classroom will be addressed in accordance with the classroom management policy of the teacher. These infractions may include but are not limited to:

- being unprepared for class
- failure to follow classroom rules and procedures
- disrespect to peers
- inappropriate language or gestures
- cheating or plagiarism

Consequences may include but are not limited to loss of privileges, lunch/recess/after-school detention, and call or conference with the parent.

More serious infractions that require the intervention of administration may result in continued loss of privileges, suspension, and/or expulsion. These consequences are determined at the discretion of the principal. Examples of serious infractions include but are not limited to:

- Fighting of any kind, including play-fighting and horseplay
- Flagrant disrespect for authority to any adult in the building
- Possession and/or use of drugs, nicotine, vapes, or alcohol
- Vandalism of school or parish property
- Possession of weapons
- Bullying or harassment of others, including cyber bullying
- Leaving class or school without permission from a school authority
- Theft
- Violation of acceptable use policy for technology
- Repeated classroom disruptions and offenses
- Repeated suspensions

Any serious infraction will be thoroughly investigated by the school administration. The results of the investigation will be communicated to parents and documented at the school level. In the event of a suspension, the principal will determine the requirements for readmittance to the school, which may include a probationary period for the student.

Continued enrollment at the school is a privilege, and full cooperation of families and students in regards to academic, behavioral, attendance, and tuition policies are expected. The principal is entrusted with the ultimate determination of consequences when this cooperation is not met.

Bullying

St. Thomas Aquinas School has a zero-tolerance policy toward any bullying behavior. The definition of bullying is: "Bullying happens when someone with more power unfairly hurts someone with less power over and over again. Power may be physical strength, social skill, verbal ability, or any other resource." Instances of bullying that go unreported cannot be dealt with in an appropriate manner. At St. Thomas Aquinas, we ask that families/guardians notify their child's teacher of the first-time bullying behavior that is reported by their child so that it can be investigated. If the investigation determines it is appropriate, such behavior may be reported to law enforcement. Families are encouraged to report threats of violence or harm to their children to law enforcement, particularly if perpetrated electronically. Students are required to refrain from participating in any malicious, derogatory, or inappropriate exchanges via text messages, e-mails, or social networking sites that involve the school name, its employees, or other STA students and families. All incidents should be reported to the school for investigation.

Electronic Device Policy

Students have access to a school-provided Chromebook throughout the day. With the exception of this Chromebook, students are **NOT PERMITTED** to have electronic devices, including but not limited to cell phones, smartwatches, and tablets, during school hours without the express consent of a faculty or staff member. The teacher will determine how any electronic devices will be stored in the classroom. Failure to follow these instructions will result in disciplinary action.

For legal and privacy reasons, students are prohibited from taking photographs or videos of any school employees or students during school hours or school-sponsored events and using them in an unauthorized manner. This includes but is not limited to sharing pictures/videos electronically by phone, email, text messages, or social media.

Technology Policy

Acceptable Use Policy

The school's information technology resources, including email and Internet access, are provided for educational purposes.

Adherence to the following policy is necessary for continued access to the school's technological resources:

Staff/Students must:

- Respect and protect the privacy of others.
- Use only assigned accounts.
- Not log in (authenticate) to the school network unless using district-owned/authorized devices or services.
- Not view, use, or copy passwords, data, or networks to which they are not authorized.
- Not distribute private information about others or themselves.
- Report security risks or violations to a teacher or network administrator.
- Report threatening or discomfoting materials to a teacher.
- Respect and protect the intellectual property of others.
- Not infringe copyrights (no making illegal copies of music, games, or movies!).
- Respect and practice the principles of community.
- Communicate only in ways that are kind and respectful.

Supervision and Monitoring:

School and network administrators and their authorized employees monitor the use of information technology resources to help ensure that uses are secure and in conformity with this policy. Administrators reserve the right to examine, use, and disclose any data found on the school's information

networks in order to further the health, safety, discipline, or security of any student or other person, or to protect property. They may also use this information in disciplinary actions and will furnish evidence of the crime to law enforcement.

Consequences for Violation:

Violations of these rules may result in disciplinary action, including the loss of privileges to use the school's information technology resources.

Receiving Your Laptop

Students and their parents will be required to attend an orientation meeting with the principal or a designee to receive the laptop and a copy of the Acceptable Use Policy. **All families are required to complete the Acceptable Use Policy before they can use the laptop.**

All members of the school community are expected to abide by the Technology Acceptable Use Policy. Students who fail to abide by this policy are subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension and/or expulsion at the discretion of the principal.

