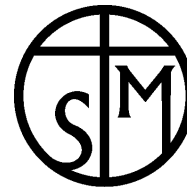




05/06

Saint Thomas More
Catholic School
Handbook



Saint Thomas More Catholic School 2005–2006



I/We have been issued a copy of the Saint Thomas More Catholic School Student Handbook.

I/We understand that I/we are responsible for the information presented in this handbook.

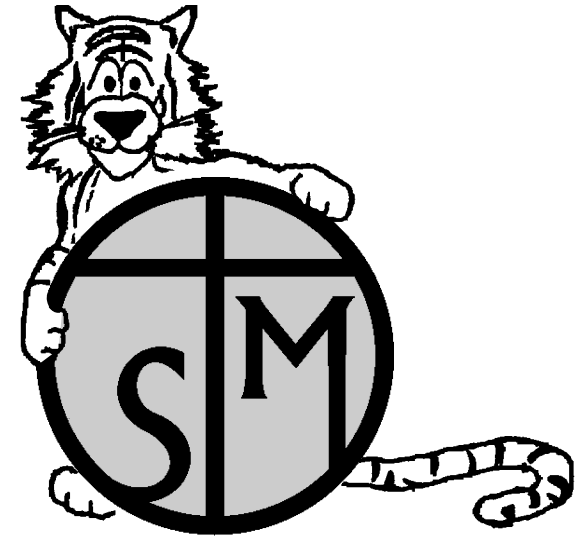
I/We understand that the continued enrollment of the student is subject to the student observing all school rules as set out in the school handbook including but not limited to general behavior, academic performance, and attendance.

I/We acknowledge that the school governs the conduct of the student when on the school property, during the aftercare program, participating in school activities off of the school property, or at any school event.

Continued enrollment, in any given school year and re-enrollment in any subsequent school year, is subject to the parents'/guardians' continued support of the mission of the school as documented in the school handbook and the maintenance of a demonstrably effective and supportive relationship between the school and the parents/guardians. Re-enrollment in any subsequent year is subject to mutual agreement. The student, the parents, or the school administration, either with or without cause, may withhold that agreement.

_____	_____
Parent/Guardian Signature	Date
Student's name(s):	Student's signature(s):
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Please return this form to the Saint Thomas More School Office.



05 / 06

**Saint Thomas More
Catholic School
Handbook & Student Directory**

630 West Ponce de Leon Avenue
Decatur, Georgia 30030

Phone 404-373-8456

Fax 404-377-8554

more@mindspring.com

www.stmga.org

Saint Thomas More School shall admit students of any race, color, sex, national and ethnic origin to all the rights and privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the corporation's school. Saint Thomas More School shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

Topics of Interest

PLEASE NOTE: This is not the entire table of contents for the Handbook. You are responsible for reading and understanding this handbook in its entirety. For your convenience, we have noted, here, those topics of major concern and interest.

STM STUDENT HANDBOOK

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Our Mission Statement

Saint Thomas More School strives to pass on the values and vision of our Catholic faith and tradition to develop a mature Christian person who understands how to relate to God and others, how to choose wisely, and how to learn.

Vision Statement

Saint Thomas More Catholic School provides a sound curriculum and effective teaching to work with parents in nurturing children to become morally good and intellectually competent. Moral and religious guidance, order and self-discipline are instilled through kindness and firmness in the formation of character. Saint Thomas More School is committed to teaching in all modalities of learning. We provide an integrated approach that brings together faith and reason, in mind, body, and spirit; wisdom and knowledge; science and technology; and creativity in learning.

We seek to develop persons committed to love God and one another, to seek the truth, to continue learning, and to develop their faith, skills, and talents. We are a community, in partnership with families and parishes, where each person is valued and respected.

Our Beliefs

- ✠ The imparting of Catholic beliefs is of great importance, together with the integration of daily living with the Gospel message, to develop a spirit of prayer and worship.
- ✠ Our students have a responsibility to serve and to witness God to the wider community
- ✠ God blesses our students with the ability to learn, achieve, create, and succeed to their fullest potential.
- ✠ Our students should practice self-control and respect in their interactions with others.
- ✠ Education is a life-long process that begins at home, is fostered in our school, and should continue throughout life.
- ✠ A sound curriculum, integrated with current technology and effective teaching, prepares our students to relate to God and others and learn how to choose wisely.
- ✠ Cultural diversity within our school facilitates interactions with and opens doors to an interdependent world.
- ✠ Our students have a learning environment that is clean, safe, and secure.

2005–2006 Saint Thomas More Faculty & Staff

NAME	POSITION	E-MAIL ADDRESS	NAME	POSITION	E-MAIL ADDRESS
Laura Ayala	Media Specialist	Layala@stmga.org	Kathy Merritt	Kindergarten Teacher	Kmerritt@stmga.org
Tim Beck	Middle School Teacher	Tbeck@stmga.org	Cate Miller	Art Teacher	Cmiller@stmga.org
Margaret Becsi	2nd Grade Teacher	MBecsi@stmga.org	Kirk Miller	Middle School Teacher	Kmiller@stmga.org
Janet Brown	2nd Grade Teacher	JBrown@stmga.org	Mary Moran	1st Grade Teacher	Mmoran@stmga.org
Judy Chadwick	Aftercare Director		Ruth Motta	3rd Grade Assistant	Rmotta@stmga.org
Joanne Collins	P.E. Teacher	Jcollins@stmga.org	Gail Msezane	Principal	Gmsezane@stmga.org
Terry Collis	8th Grade Teacher	Tcollis@stmga.org	Ansley Murphey	Development Director	Amurphey@stmga.org
Jon Paul Craciun	P.E. Teacher	JPCraciun@stmga.org	Ruth Murphy	Music Teacher	Rmurphy@stmga.org
Jewel Culton	Technology Support	JCulton@stmga.org	Mary Nicolatos	Kindergarten Teacher	Mnicolatos@stmga.org
Karyl Davis	Church/School Admin.	Kdavis@stmga.org	Erinn Osterloh	1st Grade Teacher	EOsterloh@stmga.org
Vince DeSantis	Plant Administration	Vdesantis@stmga.org	Mary Pelli	Kindergarten Assistant	MPelli@stmga.org
Patty Finley	School Nurse	Pfinley@stmga.org	Kristin Pettus	5th Grade Teacher	KPettus@stmga.org
Nancy Fleming	Guidance Counselor	Nfleming@stmga.org	Michael Ricardo	Technology/5th Gr. Science	Mricardo@stmga.org
Judy Fletcher	1st Grade Assistant	Jfletcher@stmga.org	Peggy Saunders	Middle School Teacher	Psaunders@stmga.org
Marsha Free	School Office	MWF@stmga.org	Tony Sekelja	Plant Operations	
Terri Hilliard-Gibson	Middle School Teacher	THilliardGibson@stmga.org	Connie Stierlen	Spanish Teacher	Cstierlen@stmga.org
Stacy Glavin	2nd Grade Teacher	Sglavin@stmga.org	Melody Summers	4th Grade Teacher	Msummers@stmga.org
Amy Jonap	4th Grade Teacher	Ajonap@stmga.org	Terri Tirella	Media Center Assistant	Ttirella@stmga.org
Mary Jane Kettler	Middle School Teacher	MJKettler@stmga.org	Judy Trotochaud	Resource Teacher	Jtrotochaud@stmga.org
Romana Khalaf	3rd Grade Teacher	Rkhalaf@stmga.org	Marie Trujillo	Religious Ed. Director	Mtrujillo@stmga.org
Kate King	2nd Grade Assistant	KKing@stmga.org	Noreen Walsh	8th Grade Teacher	Nwalsh@stmga.org
Kim Kissell	Kindergarten Assistant	Kkissell@stmga.org	Marcia Watt	Art/Media Center Assistant	Mwatt@stmga.org
Heather Kloer	Computer Education	Hkloer@stmga.org			
LaToya Lindsay	5th Grade Teacher	Llindsay@stmga.org			
Eileen Maron	School Office	EKM@stmga.org			

History

In 1948 the Diocese of Savannah-Atlanta purchased land for a new parish on West Ponce de Leon Avenue in Decatur, Georgia. A convent, school, church, and rectory were constructed. Saint Thomas More opened on September 1, 1950 with approximately 140 students in grades 1 to 5. The Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur staffed the school. Grades 6, 7, and 8 were added in successive years.

June 2000 sadly saw the departure of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur and the closing of the Saint Thomas More convent. The convent was renovated to house parish offices, meeting space, and additional classrooms.

As a parish school in the Archdiocese of Atlanta, Saint Thomas More is guided by rules, regulations, and policies set by the archdiocese. On the local level, the Saint Thomas More Parish Board of Education serves in an advisory capacity and oversees the general direction of the school. Visitors are welcome at the Board Meetings and communication is encouraged. *The agenda for upcoming meetings and synopsis of the meeting's discussion will be available on the website. For more information about the Saint Thomas More Board of Education, please contact the School Office.*

School Structure

Saint Thomas More serves children kindergarten through grade eight. To facilitate instructional and curriculum planning, the student body is grouped in three levels: Primary (K to grade 2), Intermediate (grades 3 to 5), Middle School (grades 6 to 8).

School Administrative Team

The School Administrative Team is a site-based management team comprised of the principal, counselor, a level coordinator from Primary, Intermediate, and the Middle School, as well as a representative of the Specials teachers. This team works cooperatively to help the school function smoothly, to assess current practices, and to plan for school improvements.

Student Support Team

The Student Support Team, or SST, is a committee of school faculty and support personnel assigned to identify, plan, and recommend alternative instruction, organizational, or behavioral strategies for a given student as a first step in trying to meet the student's needs. The SST meets weekly to review and consider students referred by instructional staff, parents, administrative or support staff.

Tutoring

Please contact Mrs. Fleming at 404-377-4520, when tutors are needed. (Teachers are prohibited from tutoring her/his own students, or upcoming students, for remuneration.) Teachers on staff who tutor may begin work with students at 3:45 p.m., in the school library. In order to best serve the needs of students, a partnership has to be formed between the classroom or subject teacher and the tutor.

Tutors in the community who have come to us for referrals have been interviewed. Any tutor we recommend for your child has solid credentials and has had a background screening. We feel this is an important safety requirement we can offer to our families.

School Counselor

The Saint Thomas More School Guidance and Counseling program is structured around four goals: *Learning to Live, Learning to Love, Learning to Learn, and Learning to Make a Living.*

Our counselor believes that as children grow they face and solve certain problems universal in human life. Therefore, the Life Skills curriculum is directed at all students by teaching topics that are developmental and preventative. The program is age appropriate and provides experiences and discussion that allow students the opportunity to learn about themselves and others.

The counselor is responsible for coordinating services for psychological or educational testing, teaching the Life Skills curriculum, meeting with small groups or individuals on an as-needed basis, and works as the school's liaison with others in the community who work with families.

The counselor is committed to all Saint Thomas More families and is available for at-home discussions. A resource library of videos and printed materials on parenting issues are available in the counselor's office. Please feel free to call Mrs. Fleming at 404-377-4520.

Admission Policy

Saint Thomas More Catholic School does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, or national origin. Preference in admissions is given to the children of Saint Thomas More Parish, secondly to Catholic children from other parishes without schools, thirdly to siblings of non-Catholic students already enrolled in our school, and lastly to non-Catholic children.

For admission to the kindergarten program, a student must reach his/her fifth birthday by September 1st of the year in which the child is enrolling. For admission to the first grade program, a student must reach his/her sixth birthday by September 1st of the year in which the child is enrolling.

Local transfer of students from any public, private, or Archdiocesan school into grade 8 is not generally considered. Students whose families have relocated into the Atlanta area may apply for admission into grade 8 at any Archdiocesan school. Admission to other grades, especially Middle School, will be considered carefully on a case-by-case basis.