General Guidelines

The following rules will apply when using the laptop, internet, and school email account. Ultimately, **students are responsible for any activity that occurs in their accounts.**

- Students must always use appropriate language.
- Students may not browse or attempt to browse inappropriate websites
- Students may not transmit language/material that is profane, sexual, obscene, abusive, or offensive to others
- Students may not send mass emails, chain letters, or spam. Students should maintain high integrity concerning email content.
- Students may not utilize "Chat rooms" during class without permission.
- Students are not permitted to bypass or attempt to bypass the Internet filter
- Students may not access or attempt to access social media sites or computer games without the express permission of a teacher or administrator
- Students must protect their username and password and should not give it to anyone else

Using Your Laptop at School and Home

The laptop is intended for use at school each day. Students are responsible for bringing their charged laptops to all classes. Only the provided charger should be used to charge the laptop.

Students are given a school-provided email for educational purposes. This email only should be used to log in to the laptop. No other email or guest mode is allowed while using the laptop.

All emails and online activity is done on a school-issued device that is not private, and school staff can review emails and activity at any time and without notice.

Students can take their device home each day, provided that the Acceptable Use Form has been signed, there is an academic purpose for the laptop to be taken home, and the student maintains proper use of the laptop. **Students are responsible for their devices at all times and are responsible in the event of loss or damage.**

General Precautions

Keep all liquids away from the Chromebook. Never eat or drink while using the Chromebook.

The laptop should not be placed on or under soft items, such as blankets, pillows, or sofa cushions. This may cause the laptop to overheat and result in physical damage to the machine.

Chargers must be inserted carefully into the laptop charging port to prevent damage.

To avoid damaging the screen, never close the laptop with anything on the keyboard, such as pencils or notebooks.

Heavy objects should never be placed or stacked on top of the laptop.

Laptop Repair & Assessed Fees

If a computer is damaged or malfunctioning, it must be reported to the administration immediately so repair can be made. Under no circumstances should anyone else attempt repairs on laptops. All laptop repairs must be provided by the IT Department.

If a laptop is lost or stolen, it must be reported immediately to the school and appropriate law enforcement authorities.

Damage will be assessed according to the following schedule:

- A \$300 charge for an unrepairable laptop may be assessed:
 - Broken Screen, water damage, major structural damage.
- A \$150 charge as the full cost of repair may be required for cosmetic/minor functional damage:
 - Missing keys, broken trackpad, chipped enclosure.
- A \$50 charge for the missing chargers

In the case of theft, the school's Principal/Admin may elect to waive the charges if a police report is provided.

An online resource for answering questions about Internet safety, computers, and the Web can be accessed by parents here: <http://www.digizen.org>

Uniform Policy

School uniforms are to be ordered through Flynn & O'Hara.

Neatness and cleanliness in personal attire are very much a part of a child's education and are the responsibility of both the child and the family. A good personal appearance is expected of every student in St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School. The uniform is expected to be worn each day of school. If there are extenuating circumstances that affect the child's ability to wear the uniform, the parent should contact the school.

Throughout the school year, there may be days in which our students may dress out of uniform. Students who do not participate in the out-of-uniform day will be expected to have their complete uniform on throughout the school day. Students in "out of uniform attire" that is deemed inappropriate by the administration may be asked to phone a parent in order to have other clothing brought to school or to be taken home in order to change clothes.

School & Student Safety

Emergency Communications

Our contact system is TADS Educate. This system will deliver emails/text messages to families individually. Should schools need to close early due to weather, or bus delays, for example, this system would notify you by email/text messages. All students have been entered into the system. If your emergency contact information changes, please update information by contacting the school office.

In the event of an emergency that requires that your child be picked up at an alternate location, information will be communicated to families via TADS Educate.

Emergency Drills

State Law requires that emergency drills be held periodically throughout the school year. Fire drills are practiced monthly. Lockdown, shelter in place, and evacuation drills are practiced yearly.

Student Health Records and Immunizations

Proof of a health examination and current immunizations are mandatory for the students to be enrolled in our school in accordance with the regulation of the Pennsylvania Department of Education. The necessary form is available from the student's personal physician. No student will be allowed to attend classes after September 15, until his/her updated health form has been turned into the appropriate school office.

Student Illness

Please do not send a child to school who shows signs of illness. A student who becomes ill at school must request permission from his/her teacher to report to the office. If the illness is serious, the family/guardian will be contacted. No student will be released from school with anyone other than the family, guardian, or responsible adult designated by the family/guardian. The responsible adult may be asked to provide identification before signing the student out at the appropriate school office.

Please remember: Students with a fever of 100° or higher, vomiting, or diarrhea will be sent home. Students are required to remain at home until fever- and symptom-free for 24 hours. Students recovering from pink eye (conjunctivitis) must be on medication for at least 24 hours before returning to school.

Families of students with chronic medical problems should report their illness to the administration, school nurse, and the classroom teacher(s).

Medication

The Prescription Drug and Medicine Authorization (MED-1) form must be completed by a physician before any prescription or over-the-counter medication will be dispensed from the office. This form is available at school. **We cannot keep medicine in the school without this form.** All medicines or refills must be delivered by a family or guardian to the school. All medications must be in the original container. Students may **NEVER** carry medicines on school grounds unless directed by the school nurse for emergency purposes. Any student with medication in their possession is subject to disciplinary consequences.

Medical Emergencies/Accidents/Injuries

Accidents on school property shall be reported immediately to the principal. A report shall be written describing the accident and follow-up care. A copy of the report shall be kept permanently in the school. If professional medical services are required, a copy of the report shall be sent to the IMS Central Office.

Food Allergies

Students with food allergies will be accommodated to the extent practical for the school. The family or guardian should notify the school in writing of the student's condition.

Inspections

Quarterly safety inspections will be conducted by school personnel. The insurance company will conduct annual inspections of the facilities and grounds. Annual asbestos inspections shall be conducted in schools that contain asbestos.

Safety and Security Legal Custody Factors

If for some reason there are court papers restricting the custody and care of your child(ren), WE MUST HAVE COPIES OF THE ORDER IN THE OFFICE. The school staff cannot be responsible for your child's safety if these documents are not on file, especially if they are in regard to a family. Please make sure your child is aware of the persons with whom they are and are not permitted to leave or be with while at school.

Families are asked to inform school personnel when legal custody of the child(ren) resides with one family. It is important for the school to have a copy of the custody decree. This will help school personnel to make effective decisions when the need arises. Custodial families are likewise asked to supply the school with copies of protection from abuse (restraining) orders if the need arises.

Those individuals who have legal custody of the student may attend school meetings, participate in educational decisions and review educational records regarding that student. Persons who do not have legal custody (including those with visitation rights but not legal custody) have no such educational rights and may not participate in these matters.

Unless a court or custody agreement specifies otherwise, each family/guardian with legal custody is entitled to access all school records of the child. Absent a subpoena or court order, school records of the child(ren) may be disclosed only upon written consent of the family/guardian with legal custody.

A child will not be released to a family/guardian that does not have physical custody, without the written consent of the custodial family/guardian. To determine the custodial family/guardian, all separated or divorced families of children enrolled in the school must provide the school with a copy of the court order or custodial agreement adjudicating that determination of custody. This Court Order/Custodial Agreement is placed in a confidential file.

Visitors to Campus

In order to maintain the highest degree of safety for our students, ALL visitors must sign in at the school office upon arrival at the school and be prepared to show identification.

Student Activities

Field Trips

Field trips are educational activities that are an outgrowth of class instruction and are designed to enhance the classroom or developmental learning experience. Permission slips must be signed by a family or legal guardian and returned to the school prior to the event in order for the child to attend the field trip. While we understand the desire of families/guardians to participate in field trips with their children, student safety is the school's priority. **It is now a state requirement that all adults attending a Field Trip must have all required clearances.** Please consult the school office for clearance requirements.

A field trip is a privilege. We reserve the right to exclude from field trips any student whose conduct in school or on previous trips has been unsatisfactory. Students' participation in field trips can be denied if they fail to meet academic, behavioral, or financial requirements. If a family/guardian does not wish a child to attend the trip for any reason, the School must be notified. The student must attend school on the day of the trip or be marked absent.

Fundraisers

All fundraisers must be approved by the Principal. No outside sales of merchandise may take place without approval from the Principal.

Parties/Birthdays

For the health and safety of all students, food treats (cupcakes, pizza, etc.) should be nut free for celebrations. Little gift bags with pencils or stickers, etc. are permitted to celebrate your child's birthday. There must be a bag for each child in the class and bags will be distributed by the teacher. No parents are allowed to attend celebrations in the classroom. Invitations for parties may not be sent to school unless an

invitation is being given to every student in the class. Parties or dances sponsored by families off-campus are not sanctioned by the school and the school's name may not be used.

Service Opportunities

At St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School, we have these service opportunities for our students: Student Council, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service, Altar Servers, and Liturgy speakers/readers.

Seventh Grade High School Visitation

Each spring, our local Catholic high schools host a visitation day for seventh-grade students. With their families/guardians, students select an archdiocesan high school to visit. Families must provide transportation to and from the high schools and students will not come to St. Thomas Aquinas on the visitation day. As the visitation day is a school day, attendance will be recorded at the high school and reported to St. Thomas Aquinas. Students who choose to not visit an archdiocesan high school on the visitation day must report to school at St. Thomas Aquinas or be marked absent.

Special Events

Back to School Night is held in September and is the best time to meet teachers and learn what the year will hold for your student and family.

Our annual Christmas Tree Lighting concert is held in December. This is an opportunity to celebrate the birth of Jesus with our school family and see our children perform.

Catholic Schools Week is held the last week in January and is filled with special activities for the students, teachers, and families.

Spiritual Activities

Our students can participate in a variety of spiritual activities, including Mass, Prayer Services, Retreats, Service Projects, and Community Outreach.

Student Clubs/Extracurricular Activities

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School has a Writers' Club, Math Night, Career Day, and a Science Fair.

Yearbook

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School yearbooks are issued to students upon eighth-grade graduation.