Parish Verification

Catholic families are required to verify that they are active parishioners within their church. All Parish Verifications are due in the Saint Thomas More School Office no later than June 1 in order to receive the Catholic tuition rate for the upcoming school year. Failure to comply will result in a charge of the non-Catholic tuition rate per student for the school year. There will be no adjustments to the tuition rate after June 1. Non-Catholic families are required to submit the appropriate form (obtained at registration/re-registration) verifying participation in their faith communities.

Withdrawals

Parents must complete a withdrawal form. All accounts must be paid to date, i.e., tuition, lunch program, Extended Care, and library fines. All textbooks and library books are to be returned. Once all these conditions are

satisfied, official school transcripts can be released to other schools. No transcripts or records will be released directly to parents or students for the purpose of transfer.

All conditions listed below **must** be satisfied before records can be released:

- ☒ All library books have been returned and all fines paid.
- ☒ Textbooks have been returned.
- ☒ Tuition has been paid to date.
- ☒ Lunch account has been paid to date.
- ☒ Extended Care account has been paid to date.
- ☒ The Book Bill will not be refunded.

Re-enrollment / Re-registration

Re-registration forms will be sent to each family presently enrolled in our school during the month of January. The forms must be completed and returned to the school office to secure a space for the following school year. A non-refundable re-registration fee of \$75.00 per family **must** accompany the forms. Please refer to **Fees** for further explanation. Financial Aid Forms will be sent with re-registration forms. The applicant is responsible for returning the financial aid forms to the Archdiocese.

Current families with new students and/or kindergarten students **must** complete the Admissions Process. New students and/or kindergarten students are not considered during the re-registration process.

Please understand that continued enrollment of the student is subject to the student observing all school rules as set in the School Handbook including, but not limited to, general behavior, academic performance, and attendance.

Continued enrollment in any given school year and re-enrollment in any subsequent school year is subject to the parents'/guardians' continued support of the mission of the school, as documented in the School Handbook, and the maintenance of a demonstrably effective and supportive relationship between the school and the parents/guardians. Re-enrollment in any subsequent year is subject to mutual agreement. The student, the parents, or the school administration, either with or without cause, may withhold that agreement.

Student Records and Confidentiality

All families who have students enrolled in Saint Thomas More School are required to have a current health card on file in the school clinic.

Educational, behavioral, and attendance records must be maintained for each student. Cumulative records shall be maintained upon the student's entrance into our school until the student has graduated or is no longer enrolled in our school. Permanent records are maintained for a reasonable time.

Upon the request of an adult student or parents of minor students, all reports, tests, and evaluations will be shown to them in the presence of qualified school personnel. No other individuals have rights to student data without a subpoena or written permission of the adult student or the parents of the minor student.

Students recommended for psycho-educational tests are normally referred to the school psychologist at the Office of Catholic Schools. Test results are kept in a confidential file. Information requested by family doctors, counselors, or psychologists would be returned directly to the office of that professional via U.S. mail or via fax.

PLEASE NOTE: *If a custodial order is in force, the school MUST be notified. A copy of the legal order will be kept on file in the School Office.*

Attendance

Saint Thomas More School operates 180 days for students, in compliance with the rules and regulations of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. School is in session from 8:10 a.m. until 3:05 p.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. Dismissal on Wednesdays is at 2:00 p.m. Middle School students are allowed to enter their building at 7:50 a.m. Students are considered **tardy** at **8:10 a.m.** When students are tardy, they are subject to losing lunch recess for detention.

It is the shared responsibility of the school and the home to assist students in developing desirable habits of punctuality and attendance. Students are required to be in school and on time when school is in session, including days scheduled for exams, field trips, or school Masses.

Parents are responsible for the attendance of their children at school. Students are expected to be in school and on time. Academic achievement is evaluated on the basis of a student's involvement and participation; there-

fore, attendance is necessary. Parents are responsible for notifying the school of an absence by calling the School Office before 9:00 a.m. on each day of the student's absence. Upon the student's return to school, parents are required to send a note to school explaining the reason for the absence. In cases of illnesses spanning more than three days, a note from the doctor may be necessary. Legal requirements mandate these notes be kept on file for the current school year. Failure to provide a written explanation is considered "Parental Neglect."

Students continually absent or tardy without sufficient cause will be referred to the principal. Georgia law requires 180 student days in the school calendar year. If a student surpasses 30 days absent, it is doubtful that the student will be prepared for the following school year and may have to repeat the current grade. Absence for any reason removes the student from the primary learning environment and has a negative effect on student achievement.

If a student is taken out of school before the end of the academic year and class work and final exams are not completed prior to the departure of the student, the student is subject to Incompletes on their final report card.

Early dismissals are disruptive to the class. ***Please do not make doctor appointments, etc. that remove your student from the same class repeatedly.*** Middle School students must attend eighty percent of their ENCORE classes in order to meet course requirements. Should a student need to be dismissed early, the student should present the homeroom teacher with a note from the parent upon morning arrival to class. Parents should report to the office to secure an early dismissal form for their student(s).

When a student becomes sick at school, the school office will call the parents. If a student is too ill to return to class, he/she must be picked up by a parent. Students who are absent from school **may not** be on campus to participate in extracurricular activities.

Sick children will NOT be kept at school.

PLEASE REMEMBER to contact the School Office with changes of address, and/or phone numbers at home or at work, or cell phone or pager numbers. It is very important to have current phone numbers on file in the event of an emergency.

Tuition

Catholic tuition applies to families who have received a signed Parish Verification form from their church stating that they are active members of their parish. The Parish Verification form must be on file in the School Office of Saint Thomas More School no later than July 15 in order to receive the Catholic tuition rate. If the form is not on file in the School Office by the July 15 deadline, the family will be charged the non-Catholic tuition rate for each child for the upcoming school year and adjustments **will not** be made to the tuition rate during the school year. Non-Catholic tuition is based on the actual unsubsidized costs. Tuition is reduced by \$50.00 per student if tuition is paid in full by the first day of school and written notice of intent to pay in full is given to the school no later than June 10. Tuition is reduced by \$50.00 per student if tuition is paid in full before the start of school. All families are expected to make prompt payment of tuition and fees in accordance with the procedure and schedule approved by the Saint Thomas More Parish Board of Education and published by the principal. Tuition will be divided into 10 equal monthly installments beginning on July 20 and ending on April 20. Families who fail to submit a tuition payment by the established “due date” will be notified.

Students will be dismissed from Saint Thomas More School 60 days after a missed tuition payment unless their account is made current. Students who have been dismissed are not eligible for re-enrollment for the current school year.

Any family whose tuition account shows an outstanding balance at the end of the academic year will not be eligible for re-enrollment for the next school year. Eighth grade students must have all fees paid by May 1 in order to graduate.

SMART

Saint Thomas More School uses SMART, a financial institution, as our tuition collection service. SMART offers two payment options:

- 1) pay tuition in full by the 1st day of school, or
 - 2) automatic bank account withdrawal plan through First Financial SMART
- Tuition and book bill fees will be added together and divided into 10 equal monthly installments beginning in July and ending in April. You may obtain information about your tuition account by contacting SMART. You may contact them via the address or phone number below or by going online to www.smartontheweb.com and following the simple log-on instructions.

SMART—First Financial Savings
581 Main Street
Woodbridge, NJ 07095-1198
1-800-762-7803
School Account #01661

Fees

BOOK BILLS—This non-refundable, per-student fee which is added to the annual tuition covers the rental of school textbooks, testing materials, consumable workbooks, and miscellaneous supplies. The amount of this fee is published in the *More News*. This is a non-refundable fee, as it holds a place for your student(s) at Saint Thomas More School.

RE-REGISTRATION FEE—This non-refundable fee is collected from January 1 through February 15. This fee secures your family’s place for the next school year. Included in the 2005–06 re-registration fee will be an additional \$25 to cover the cost of yearbooks for the 2004–05 school year for a total payment of \$100. All families will receive one yearbook at the end of the school year, and if additional yearbooks are desired, order forms will be available during the 1st quarter of the school year. If you choose not to pay the additional \$25 on the re-registration form, note this and sign the form where indicated. Eighth grade parents will receive a letter regarding the purchase of yearbooks.

PARENT WORK DAY FEES –The PTO schedules 3 parent workdays throughout the school year and the 8th grade parents participate in a workday prior to the 8th grade musical to offset cleaning and maintenance costs. Each family is expected to donate 5 hours of their time to the parent workdays. If a family is unable to participate in any of these scheduled workdays or fulfill the 5 hour requirement, there is a \$50 fee collected at the end of the school year. Bills are distributed to all families who did not participate.

NEW STUDENT APPLICATION FEE –This non-refundable fee is collected with the student’s application for admission. All new applicants must pay this fee to cover the costs of processing admissions paperwork and the required testing for admittance.

All fees and accounts (hot lunch, aftercare, library fines, tuition, and book bills) must be paid in full one week prior to the end of the school year. Payments for any of the above accounts will not be accepted on the last day of school.

Financial Aid

A limited amount of financial aid is available to Catholic families. Applications for aid will be sent with re-registration forms in January. The applicant must send the application form for financial assistance to the Archdiocese.

Short Term Emergency Financial Assistance

Short-term assistance is available. Saint Julie Billart, foundress of the Sisters of Notre Dame, was especially concerned with helping families in need. Saint Thomas More School honors this tradition. Please contact Mrs. Msezane or Mrs. Fleming with your requests for assistance. This help is supported by contributions from school families and parishioners of Saint Thomas More. If you would like to make a contribution to aid those in need, please see Mrs. Msezane or Mrs. Fleming. Tuition aid is not available through this fund.

Other Programs

STATE LICENSED EXTENDED CARE PROGRAM

The Extended Care Program at Saint Thomas More is licensed by the State of Georgia and is available to students who are currently enrolled at STM. The program is open to students from kindergarten to 8th grade, but space is limited. Extended Care will be held every **full day** that school is in session.

The Extended Care Program will provide a snack, study hall, planned activities, and play time. Students are expected to adhere to the behavior guidelines of the school. Students who do not demonstrate good judgement in their choices may receive a Conduct Referral, which may lead to permanent removal from the Extended Care Program.

Registration for the Extended Care Program will be available in the early spring for the following year. There is a non-refundable \$25 registration fee per family. For information, please contact the Extended Care Program Director via *Kids Mail*.

HOT LUNCH PROGRAM

At printing, Saint Thomas More currently does not have a Hot Lunch Program. A committee has been formed to research lunch programs. An announcement will be made in the *More News* once a new program is put into place along with the new Hot Lunch Program policies.

MILK PROGRAM

The milk program is administered through the School Office. It is NOT part of the Hot Lunch Program. Milk must be purchased for the entire year at the beginning of the school year. The cost for milk for the 2005–06 school year is \$30.

Communication with the School

Good communication fosters mutual understanding and support between home and school that is essential to student success.

- ☞ Our first important channel of communication is our **Meet the Teacher Night**. *This is a mandatory meeting for all parents.* At this meeting parents are oriented to aspects of the school year. Information on curriculum projections, behavioral and discipline standards, school/classroom expectations, and homework requirements will be discussed.
- ☞ The **More News** is our school newsletter. It communicates important news about what is going on at school and messages from administration, parish, and parent committees. This newsletter is e-mailed to all parents for whom we have an e-mail address. It is also available at www.stmga.org and a hard copy is available upon request.
- ☞ **Mandatory parent conferences** are scheduled at the end of first quarter. Families whose names end in A-M will be scheduled on the first day of fall conferences and families whose names end in N-Z will be scheduled on the second day of fall conferences. Fifth grade students and Middle School students are required to attend the conferences. Additional conferences can be scheduled as needed.
- ☞ **Report cards** are issued each quarter. Mid-quarter progress reports are issued first and third quarters in grades 5 to 8, and mid-quarter deficiency concerns will be issued second and fourth quarters at all levels. During third quarter, parents are notified if summer school will be required or recommended for your student.
- ☞ Grades K to 5 also communicate by sending a **folder** home on a regular basis. This will be explained to you on *Meet the Teacher Night*. It may include the *More News*, a class newsletter, work to be signed or completed, and other communication from the teacher/s. Middle School students use their *planner/assignment book* as a communication tool between home and school. Parents may be required to check it and sign that they have seen the test/score sheet. The parent or teacher may write notes to each other in the folders or planners.

COMMUNICATION WITH TEACHERS

The most appropriate person to contact is the child's homeroom or subject teacher. The most dependable way of reaching the teacher is by e-mail. E-mail addresses for all teachers are available in the front of this handbook. Teachers are not available during the school day for conferences. Please e-mail the teacher, or send a note with the student regarding the question or concern, or to request a conference. If the note has sensitive material, inappropriate for the child to see, please call the office and use the teacher's voice mailbox. You are also welcome to call the office and leave a message for the teacher to call you. Please suggest the best time to reach you and leave a phone number. If a return call is not made within a 24-hour period, please call the office again. If the second call is unanswered, please call the principal. School policy is that all phone calls, notes, or e-mails from parents should be answered within three days.

Drop-in conferences before, during, and after school hours are not possible. Teaching is the teacher's first priority. Conferences must be scheduled with the teacher.

POLICY FOR COMMUNICATING WITH NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS

St. Thomas More School abides by the Buckley Amendment. Thus, non-custodial parents will be given access to the academic records and to information regarding the academic progress of their children, unless there is a court order specifically stating that the non-custodial parent is denied access to such information. For non-custodial parents to receive a copy of their child(ren)'s report card and/or other school communications, they must notify the School Office or their child(ren)'s homeroom teacher in writing. The homeroom teacher will be responsible for giving photocopies of report cards and other classroom communication to the office staff, who will mail them. The office staff will be responsible for mailing all school-wide mailings.

POLICY FOR UNUSUAL CUSTODIAL ARRANGEMENTS

In the event of unusual custodial arrangements (i.e., a child not allowed to go with a parent, etc.), the school must be given a copy of the pertinent legal document, which will be kept on file in the school office. Any faculty or staff member who needs to be aware of the situation will be informed. No student will be dismissed from any class or activity (i.e., lunch, recess, etc.) without the proper dismissal form from the School Office.

CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION

If you have concerns involving the school and its policies, please be courteous and speak first with the principal, Mrs. Msezane, before calling the Office of Catholic Schools, or going to the Pastor. There are proper channels of communication and they begin with the principal. Petitions, phone chains, informal parent surveys, and gossip will not be recognized.

Please remember the Golden Rule! No one has the right to confront another parent, student, or any member of the STM family regarding personal matters on school property. Please schedule an appointment with the school counselor or principal if you have a matter that needs attention. Unless Mrs. Msezane is attending a meeting off campus, she is available most mornings after prayer until 9 a.m., and in the afternoon 2:30–3 p.m. Please call her to arrange an appointment. She encourages open communication between all STM parties.

SCHOOL AND FAMILY COOPERATION/COMMUNICATIONS

If information, which causes concern, surfaces at school about a particular student(s), and if the information cannot be immediately substantiated, the school reserves the right to discuss this information with the particular student(s) and his/her/their parents. This unofficial and off-the-record type of communication reflects the school's ongoing desire to act in cooperation with families in raising awareness, bringing about preventative intervention, and dispelling rumor.

School Closing Information

In case of snow, ice, or other hazardous weather conditions, attendance information for Saint Thomas More School will be given to the following radio and television stations by 6:00 a.m. on the relevant day: Fox 5, WAGA; 11-Alive, Channel 11, WXIA-TV; News/Talk 750 WSB Radio; WGST, 640 AM, and STAR 94 (94.1 FM).

We will no longer follow DeKalb County School Systems for school closings.

In the event of inclement weather, please use your best judgment for traveling to school.

If power is not affected, this information will be on the school website: www.stmga.org. You may call the School Office at 404-373-8456. Closing information will be updated on the answering machine if at all possible, weather conditions permitting. **Please do not call the rectory for this information.** Parents, students, and faculty will be responsible for listening to these stations for the closing announcements.

Visiting the School

All visitors must register in the School Office before any visit.

Visitors are welcome at Saint Thomas More School. Parents are welcome to visit classrooms and talk with the teachers, **but not during school hours**. It is recommended that you schedule an appointment with your child's teacher if you need to see them. Methods with which you may schedule this appointment are: go to the school office and leave a message for the teacher, send a message via kids' mail or leave a message on the teacher's voice mailbox to schedule a time to visit your child's teacher before or after school hours. Classroom observations must be scheduled with classroom teachers and the principal.

All visitors, volunteers, and parents must check in at the School Office. Former students and graduates are welcome to visit with faculty members. They are required to check in at the School Office and not interrupt the teacher during a class period. No one should wander the school halls, grounds, or lunchroom, or visit classrooms without securing a **pass from the Office**.

Parents are requested NOT to make a special trip to school to deliver forgotten items. Sometimes it is important that a parent needs to reach their child during the school day. If it is an emergency, we will locate your child and deliver the message. However, should a parent need to contact their child during the day for non-emergency issues, the office staff will attempt to deliver your message. Arrangements for carpool and aftercare should be made prior to the start of the school day. We understand that sometimes these plans may change and it is necessary to convey this information to your student. However, daily messages regarding carpool, aftercare, and extracurricular activities are very disruptive to the classroom. It is especially difficult to deliver messages to Middle School students after lunchtime due to their varying ENCORE class schedules. Please understand that there are times when messages cannot be delivered in a timely manner.

The School Office will be closed daily from 2:50 to 3:15.

School Policies

RELIGION

CHURCH ATTENDANCE

Catholic families are expected to regularly attend Mass on Sunday and holy days of obligation. Non-Catholic families are expected to regularly participate in their worship services.

RELIGION CLASSES

Religion classes are part of the curriculum and required of all students. Students are expected to participate in prayer, liturgy, retreats, and other religious activities in a respectful and dignified manner. Each grade level participates in the planning of scheduled liturgies throughout the year. All students participate in service projects to benefit the wider community during the Advent and Lenten seasons.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Parent meetings and family activities supplement sacramental preparation done in school. Reconciliation and Eucharist are the two sacraments that are celebrated in the second grade at Saint Thomas More School and Parish. All students participate in the classroom lessons. All Catholic students are expected to receive the sacraments as scheduled within their home parishes. Non-Catholics are not eligible to participate in the sacraments.

AUDIO/VIDEO RECORDING

No audio/video recording devices may be used during functions of the school without the expressed permission of the principal. Such events include, but are not limited to: classroom presentations, award ceremonies, performances, parent conferences, administrative conferences, and religious services. This policy also includes tape recording of conversations, either in person or by telephone, by or among students, parents, teachers, or school administrators on school property, or involving the use of the school telephone.

CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT

The State of Georgia requires by law that any principal, teacher, counselor, or other school administrator report all cases of suspected child abuse or neglect of children under eighteen years of age.

Georgia Law, Code Section 19-7-5, requires the reporting of injuries or neglect of minors, provides immunity for those reporting in good faith, and provides for a penalty for violation of the law.

IMMUNIZATION

All students must comply with the State of Georgia immunization laws. A "Certificate of Immunization" Georgia form 3231 must be kept on file for every child enrolled in our school. Per State of Georgia law, all rising 6th grade students must provide the School Office with an updated immunization record indicating that the student has received a second MMR vaccination and proof of chicken pox or the chicken pox vaccination.

ACCIDENTS, INJURY, OR ILLNESS AT SCHOOL

In the case of an accident, injury or illness, the School Office will notify parents. An accident report will be completed and placed on file regarding all accidents resulting in significant injury.

HEALTH AND MEDICATION

Health Cards and Parent Consent Forms must be signed and on file in the school office. **If a student has special health concerns or allergies these MUST be identified on the Health Card.** Parents are required to notify the school office of communicable diseases such as pink eye or head lice. Students must have a physician's note in order to return to school under these circumstances. Students with head lice must be checked in the School Office before they will be allowed to return to class. **Emergency contact names and phone numbers must be listed on the Health Card.** These numbers are needed in case of an accident or medical emergency when parents cannot be contacted.

The Saint Thomas More School office operates a clinic staffed by a part-time registered nurse and volunteer nurses. The primary function of the clinic is to provide care of minor injuries or illnesses and to administer prescribed medications. If a student is to take prescribed medication during school hours, the medication should be brought to the School Office. Prescribed medications must be properly labeled in a container by a pharmacy. The student's name, the name of the medication, the dosage, and the time to be given must be included. **Medication will be administered to students with written parental consent. Please see Health Card.** If your child's Health Card is not on file in the School Office, your child will not be allowed to stay at school.

NON-PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

The school may not dispense any over the counter medications,. This includes, but is not limited to, Tylenol, Ibuprofen (Advil or Motrin), cough syrup, or cough drops. If your child needs to be given any non-prescription

medications during school hours, please send the medication in a new, unopened bottle, labeled with your child's name, with instructions listing time and dosage needed. **A child who is given non-prescribed medication receives a clinic report that goes home explaining what medication was given, when, and why.**

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

A manual of emergency procedures is available in the school office. Parents who wish to review these procedures may do so. Standard fire drills, tornado drills, lock-down drills, and evacuation procedures are in place. GEMA Officials have reviewed our emergency procedures and completed a site survey.

ASBESTOS

Our school building contains asbestos in limited, controlled concentrations. It is maintained according to all AHERA (Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act) regulations, including annual inspection. Our management plan is available for your review upon request.

FIRE AND TORNADO DRILLS

Fire drills are mandatory and are conducted throughout the school year. Students are expected to follow the directions of the teacher and adults in charge. Evacuation procedures are posted in all classrooms and are reviewed by the teacher. Students are expected to be silent and conduct themselves in an appropriate manner in order to insure the safety of all students, faculty, and staff personnel.

Tornado drills are conducted at least once a month during tornado season. Students are instructed as to where they are to go in case of a tornado or severe weather conditions. Students are expected to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner in order to insure the safety of all students, faculty, and staff personnel.

In the event that tornado watches are issued for the school area, the administration office will constantly monitor the weather channel and weather band radio. If the watch turns into a warning, the students will be conducted to safety.

SCHOOL-WIDE EVACUATION

In the case of an emergency where our school must be evacuated, students will be moved to the First Christian Church of Decatur on the corner of West Ponce de Leon and Nelson Ferry Road.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Smoking, drinking, or any other drug use by Saint Thomas More students either in the building, on school property, or at a school-sponsored activity is a violation of school regulations. Any student found in violation or any student receiving or distributing prohibited items while under school supervision will be referred to the principal.

In the case of smoking, the principal will:

- ☒ Notify parents
- ☒ Suspend the student for a period of time at the principal's discretion
- ☒ Possibly expel the student

In the case of alcohol, or any other drug, the principal will:

- ☒ Notify the police immediately
- ☒ Notify parents
- ☒ Expel the student

(Please refer to **STM Parents Supporting Parents Guidelines**, page 29.)

SCHOOL DESKS & LOCKERS

Lockers and desks are provided to the students by the school and are considered school property. Because they are school property, lockers and desks are subject to search by the school administration at any time. Students and their parents should not have any expectations of privacy with respect to lockers and desks.

WEAPONS AND CONTRABAND MATERIALS

The use, possession, or discharge of any weapons, parts of weapons, dangerous instruments, or explosive devices in the school, on school grounds, or at school-sponsored activities is prohibited. This policy includes the possession of firearms (*real* or *toy*), materials that can be used as weapons and other contraband materials, matches, lighters, or flammable substance. Any item used in an inappropriate manner that could harm another individual is defined as a weapon. Violations of this policy may warrant the notification of the police, immediate suspension, and possible expulsion.

If a student is suspended, the parents may be asked to sign a Probation Contract that will include all conditions of the student's retention at our school. Possible terms of this contract may include professional counseling, participation in local community programs addressing youth violence, suspension from all extracurricular activities, and any other conditions deemed appropriate by the school administration.

HARASSMENT/BULLYING

It is imperative to maintain an educational environment that encourages optimum human growth and development. Respect for the dignity of each person is essential to Catholic tradition. It is vital that each school program maintains a learning and working environment free of any form of harassment or intimidation of students by any other student, lay employee, religious, or priest. The school will treat allegations of harassment seriously and will review and investigate such allegations in a prompt, confidential, and thorough manner. Substantiated acts of harassment will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Students found to have filed false or frivolous charges will also be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. Examples of harassment include, but are not limited to, verbal or written taunting; bullying; other offensive, intimidating, hostile conduct; jokes, stories, pictures, cartoons, drawings or objects which are offensive, tend to alarm, annoy, abuse, or demean an individual or group.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Saint Thomas More School is firmly committed to providing a safe, positive learning and working environment for everyone in the school. For this reason, and in keeping with the goals and objectives of Catholic education, Saint Thomas More School expressly prohibits sexual harassment and sexual violence in the school environment. This policy re-emphasizes the personal dignity of the individual and fosters positive sexual attitudes and respect for others.

Sexual Harassment defined: For the purposes of this policy, sexual harassment includes the following specific instances: verbal sexual abuse; disseminating obscene or sexually explicit material, whether in the form of music, written lyrics, pornographic pictures or other literature, or having such material in one's possession in the school, on school grounds, or at school-sponsored activities; obscene or sexually explicit graffiti anywhere in the school or on the school/parish grounds; continuing unwanted written or oral communications directed to another of a sexual nature; spreading sexual rumors/innuendoes; obscene t-shirts, hats, or buttons; touching oneself sexually in front of others; obscene and/or sexually explicit gestures; and any other inappropriate behavior of a sexually explicit or obscene nature that demeans or offends the recipient. The above list is not meant to be all-inclusive, but is intended to provide guidance as to what may constitute sexual harassment. Isolated, trivial incidents are not sufficient

to constitute sexual harassment and will be handled according to the student behavior code.

Allegations of sexual harassment (as defined above) are to be reported to the teacher and the principal. Parents of both the offender and the victim will be informed of the allegations. The matter is to be kept confidential by all parties involved and every effort will be made to protect the alleged victim from retaliation. The parents of both the offender and the victim are obligated to cooperate in remedying the situation. If the allegations are substantiated, disciplinary actions will be taken. These will depend on the nature, frequency and severity of the action, the ages of the offender and victim, the history of similar actions by this individual, and the circumstances in which the harassment occurred. Possible disciplinary actions may include, but are not limited to, any or all of the following:

- ☒ Verbal warning/reprimand and apology to the victim;
- ☒ A parent/student/principal conference;
- ☒ Written warning/reprimand and parent notification, entered in the student's file;
- ☒ Detention or removal from selected school activities and/or extracurricular activities;
- ☒ Behavior/probation contracts, possibly requiring professional intervention;
- ☒ Suspension;
- ☒ Expulsion.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Sexual violence is handled separately because of its potential criminal nature. If an incident of sexual violence occurs, the principal, or other school authority is required under state law to report the incident (GA Code Section 19-7-5), that sexual abuse or violence has occurred involving a child less than eighteen years of age. The Archdiocesan Department of Catholic Education will be contacted immediately in these situations.

Generally sexual harassment should be construed as sexual violence when the recipient: is physically touched without his/her consent in a sexual manner; is expressly threatened or perceives a threat of physical harm for purposes of the offender's sexual gratification; or is the victim of sex offenses under Georgia law. In these cases, the Department of Human Services and the police will be contacted immediately.

GANGS

Youth gangs and gang-related activity are prohibited. A gang is defined as any non-school sponsored group, usually secret and/or exclusive in membership whose purpose or practices include unlawful or anti-social behavior, or any action that threatens the welfare of others. Gang activity includes:

- ☞ Recruitment;
- ☞ Initiation;
- ☞ A manner of grooming, hair style and/or wearing of clothing, jewelry, head coverings, or accessories, which by virtue of color, arrangement, trademark, or other attribute denotes membership in a gang.

Celebrations on Campus

ON CAMPUS

We have class parties to celebrate certain holidays. These vary by grade level. Homeroom teachers and room parents will discuss plans for these celebrations. We do not have parties during Lent.

BIRTHDAYS

- ☞ A birthday child may come out of uniform on his/her birthday.
- ☞ Birthday treats organized by parents must be planned with the Primary and Intermediate homeroom teacher.
- ☞ Birthday treats will be consumed in the child's homeroom. **No treats can be shared in the lunchroom.**
- ☞ The Middle School schedule does not lend itself to sharing birthday treats. **No treats can be shared in the lunchroom.**
- ☞ **Flowers and balloons.** Please do not have flowers or balloons delivered to school. These will not be delivered to the student and will remain in the office until dismissal time, when the student may pick them up.

Invitations for off-campus celebrations will only be distributed at school when the entire class or grade level has been invited.

For off-campus parties, please refer to **STM Parents Supporting Parents Guidelines** on the next page.

STM Volunteer Policy

Parent volunteers are an important part of the educational program at Saint Thomas More School. Parents are encouraged to volunteer for special projects, holiday celebrations, field trips, clinic, school office, cafeteria and playground assistance, and regularly scheduled workdays.

Volunteers who want to work with children **MUST** complete an orientation program, required by the Atlanta Archdiocese, given by our school counselor. Once orientation is complete, the volunteer's name will be added to a list of certified school volunteers. This orientation does include background screenings. Volunteers work under the direction and guidance of our school personnel.

STM Parents Supporting Parents Guidelines

- ☞ When a party is planned in my home, there will be no drugs or alcohol served, or brought in by guests, or tolerated. Smoking will not be tolerated. Liquor in our home will be inaccessible to children.
- ☞ I will be home and visible throughout a party. Older teens should not be the sole chaperones of middle school parties. I will have clear guidelines and boundaries for parties.
- ☞ If a guest brings alcohol, drugs, or cigarettes to the party or arrive intoxicated, I will ask the child to remain in my home, and I will immediately notify the child's parents.
- ☞ I will welcome calls from other parents who have concerns or questions when my child has a party.
- ☞ If my child is going to a party, I will not hesitate to phone the host's parents if I have concerns or questions.
- ☞ I understand that no written or verbal invitation will be extended at Saint Thomas More School.*
- ☞ I will inform all invited guests' parents of party details, location, and times.
- ☞ I will discuss these guidelines with my child.
- ☞ I will inform other parents if I plan to allow guests to watch videos, movies, or television programs of questionable content.

- ☞ I will monitor which videos, movies, or television programs children in my home are viewing.
- ☞ I will monitor which videos, movie, television programs, computer and internet use (instant messaging and e-mail) children in my home are viewing or using.

**Invitations may be issued at school if ALL classmates are invited and the homeroom teacher has been notified in advance.*

Saint Thomas More School Uniform

Please be sure that all belongings are labeled with your child's name.

Dress Uniform

GIRLS—KINDERGARTEN TO FIFTH GRADE

- ☞ Blue-gray plaid jumper, or navy Buckhead uniform pants
- ☞ Light blue Buckhead/Land's End blouse with Peter Pan collar (short or long sleeves)
- ☞ Navy blue or white crew or knee socks (in cold weather, navy blue tights may be worn)
- ☞ Black & white saddle oxfords, or brown or black tie leather shoes (heel should not exceed 1 inch), or Keds' saddle oxford tennis shoes
- ☞ Navy blue Buckhead/Land's End cardigan or pullover sweater, or navy blue STM sweatshirt
- ☞ **Special note for fourth & fifth grade girls:** You may wear a light blue oxford shirt or Parker overblouse and the plaid skirt.

GIRLS—MIDDLE SCHOOL

- ☞ Navy blue Buckhead dress pants or navy skirt/skort (*not more than 4 inches from the top of the knee when kneeling down*)
- ☞ Light blue light blue Buckhead/Land's End oxford shirt or Parker overblouse (all Middle School girls)
- ☞ Navy blue or white crew or knee socks (in cold weather, navy blue tights may be worn)
- ☞ Brown or black tie leather shoes (less than 1 inch heels) or tan bucks
- ☞ Burgundy or navy Buckhead/Land's End cardigan or pullover sweater, or burgundy or navy Buckhead/Land's End sweatshirt
- ☞ Must wear P.E. uniform with athletic shoes for all physical education classes

BOYS—KINDERGARTEN TO FIFTH GRADE

- ☞ Navy blue Buckhead dress pants
- ☞ Light blue Buckhead/Land End's knit shirt, 2–3 button, with collar (short or long sleeves)
- ☞ Navy blue or white crew socks
- ☞ Brown or black tie leather shoes or solid black athletic shoes
- ☞ Navy blue Buckhead/Land's End cardigan or pullover, or navy blue STM sweatshirt
- ☞ **Special note to fifth grade boys:** You may choose to wear a light blue oxford shirt.

BOYS—MIDDLE SCHOOL

- ☞ Navy blue Buckhead dress pants
- ☞ Light blue Buckhead/Land's End oxford shirt (short or long sleeves)
- ☞ Navy blue dress socks or white crew socks
- ☞ Brown or black leather tie shoes, or tan bucks
- ☞ Burgundy or navy Buckhead/Land's End cardigan or pullover, or burgundy or navy STM sweatshirt
- ☞ Must wear P.E. uniform with athletic shoes for all physical education classes

Summer Uniform

The summer uniform may be worn from the first day of school until mid-October and again from mid-April through the end of school.

- ☞ Navy blue Buckhead Uniform walking shorts or skort
(*not to be shorter than 4 inches above the knee when kneeling down, nor should they measure below the knee*).
- ☞ Light blue blouse for girls in grades K to 5 (fourth & fifth grade girls may wear oxford shirt or Parker overblouse)
- ☞ Light blue knit shirt for boys in K to 5 grades
- ☞ Light blue oxford shirt for boys in Middle School
- ☞ Light blue oxford shirts or Parker overblouse for Middle School girls

- ☞ Plain white crew socks that cover the ankles (**no sports socks, no logos, no designs, or ruffles**)
- ☞ PLAIN WHITE canvas or leather athletic shoes ((**no high tops, no mid-rise, no beads, or charms**))

General Uniform Information

The complete **DRESS** uniform must be worn when students participate in liturgies or are representing our school.

The dress uniform can be worn on any day. The dress uniform and summer uniform **cannot be** mixed. (i.e., no long pants with white sports shoes). Skirts and jumpers should be worn 4 inches from the top of the knee or longer when kneeling down. Pants and shorts must fit correctly, not too loose or too tight. The school uniform is to be sized and worn appropriately, regardless of current fashion trends. Skirt/skort waistbands are not to be rolled over and oxford shirts are to be tucked in properly and are not to hang over the skirt/skort or pants. Pants and shorts are to be worn at the natural waistline. T-shirts with slogans or with sleeves longer than the uniform shirt are unacceptable. Please replace items that wear out.

A Physical Education uniform is available for all students. However, Middle School students are required to wear the PE uniform for PE classes and sports-related Encore classes. The PE shirt and shorts must have the STM logo. Sweatpants are available to be worn during the winter uniform period. The sweatpants can be purchased through the school. The other PE uniform components can be purchased from Buckhead Uniforms. All PE/sports-related Encore class students are required to wear white or black tennis shoes.

The STM Emblem

- ☞ The STM emblem must be visible at all times on shirts, blouses, jumpers, and sweaters.
- ☞ Badges can be purchased at the School Office and can be sewn onto clothing (left side, over heart). Buckhead Uniforms or Land's End can embroider or heat press the STM logo onto sweatshirts, shirts, and blouses.

Shoes

- ☞ Appropriate shoes are part of the school uniform. Heels should not exceed 1 inch.
- ☞ P.E. shoes are to be all white canvas or leather athletic shoes (**no high tops, no beads, or charms on the shoes**).

Outerwear

- ☞ Pullover or cardigan sweaters with the STM emblem sewn or embroidered on, or the STM sweatshirt may be worn during class. Sweaters and sweatshirts are **not** to be oversized. Please remember that kindergarten through fifth grade must wear navy blue. Middle School students may wear burgundy or navy. School sweatshirts are available from Buckhead Uniforms or Land's End. The STM school patch cannot be sewn onto a sweatshirt. The sweatshirts must come from Buckhead Uniforms or Lands' End. No other sweaters, sweatshirts, or jacket may be worn during class.

Accessories

- ☞ Belts should be worn if there are belt loops on shorts or pants.
- ☞ Hats and ball caps may not be worn indoors.
- ☞ Jewelry allowed: small necklace (“choker” style necklaces are **not** allowed), simple ring, wrist watch, and tiny, plain, non-dangling earrings (no larger than ear lobe and, for safety reasons, no hoop earrings).

Hair

Unusual or dyed hair styles are not permitted. Girls are not permitted to wear chopsticks/knitting needles or hair pins to put hair up. All boys' hair should be cut, not pushed back, to **not** exceed the eyebrows, the top of the shirt collar, or the bottom of the ears; no ponytails or side burns are permitted for boys.

PLEASE NOTE: *Anything that is a distraction to learning (i.e., nail polish, hair styles, and accessories) will not be tolerated and will be dealt with on an individual basis. Clear nail polish is acceptable. Only eighth grade girls may wear pale lipstick and a reasonable amount of make-up.*

Dress Code for Out-of-Uniform Days

When an out of uniform day is announced, or a student comes out of uniform for their birthday, the student(s) are expected to be neat and well groomed and dressed appropriately.

Shorts, skirt and skort lengths are to comply with the length guidelines for the school uniform as stated in the STM Handbook under **General Uniform Information**. Skirts, skorts, and jumpers are to be worn not more than 4 inches from the top of the knee (when kneeling down) or longer. Shorts are not to be shorter than 4 inches above the knee (when kneeling down), nor should they measure below the knee.

Denim jeans or casual slacks are permitted, but should be sized appropriately and should not be torn or worn out.

Students are not allowed to wear tank tops, spaghetti strap tops, strapless tops, halter tops, mesh or see-through tops, beach shoes, flip-flops, sports sandals, backless shoes, Birkenstocks, short shorts, or t-shirts/shirts with advertising that does not promote the Christian values taught at Saint Thomas More School.

The students' shoes on an out of uniform day must comply with the guidelines stated in the STM Handbook. The heels of the shoes should not exceed 1 inch. If a student has physical education on an out of uniform day, they must have shoes appropriate for the class.

Students are not allowed to wear hats indoors during the school day.

PLEASE NOTE: Because of the unique and constantly changing nature of fashion, the school has reserved the right to classify any style of dress, grooming, or appearance inappropriate.

During the months when the winter uniform is required, shorts may not be worn on out of uniform days.

If a teacher finds a student to be dressed inappropriately, the school will contact the parents of the student and request that the child be picked up and taken home.

Academic Responsibilities

ASSESSMENT

Saint Thomas More students are assessed using age-appropriate and varied methods. These may include portfolios, special projects, classroom work, and teacher observations as well as curriculum-based testing and standardized testing. Middle School students are required to take cumulative exams.

CLASSROOM

Since study skills are an important part of the learning process, a student must be responsible for certain aspects of his/her academic development. Parents will be notified* when a student does not accept responsibility for the following:

- ☒ Homework, class work, or long-term project completed and/or handed in.
- ☒ Satisfactory work/tests.
- ☒ Tests/assignments signed and returned when requested.

The student will be expected to bring back a response from the parent the day after notification.

**Depending on the age and grade of the student, teachers notify parents in a variety of ways, such as the student's weekly folder, the assignment book/planner, e-mail, phone calls, progress reports, etc. Communication is less frequent in Middle School because that is the time when students must learn to be responsible for their actions. Expectations about communication with the home will be explained at Meet the Teacher Night in the fall.*

Students are expected to be on task and to be active participants in the learning process.

HOMEWORK

Homework serves an integral and vital role in the learning process and aids in the student's academic growth and development. It is a chance for students to review and master the skills learned in class. It also teaches self-discipline.

A regular time and place for home study should be provided. Study is an essential element of learning. Excessive amounts of time spent on homework may be the result of neglect in previously assigned work, misunderstood directions, poor study habits, or a learning disability. Parents should check with homeroom or subject teachers when they have homework questions.

KINDERGARTEN Homework is assigned one night a week beginning in September.

FIRST GRADE 15 to 30 minutes of homework 4 nights a week beginning in September.

SECOND GRADE 15 to 30 minutes of homework 4 nights a week.

THIRD GRADE 30 to 60 minutes of homework 4 or 5 nights a week. Special projects will be assigned throughout the year. Assignment books are required.

FOURTH GRADE 30 to 60 minutes of homework 4 or 5 nights a week. Special projects will be assigned throughout the year. Assignment books are required.

FIFTH GRADE 30 to 60 minutes of homework 5 nights a week. Special projects will be assigned throughout the year. Long-term assignments will be assigned as well. Assignment books are required.

MIDDLE SCHOOL Students in Middle School should expect 60 to 120 minutes of homework each night. Students will have a variety of long-term assignments. Course syllabuses will be given to parents at the beginning of each quarter. ENCORE classes do have homework requirements. Students are required to make up work they have missed.

Conferences

Conferences are scheduled at the end of the first quarter and are mandatory for all families. Fifth grade and Middle School students are required to attend conferences. Middle School conferences often include several teachers. See conference information given in **Communication With the School**, page 18.

Interim and Grade Reporting

Teachers report student progress to parents via interim reports, issued at midpoint of the grading period, and report cards, issued at the end of the quarter. The archdiocesan grading scale is used. The Archdiocesan Manual states that parents may make inquiries as to the assessments which resulted in the cumulative grade on a report card. However, grade changes should not be made unless academic evidence warrants such a change. Furthermore, despite parent requests, comments should not be modified or deleted.

Failure of Core Subjects/Retention/Summer School

Students in grades 5 to 8 may not fail more than two core courses* in more than one academic year. *Definition of Fail: earned grade of "F" which is 69% and below as a final year average.* Should a student fail more than two core courses in an academic year, alternative educational placement will be required.

Students in grades 5 to 8 who fail one or more core courses in one academic year will be required to remediate the coursework missed according to the parameters set by the school. Failure to successfully remediate according to school guidelines indicates the parents' choice for alternate educational placement.

It should be noted that academic failure in any core course could adversely impact a student's ability to attend an Archdiocesan Catholic high school.

Summer school sessions in language arts, math, and study skills are offered for STM students needing remediation. Teachers may require summer school attendance, or in some cases, may recommend summer school or a tutoring program. Parents will be notified during the third quarter if this is recommended for their student. Information on summer school dates and fees will be in the March issues of the *More News*.

The staff may recommend that a student be retained in the present grade if there is sufficient academic and/or personal need. Performance in reading, language arts, and math will be very closely considered when determining readiness for the next grade.

***Core courses are defined as: religion, language arts, mathematics, social studies, and science.**

Absences/Make Up Policy

In accordance with our academic standards, the faculty suggests that absences be limited. It is the responsibility of students in grades 3 to 8 to talk with their teachers and arrange to make up all work missed, i.e., tests and projects, due to illness, tardiness, or early dismissal. This includes ENCORE classes in Middle School.

☞ No homework or books will be sent home the first day of a student's absence. If the child has been ill for the day, we would expect that they rest and recover instead of worrying about their schoolwork.

- ☞ Please don't e-mail the teacher, call the School Office, or go to the classrooms/teacher for the assignments.
- ☞ If the student misses a second day of class due to illness, please e-mail the homeroom teacher prior to 7:45 a.m. that morning to request books. Your student may feel up to doing some of their homework. **In most cases**, books can be sent to the School Office to be picked up by a sibling or carpool friend, or parents can pick up **after dismissal**. However, in the normal course of the school day, many interruptions occur that may prevent books and assignments from making their way to the School Office. Please know we try our best, but sometimes messages don't get through to the proper people on time.
- ☞ Your student should have the phone numbers of several friends who they can call to get homework assignments. When your children return to their classroom, they can talk with their teacher to make up required work.
- ☞ In grades 6 to 8, when a student returns to school following a one-day absence, he/she is expected to take any previously assigned test or quiz on the day of return. The student has had ample notice of those assignments. Teachers in the other grades will make arrangements with the student to take tests when they are ready. For absences exceeding one day, the following schedule for make up is operative:
 - 2 days absent = 2 school days permitted to make up work.
 - 3 days absent = 3 school days permitted to make up work
 - 4 days absent = 4 school days permitted to make up work
- ☞ For prolonged illness or frequent absences, alternate arrangements may be made at the teacher's discretion.
- ☞ If a student is taken out of school before the end of the academic year and class work and final exams are not completed prior to the departure of the student, the student is subject to Incompletes on his/her final report card.

Family Vacations

In the event of absences due to family vacations, the parents assume the responsibility for student learning. **Parents are requested to send a letter to the homeroom teacher one week in advance of the planned absence of the student.** In the Middle School, the homeroom teacher will advise all other teachers of the notice.

Teachers should not be expected to provide daily assignments *before or after* such absences. Major tests, reports, and projects will be delayed or made up **at the discretion of the teacher.** No teacher is expected to meet with students outside of the normal class periods to make up work due to absenteeism resulting from family vacations. If no notification of the absence is received one week in advance of the planned absence, the schedule above for make up will be used.

Field Trips

Time on task is essential to academic success; consequently, our school takes field trips with a clear educational purpose. Field trips are privileges. Students may be denied participation if they fail to meet behavioral expectations. No student will be allowed to participate on a field trip without a signed parental/guardian consent form. Consent forms will be sent home prior to all trips notifying parents of the location, date, and times that a student will be away from the Saint Thomas More School campus.

Over-the-phone permission will not be accepted.

Students are expected to wear neat, clean, freshly pressed uniforms at all times, but especially when the students leave the campus for a field trip.

Media Services

The media center supports the school curriculum and provides opportunities for student research and reading for pleasure.

HOURS: 7:45 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. Monday and Friday
8:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Wednesday
7:45 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday

Circulation Regulations

Students may check out most books and back issues of magazines. Students in grades 4 to 8 are limited to two fiction and two non-fiction books at a time, unless otherwise authorized by the media specialist. Kindergarteners may check out only one book at a time; first graders through third graders progress from one to two books after they have demonstrated responsibility. Grades K to 3 may check out books for one week. Grades 4 to 8 have two weeks for check out.

Items may be renewed twice unless in demand by other patrons. Reserve books circulate 1 to 3 days and cannot be renewed. Reference books circulate overnight. They can be checked out five minutes before dismissal and must be returned by 8:30 a.m. the following morning. Reference books may also be checked out during the school day for a single class period.

Fines are assessed on overdue items beginning the school day following the due date and including the day of return. Fines do not accrue during weekends or school holidays.

FINES: \$0.03 per school day for each overdue book or magazine
\$0.50 per school day for each overdue reserve book
\$3.00 per day for each overdue reference book
\$0.50 per day for failure to return magazines or pamphlets in their bar-coded envelopes

ASSESSMENTS

Students are expected to pay all fines and the replacement cost of lost or damaged items. Report cards and school records will be withheld until all financial obligations to the Media Center have been met.

Expectations for behavior are discussed with each class using the Media Center. Students who persist in breaking rules will be denied use of the Media Center.

Accelerated Reader Program

STM participates in the Accelerated Reader Program (AR), a computerized reading management program that motivates students to read good and more challenging books. The program's premise is that children become better readers by practice. Motivation is provided by the computer format and awarding of points.

After reading an AR book, the student takes a straightforward computerized test of ten to twenty questions. The computer scores the test and awards points based on the number of correct answers and the length and reading level of the book. The computer also prints results for the student and maintains records showing progress from year to year.

We believe that students should be rewarded for AR achievement by praise and recognition rather than material rewards. They are recognized for their AR achievement at honor assemblies twice a year. The honors take two forms. They are honored for the quantity of reading they have done with membership in Point Clubs when they have accumulated 20, 25 (Kindergarten to grade 5), 50, 100, 200, and 300, etc. points. To encourage them to read more challenging books, they are also recognized when they qualify for each of the following levels of certification:

READY READER – minimum of 5 points (K to 2 *only*)

INDEPENDENT READER – minimum of 10 points and has read and passed tests on three books without help from parents and teachers (K to 3)

SUPER READER – minimum of 15 points, which includes at least three books worth 1 or more points each (K to 3).

ADVANCED READER – minimum of 20 points, which includes at least three books worth 2 or more points each.

STAR READER – minimum of 100 points, which includes at least three books on the fifth grade reading level, each worth 5 points or more.

CLASSIC READER – minimum of 100 points, which includes at least three books on a seventh grade reading level worth 10 points or more each.

Computer Policy and Internet Acceptable Use Policy

Effective 8-4-04

Saint Thomas More Catholic School (STM) offers Internet access to its students on a limited basis. The Internet is an electronic highway connecting computers and individuals all over the world. We believe that providing teachers and students access to the Internet will enhance our goal of educational excellence by providing information, which was previously unavailable to us, and by fostering the exchange of ideas.

With access to such a broad base of information and people comes the

possibility that inappropriate materials, not consistent with STM's educational goals, may be made available. We hope that Internet filters, strict guidelines for use, and close supervision will minimize such possibilities. Further, we believe that access to valuable information far outweighs any dangers that may occur to users or their parents.

Smooth operation of the Internet relies upon the proper conduct of all users. It is the purpose of the Internet Use Policy to insure that Internet access is used appropriately and in a manner consistent with the school's educational goals and philosophy.

The most important prerequisite for Internet access at STM is that each user takes full responsibility for his or her own actions. Saint Thomas More School and the sponsor of this Internet connection will not be liable for the actions of anyone connecting to the Internet through this hook-up. All users shall assume full liability, legal, financial or otherwise, for their actions.

If a STM School user violates any of these guidelines, his or her access will be terminated and future access could possibly be denied. The Internet coordinators reserve the right to examine all data at any time.

The signing of this document is legally binding and indicates the parties who signed it have read the terms and conditions carefully and understand their significance. This contract will be continuously in force and enforced at Saint Thomas More School.

INTERNET – TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF USE

1. ACCEPTABLE USE – The primary purpose of the Internet connection is to support education by providing access to unique resources and an opportunity for collaborative work. Its use must be consistent with the educational objectives and philosophy of the school. It is essential that everyone who uses this connection understands this purpose and accepts full responsibility for his or her own actions. Transmission of any material in violation of any state or national regulation is prohibited. This includes but is not limited to copyrighted material, threatening or obscene material, or material protected by trade secret. All users shall assume full liability, legal, financial, or otherwise for their actions.

2. PRIVILEGES – The use of the Internet is a privilege, not a right. Inappropriate use will result in cancellation of Internet privileges. The Internet coordinator, supervising teachers and school administrators

will have authority to deny, revoke, or suspend access to users for deliberate misuse or inappropriate behavior. The school also reserves the right to log Internet use and to examine data at any time.

3. SECURITY – Because security on any computer system is a high priority, students have a duty to abide by Saint Thomas More School policies regarding logging in and out of our network. Each student from 1st through 8th grade will have an individual log in ID and password that must be used when using computers at school. Students must also log off when they are finished using the computer, as *violations of this policy are the responsibility of the user who is logged in at the time of the violation*. Because of this, students should never share their password or other log in information with anyone except their teacher.

Students also have a duty to report any inappropriate use or security problem to the Internet coordinator or teacher. A student's attempt to use administrative functions will result in cancellation of his or her user privileges. Vandalism will also result in cancellation of user privileges. Vandalism includes but is not limited to introducing software in violation of school policy, unloading or creating computer viruses, or changing the basic setup or application settings of school computers.

4. WARRANTIES – Saint Thomas More Catholic School makes no warranties of any kind, expressed or implied, for the Internet service it is providing. This includes loss of data and non-delivery or service interruptions. The school also denies responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information received from the Internet.

5. NETIQUETTE – Students are expected to abide by the generally accepted rules of network etiquette including the following:

- ☞ Computers must be treated with respect. Students must never install or remove any software (computer programs) on a school computer. All software on school computers is copyrighted, which means students are not allowed to copy, share, or change programs in any way.
- ☞ Students are expected to be courteous and use appropriate language. The use of obscenities, vulgarities, profanities, or harassing statements is strictly forbidden on the Internet just as it is in all other situations at school.

- ☞ Students should be careful to disclose only information pertinent to the topic they are researching. They should refrain from disclosing any personal information about themselves or others, such as their address, phone number, or credit card number.
- ☞ E-mail at school is to be used solely for educational purposes. Students should also remember that electronic mail is not private and that faculty and staff will have access to all e-mail.
- ☞ Students are not to use the network in a way that disrupts the use by other people. Any malicious attempt to harm or destroy the data of another user, the Internet, or any other network is considered to be vandalism and is strictly forbidden.
- ☞ Students will acknowledge that all information accessible via the Internet is assumed to be private property. Plagiarism, using material created by someone else without permission or acknowledgement, is forbidden. Students shall be responsible for citing Internet resources and respecting copyrighted material.

6. GUIDELINES FOR USE OF STM INTERNET SERVICE – Students must accept the following rules for Internet use in school:

- ☞ I understand that I must have a signed policy on file before Internet privileges will be granted.
- ☞ I know that use of the Internet is a privilege and not a right and I agree to follow the guidelines and rules established by STM for its use.
- ☞ I will not share my user id or password with any other student.
- ☞ I will have approval from my teacher for all topics that I research on the Internet and will present evidence of this to the Internet coordinator before using the Internet.
- ☞ I will use the Internet only when an adult is present to supervise.
- ☞ I will properly log-in and log-out when using any computer at Saint Thomas More. Violations of this policy that occur under my login are my responsibility.
- ☞ I will not enter a chat room, divulge personal information about others, or myself or play “arcade-style” games online.

- ☒ If I find myself in an uncomfortable or inappropriate situation on the Internet, I will stop immediately and tell a teacher in charge.
- ☒ I understand that I can download information from the Internet onto a disk but not onto the computer hard drive. I also understand that I cannot upload the contents of any disk brought from outside school.
- ☒ I will not make changes to the set-up or application settings on the computer.
- ☒ I acknowledge that plagiarism is unacceptable and will be responsible for citing sources used on the Internet.
- ☒ I will follow the rules of netiquette.
- ☒ I will use e-mail only for educational purposes.
- ☒ In fairness to other students, I will abide by the online time limits set by the coordinator or teacher.

Please keep Internet Use Policy on file for future reference.

**Saint Thomas More Catholic School
Internet Permission**

Student

I understand and shall abide by Saint Thomas More School's *Internet Use Policy*. Should I commit any violation my access privileges may be revoked and school disciplinary and appropriate legal action may be taken. I assume responsibility for my actions in accessing network services.

User's full name (please print) _____

User's signature _____ Date _____

Parent or Guardian

As a parent or guardian of this student I have read Saint Thomas More School's *Internet Use Policy*. I understand that access to the Internet is designed for educational purposes and that precautions have been taken to reduce student exposure to inappropriate material. I will not hold the school or any employee responsible for any material acquired on the network. If I disapprove of any material this student receives on the Internet, I understand that my recourse is to withdraw my permission in writing. I hereby give my permission for the above student to be given access to the Internet.

Parent or guardian's name (please print)

Parent or guardian's signature _____

Date _____

Please return this signed form to the media center.



Student Recognition

Tops

Each grade level has a joint **TOPS** chart. Stickers are awarded by a variety of people: grade level teachers, other teachers, teaching assistants, support staff, parents assisting at the school or on a field trip, and the principal. When the chart is filled, the grade level will be rewarded. Grade levels may vote on the reward they receive for a filled **TOPS** chart. Stickers are awarded for caring and responsible behaviors.

Rewards may include:

- ☒ out-of-uniform day
- ☒ movie and popcorn Friday
- ☒ extra recess or free time
- ☒ candy treat
- ☒ ice cream
- ☒ treasure box

MORE AWARD

Students in grades 5 *through* 8 who demonstrate Christian service to others in the broader community can earn the More Award. At 100 hours of service, a gold letter “M” is awarded to the student to be worn on the school sweater or sweatshirt. For each additional 50 hours, the student receives a gold star to be attached to the “M.”

Hours must serve the broader community. Acceptable service activities include helping at The Hager House, St. Vincent de Paul Society, Ronald McDonald House, Nicholas House, shelters, soup kitchens, animal shelters, nursing/assisted living homes, walks sponsored by a specific charity or cause (e.g., Relay for Life), and reading to hospitalized children. Other activities may be acceptable, but should be presented to the More Award faculty coordinator, Laura Ayala, prior to completion of the activity for approval. If needed, the faculty coordinator will consult with the administration team to determine if the project meets the required criteria. Projects completed as part of a parish/church youth group or a scout troop may be included in the hours.

Service hours *must be completed on the correct form* available either in the School Office or on the school website. *The form must be completed by the student and signed by the supervising adult of the activity.*

Hours are carried over from one grade to the next.

For the 2005–2006 school year: Primary and intermediate students who have earned service hours prior to the changes made this year and have not entered fifth grade will have their current hours kept on record until they reach the fifth grade. Please do not send in any more hours for these students until they begin to accumulate more in the fifth grade.

BE A BETTER ME PROGRAM

Students in grades 3 to 5 will participate in the *Be A Better Me* program. In this program teachers and parents will guide students in assessing their own progress and setting attainable academic/behavioral goals for themselves each quarter. Students who achieve these self-directed goals will be recognized at the end of the quarter. More information about this program will be available at the *Meet the Teacher Night* meeting.

HONOR ROLL

The purpose of the Honor Roll is to award outstanding scholastic achievement. We honor those students in **grades 6 to 8** who are highly motivated, responsible, hard working, and demonstrate Christian values.

Students qualify for the Honor Roll based on overall points earned in academic subjects that all students are required to take. Requirements are listed below:

Principal's List	96 to 100
First Honors	93 to 95
Second Honors	90 to 92

The following Conduct Comments, as noted on the report card, will keep a student off of the Honor Roll:

- ☒ Lacks appropriate self control
- ☒ Lacks respect for students
- ☒ Lacks respect for authority
- ☒ Is rude or disruptive
- ☒ Distracts class members
- ☒ Does not obey school rules

These areas of respect are a great concern. Students honored at Saint Thomas More School must be truly representative of our Christian values.

National Junior Honor Society

Students in grades 7 and 8 who meet the following requirements during two consecutive quarters are eligible for membership in the National Junior Honor Society.

SCHOLARSHIP—A grade point average of 95% in Religion, Math, Science, Literature/English, and Social Studies.

LEADERSHIP—A student who demonstrates leadership in promoting school activities, inspires positive behavior in others, and reflects responsibility, dependability, and reliability.

SERVICE—A student who volunteers to assist in school and community programs. The students must have earned a More Award.

CHARACTER—A student who consistently exemplifies Christian qualities, such as honesty, courtesy, reliability, friendliness, stability, and morality.

CITIZENSHIP—A student who contributes to the civic life of the school and community, maintaining a high regard for freedom, justice, and respect for the American government and our school administration.

The selection of members is determined by a majority vote of the Faculty Executive Council of the Saint Thomas More Honor Society. Maintaining the above criteria is necessary to remain in the National Junior Honor Society.

HONORS PROGRAMS

At the end of each school year, students are recognized at an Honors Program. Awards are given for a variety of academic and behavioral accomplishments. Contest winners are also recognized at that time.

Informally, our mascot, Stripes, visits the classrooms to honor students. Stripes gives hugs, handshakes, love, and encouragement for a job well done.

Student Leadership

SAFETY PATROL

The Saint Thomas More School Safety Patrol helps to maintain order on and near the school grounds. Safety Patrol members are to be obeyed by all students, all parents, drivers, and pedestrians while on or adjacent to the school grounds. If questions arise regarding directions given by a Safety Patrol member, please contact the supervising teachers or the school principal about the situation.

STUDENT COUNCIL

The purpose of our Student Council is to provide opportunities for leadership; to assemble representatives of the student body who will communicate concerns and suggestions for the improvement of our school; to support and encourage ways to promote school spirit; and to participate in service projects and activities to benefit the community. The Saint Thomas More School Student Council functions as an extension of the work of the National Junior Honor Society. Because character, leadership, and service are essential ingredients for membership in both, National Junior Honor Society members are automatically members of the Student Council. Besides these students, the student body elects additional council members.

Requirements for eligibility for student council:

1. Scholastic average of 2.5 based on cumulative grades from the previous school year.
2. Satisfactory conduct as demonstrated in the previous school year.
3. Application form completed with required signatures and submitted by the deadline.
4. Election speech to be given at a school assembly prior to the elections.

PEER MEDIATION TEAMS

A Middle School team of trained peer mediators is available to help students responsibly and constructively solve their own conflicts. Peers understand and trust their peers. They speak the same language and share common concerns.

Goals of the teams:

- ☞ To resolve peer disputes that interfere with the education process
- ☞ To increase student participation and develop leadership skills
- ☞ To build self-esteem
- ☞ To improve student-student relationships
- ☞ To build a stronger sense of cooperation and school community.

Mentoring activities to foster leadership take additional forms at STM. The eighth graders buddy with the kindergarten students to help ease transition into school life. Additional activities that foster leadership take additional forms at STM. The eighth graders “buddy” with the kindergarten students to help ease their transition into school life. Student who

are new to STM are assigned a buddy that will contact them and serve as a good will ambassador to help them feel comfortable in their new school setting.

Behavioral Responsibilities

You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind...and you must love your neighbor as yourself.

Matt. 22:37-40

As parents you acknowledge that the school rules govern the conduct of the student when on the school property, including the Extended Care program, participating in school activities off of the school property, field trips, or any school event.

- ☞ We respect all people and property.
- ☞ We respect a person’s right to be free of mental, physical, and/or personal property abuse stemming from intimidation or “horseplay.”
- ☞ We are self-disciplined and maintain order.
- ☞ We are honest. We do not lie, cheat, or steal.
- ☞ We do not use rude, abrasive, or profane language.
- ☞ We accept responsibility for what we do and what we fail to do.

Acceptable standards of behavior as defined by our school will be expected at all times. Discipline will be administered when an individual’s actions interfere with the right of the teacher to teach and students to learn. A student will be sent home from school in cases of disruptive behavior.

The Ten Commandments by Columbus Copeland

When your friends or one of your peers is being teased or bullied you can:

1. Give the person being teased support and encouragement.
2. Inform an authority figure of what is happening before it escalates to violence.
3. If you have a relationship with a teaser, let them know the pain that they are causing.
4. Don’t give the teaser an audience.

5. Include the person being teased or picked on in your in-school and out-of-school activities.
6. Start a campaign in your school and community: “No Put Down Day.”
7. Develop courage by standing up for what is right over what is popular and what the majority is doing.
8. Identify and develop your own gifts and talents.
9. Do one thing per day to improve the quality of your life and the quality of the people around you.
10. You make all the difference to end emotional violence

STANDARDS OF EXPECTATION

- ☞ Students are expected to exhibit Christian behavior, speech, courtesy, and respect for teacher, staff, parents, assistants, and fellow students.
- ☞ Students are expected to show respect and care for all school property, including the covering of rental hardback books.
- ☞ Students/parents are expected to pay full price for any library book, text book, or workbook that is lost or no longer usable. Fines will be assessed for damaged books that can be reused. The report card may be held until payment is received. After four weeks, the book is presumed lost and payment is expected in full for that book.
- ☞ Students are expected to follow specific classroom guidelines as noted by the classroom teacher.
- ☞ Cheating or copying another student’s work is a serious offense.
- ☞ Students and parents are expected to follow safety rules for arrival and dismissal in the mornings and afternoons.
- ☞ Students must remain on the school grounds during school hours. During after-school hours, students are not permitted to re-enter the building.
- ☞ Students participating in a supervised extra curricular activity must remain with the chaperone(s).
- ☞ Students are expected to abide by all school regulations going to and from school, and/or while on field trips or attending in-house cultural programs.

- ☞ Students are not allowed to have excessive amounts of money or valuables at school (for example, jewelry, electronic equipment, toys, or items to sell or trade).
- ☞ Students will be permitted to use the phone in the School Office in cases of emergency with permission from a teacher and under the supervision of an office staff member. Students are *not* allowed to have personal cell phones in their possession during school hours.
- ☞ Students are not allowed to have any form of chewing or bubble gum on the school premises during school hours, before school hours, or after school hours.
- ☞ Snacks provided by the aftercare program are **only** for the students who attend the aftercare school program.
- ☞ Students are responsible for remembering lunches, books, gym clothes, permission slips, assignments and for making after school social arrangements outside of school time. To help students develop this sense of responsibility, parents are asked **NOT** to make a special trip to school to bring forgotten items.
- ☞ Students are expected to wear the school uniform in an appropriate manner. Please see pages 31–35.

LUNCHROOM

- ☞ Students will enter the lunchroom and go through the lunch line quietly.
- ☞ Students will sit at their assigned tables.
- ☞ Students will talk quietly to the people at their table.
- ☞ Students must request permission to leave their seats for the restroom or to be dismissed.
- ☞ Students are expected to be courteous and use polite table manners.
- ☞ Students must clean the tabletop, clean up any food on the floor, and push in chairs under the table when they are dismissed. The student should carry all trash to the trashcans.
- ☞ No student is allowed to “warm” food brought from home.
- ☞ Table washers must check with the teacher on duty when finished washing the tables.
- ☞ Students are expected to follow the directions of the adults on duty.

- ☞ Special permission from the principal is necessary for eating anywhere other than the cafeteria.
- ☞ Please have all lunchboxes labeled with child's name.
- ☞ Students may sit at any place at the class table. Saving seats is not allowed in the lunch room.

PLAYGROUND

- ☞ Fair play is expected at all times. Games must be open to all asking to play.
- ☞ Fighting and the use of profane or abusive language will result in a Conduct Referral.
- ☞ Students are not allowed near electrical poles, fences, classrooms, windows, dumpsters, or recycling bins.
- ☞ Students will stay in assigned areas and will not leave the playground without permission.
- ☞ Students are not allowed to bring balls or other equipment from home.
- ☞ Students will not throw things over the fence.
- ☞ Sticks, rocks, and other inappropriate objects are not to be used in a manner that could do harm.
- ☞ Students will line up quickly and quietly when the bell rings or whistle blows.
- ☞ Students will use all playground equipment properly.
See **STM Equipment Rules**.

Lost & Found

Please check "lost and found" area for missing items. **Label all belongings.** Before each major school break, (Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter, and Spring Break), the lost and found will be cleaned out and donations will be made to The St. Vincent de Paul Society.

Possessions

Students should not bring to school any possessions that are distracting to the learning process, dangerous, or expensive to replace if lost or damaged. Students are not allowed to carry knives or weapons, or parts of weapons as stated in the school policies. Students are not allowed to have personal cell phones, CD/MP3 players, Gameboys, head phones, etc. in their possession during school hours on school property.

If expensive items or items referenced above are needed for class projects or "Show & Tell," permission must be obtained and arrangements must be made with the classroom teacher and school administration.

STM Equipment Rules

GENERAL

- ☞ Balls or jump ropes are not permitted on the playground.
- ☞ Running and pushing are not allowed.

BOB (BLUE-ORANGE-BEIGE BARS)

- ☞ Only one person at a time crossing bars, hand by hand.
- ☞ No sitting on top of the bars.
- ☞ No jumping off of the top of the bars. **Climb down!**
- ☞ Start on the side facing the road.
- ☞ No racing on the bars.
- ☞ No pulling a person down who is crossing the bars.
- ☞ Do not put any balls or ropes on or near the bars.

ORANGE CURLY Q

- ☞ Climb up and down **only!**
- ☞ **Limit only ONE** person on each of these bars.

ORANGE POLE

- ☞ Climb up and down **only!**
- ☞ **Limit only ONE** person on each of these bars.
- ☞ **Be careful when sliding down. DO NOT land on someone!**

SLIDES

- ☞ Only one person goes down the slide at a time.
- ☞ Do not walk, crawl, or run UP the slide.
- ☞ When at the top of a slide—don't waste time, get set and slide down.
- ☞ When the person in front of you gets off of the slide, then it is your turn to go down. Only one person is allowed on the slide at a time.
- ☞ *No trains permitted!*

When the whistle blows, please bring all equipment back to its proper place! Three continuous whistles means *FREEZE*. Be quiet and listen for further instructions!

Classroom Rules for Kindergarten to Grade 2

We use a “card in the pocket” discipline system. Rules are posted in the classroom. Rules do vary slightly within each grade level. Parents are informed of the classroom rules, rewards, and consequences at our *Meet the Teacher Nights*. There is a chart in each classroom with a pocket for each student. If a child breaks a rule, he/she places a card in his/her pocket. The cards are coded to the rules, so that the teacher can track behavior patterns.

Students are rewarded or receive consequences according to the number of cards received. Cards in the pocket may result in poor conduct marks on the report card. Conduct Referrals are very rare in the primary grades and indicate a serious problem.

Conduct Referrals will be automatically given for serious offenses such as:

- ☞ **fighting and aggressive behavior**
- ☞ **vandalism of the physical plant or school property**
- ☞ **verbal or physical abuse of authority figures and peers**
- ☞ **profane language**

Rewards include: snacks or treats; stickers; no homework passes; holy cards or statues; working as a “special helper” for the teacher, principal, the office, or another student; and prize basket/treasure box. Rewards are earned weekly and quarterly.

CONSEQUENCES FOR WARNING CARDS WILL BE:

- 1 card A warning during 1st and 2nd quarters.
A 5-minute loss of recess during 3rd and 4th quarters.

- 2 cards Student loses 10 minutes of recess or free play.
- 3 cards Student loses all of recess or free play.
- 4 cards Student writes a note, and an action plan is sent to parents (signed and returned).
- 5 cards Teacher and student will call parent when the fifth card is earned.
- 6 cards Conduct Referral (see **Discipline and Conduct Referrals**, page 61).
Consequences are earned daily. Teachers record cards and are clear them from the student's pockets daily. Every child starts every day “fresh.”

Classroom Rules for Grade 3

- ☞ Be kind and respectful.
- ☞ Follow directions.
- ☞ Talk only during your turn.
- ☞ Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself.
- ☞ Come prepared with the necessary books and materials.

If you choose to break a rule:

FIRST TIME: Student receives a warning from the teacher and one warning card in the pocket.

SECOND TIME: Student receives two cards in the pocket and misses 10 minutes of recess or 10 minutes away from the group.

THIRD TIME: Student receives three cards in the pocket and misses 20 minutes of recess or 20 minutes away from the group, plus completes a “Think Sheet” which is to be signed by parents. This will be indicated in the Tuesday folder. Three “Think Sheets” in a given quarter, or three checks in the weekly folder, will result in a comment on the report card.

FOURTH TIME: Parents are called.

SEVERE DISRUPTION (FOR MAJOR INFRACTION): Student is sent immediately to the principal. Conduct Referral.

Rewards are an essential component of the behavior system. Rewards are varied and will be discussed with each class.

Classroom Rules for Grades 4 & 5

- ☞ Respect people, equipment, and furnishings.
- ☞ Listen to instructions the first time and follow directions.
- ☞ Adjust your voice to suit the activity. Do not disturb working classmates.
- ☞ Raise your hand to participate.
- ☞ Change classes quickly and quietly with appropriate behavior.

If you choose to break a rule:

FIRST TIME: Student receives a warning and name on the board.

SECOND TIME: Student receives one check and misses 10 minutes of recess or 10 minutes away from the group.

THIRD TIME: Student receives two checks and misses recess or 20 minutes away from the group, plus completes a “Think Sheet” which is to be signed by parents. This will be indicated in the Tuesday folder.

Three “Think Sheets” in a given quarter, or three checks in the weekly folder, will result in a comment on the report card.

FOURTH TIME: Student receives three checks. Parents are called.

FIFTH TIME: Student receives four checks. Conduct Referral.

SEVERE DISRUPTION (FOR MAJOR INFRACTION): Student is sent immediately to the principal. Conduct Referral.

Names and checks are erased at the end of each day. Rewards are earned as a result of appropriate behavior. These rewards are varied and will be discussed with each class.

Classroom Behavior Policy for the Middle School

Middle School students are expected to use self-discipline. Two principles of discipline, which must be followed, are **respect and responsibility**. Students must allow the teacher to teach and allow classmates to learn.

Responsibilities include following the General Behavior Code and Standards of Expectation and Honor Code of Saint Thomas More Catholic School. Students must complete all homework assignments, and come to every class prepared with all materials.

If a student chooses to behave in an irresponsible or disrespectful manner, the following actions will occur, but not necessarily in the order

listed depending upon the severity of the infraction. Some actions warrant immediate conduct referrals:

CONSEQUENCES:

- ☞ The teacher will give the student a **verbal warning** that indicates the poor choice made by the student.
- ☞ If poor choices continue, a Conduct Warning may be issued. The interim report card or report card will indicate where improvement is needed.
- ☞ Continued failure to exhibit self-discipline will result in a student receiving a Conduct Referral.
- ☞ If behavior continues the student will be put on a checklist to monitor behavior. The Middle School teachers, the student, and the student’s parents would attend a conference prior to this process.

Lockers

Lockers must be treated with respect. Decorating the outside of the lockers will not be permitted. Decorations inside the lockers should be appropriate and in keeping with our school philosophy and policies. Students are required to have one locker shelf. You may rent a shelf for \$1 from the school or you may purchase one on your own. Students should not share locker combinations with other students.

Discipline and Conduct Referrals

Conduct Referrals, or Conduct Referral Warnings, are issued for disregard of rules. *Verbal warnings may be given first to help the student correct their behavior.* If this is unsuccessful in correcting inappropriate behavior, verbal warnings are followed with Conduct Referral forms, which will have the word WARNING written on the top. This warning serves to notify the parent that the student is disregarding rules and responsibilities, and unless the student regains self-discipline, a Conduct Referral may be imminent.

The issued Conduct Referral /warning is first discussed with the principal or counselor. Parents will receive a copy of the referral/warning in the mail explaining the incident. Warnings of Conduct Referral *could* also be reflected in the conduct grade. Receiving a Conduct Referral will be reflected in the student’s conduct grade, and student will not be named to the academic Honor Roll. Middle School students will not be placed on the Honor Roll with a conduct grade of “U”.

As stated in the Atlanta Archdiocese Student Policies 5000 Series Handbook, a student's responsibilities are as follows:

- ☒ Conduct himself/herself in a manner that contributes to a positive school environment.
- ☒ Avoid any activity that may be considered discriminatory, intimidating, or harassing.
- ☒ Report any dangerous incidents to the supervising adult.
- ☒ When informed he/she is perceived as engaging in intimidating, harassing, or unwelcome conduct, the person must discontinue that conduct immediately.

Some offenses warrant automatic Conduct Referrals. Examples would be: inappropriate behavior, bullying, fighting, vandalism, cheating, stealing, and profanity. The faculty and administration is concerned with students whose conduct on or off our school property brings discredit or harm to the name of the school or to the reputation of our STM community. Conduct or behavior which is in opposition to our school rules, Catholic philosophy, and moral standards, on the part of our students, could require a penalty or dismissal from the school. Field trips are an extension of the school day. Behavior expectations are one and the same.

Behavior strips and behavior checklists are routinely used to foster self-discipline and encourage students to make proper choices and accept responsibility of his/her actions. Repeated or extremely serious offenses will result in a conference involving the student, parents, principal, school counselor, and faculty members. These actions also result in a discipline record and discipline records are forwarded to new schools if the schools request this information. Possible suspension or expulsion could be recommended. All strategies and recommendations for improving student's behavior will be documented in accordance with the policies of the Archdiocese.

Expulsion

As a definition, expulsion is considered a termination of enrollment. Expulsions shall be used only as a final measure or in response to an egregious offense.

Expulsion results from repeated refusal to obey school rules or from conduct which endangers self and others, property, health or safety of others, and is deemed to be in the best interest of the school community.

One extremely serious offense may also be cause for expulsion. Saint Thomas More School follows guidelines established by the Archdiocese in matters involving expulsion.

Students asked not to return the following year for behavior reasons are not considered to be expelled. The student has not been accepted for re-enrollment in the next academic year because of prior behavioral problems. Students not allowed to return due to failure to meet required academic standards are not to be considered expelled. These academic requirements are articulated in this handbook.

The Archdiocesan Superintendent of Schools is to be informed before any action leading to expulsion is taken.

All disciplinary actions taken by the school shall be preceded by internal procedures and supported by defensible records.

EXPULSION PROCEDURES

In those cases where the code of discipline has reached or exceeded the allowable accumulated infractions, the principal may expel a student after consultation with the superintendent (and pastor, where applicable). Due process must be evident during the period of accumulation (i.e., notification of parents, parent conference, behavioral contract, suspension, etc.) Appeal of expulsion is made by the parents to the superintendent.

In those cases of serious breach of discipline that demand immediate review, a disciplinary committee will be convened to examine the specific details of the situation. The committee is typically made up of five to six individuals representing guidance, pastoral formation, academic disciplines, and other members of the administration. The principal is not part of the disciplinary committee. Parents should be given five (5) days notice as to the assigned date of the disciplinary committee meetings. Upon request by the parents, such notification may be waived.

The student(s) and his/her parent(s) will be permitted to answer questions and present evidence in order to clarify the details of the case for the disciplinary committee. After the meeting is completed, each member will submit his/her recommendation to the principal for consideration. The final disciplinary action decision rests with the principal. Appeal of expulsion is made to the superintendent.

The disciplinary committee makes a recommendation that might include:

- ☒ Not to expel the student (other disciplinary suggestions should accompany this recommendation)

☞ Allow the student to voluntarily withdraw from the school in lieu of expulsion

☞ Expulsion

Before the hearing is held, the parents and student are informed of the possible recommendations of the committee and that once the hearing is in progress that the student may not have the right to voluntarily withdraw, in lieu of expulsion, unless that is the recommendation of the committee. If the decision to expel the student is made, the parents are notified in writing.

When a specific disciplinary issue arises from outside of a school resulting in direct repercussions for a school of the archdiocese, the principal(s) involved must immediately contact the superintendent. In those cases, the individual school(s) should follow their handbook procedures in order to ensure due process in assigning discipline. However, in cases involving students from more than one archdiocesan school where expulsion could be considered, the disciplinary committee is convened and makes a recommendation to the superintendent. The decision for expulsion, or other disciplinary action in such cases, rests with the superintendent. Appeal of expulsion is made to the Office of the Archbishop.

In those situations which arise for which no policy exists, the superintendent, in consultation with the Office of the Archbishop, will render a final decision.

In keeping with Canon Law, the archbishop or his designee reserves the right to make decisions in all matters regarding archdiocesan elementary and secondary schools.

Traffic Plan for Arrival and Dismissal

The majority of our students commute to our school. We strongly encourage carpooling. The school does not match carpoolers, but does have a list of zip codes on file in the office.

Do not drop off or pick up your child/children on Trinity, Water, Adair, Pinetree, or Ponce de Leon Avenue in front of the church. No parking, pick up, or drop off in front of or behind the rectory or parish offices.

Only walkers will be allowed to walk home. Students cannot walk to the post office, neighboring homes, churches, or businesses to be picked up.

Parents of students who will be walking or riding bikes to and from school should notify the School Office in writing. Bikes are to be parked in the rack behind the lunchroom. Bike riders and walkers proceed up Trinity Street to the corner with the crossing guard.

Arrival Policy/Morning Car Pool

☞ ENTER the parking lot via the driveway from Trinity Street from the right.

☞ EXIT the parking lot via the driveway on Trinity Street to the right.

Please follow the flow of traffic and the directions of the Safety Patrols. The Safety Patrols will open car doors to ensure the safe exit of students onto the sidewalk. *Please refrain from using cell phone during morning car pool.*

Dismissal Policy

Afternoon dismissal is at 3:05, except for Wednesday when students are dismissed at 2:00. Drivers should be familiar with the following instructions:

☞ Display carpool number(s), students' names, and homerooms for safety patrols and parent volunteers.

☞ If there is a back up on Trinity, the queue line will be on Water Street. Enter driveway from Trinity by turning right, otherwise the carpool line will be on Trinity.

☞ Follow the direction of the safety patrols and parent volunteers for parking and the directions of the Crossing Guard at the corner of W. Ponce de Leon and Trinity.

- ☞ If children in your carpool do not come out for first call, you will be sent back to the queue line so that dismissal is not held up.
- ☞ Remember that the School Office will be *closed* daily from 2:50 to 3:30. If you need to come into the school for any reason, you must wait until after the dismissal process has been completed.
- ☞ If carpool numbers are not displayed or the directions of the safety patrol/parent volunteers are not followed, cars will be sent back to the end of the line. Please familiarize family members or friends who pick up carpools with the process to avoid delays.
- ☞ If you have an afternoon conference, please park along the back fence.
- ☞ If you have to check out your child before dismissal, please pull into the first row (behind the Principal's parking spot), tell the parent volunteers what you need and follow their directions.
- ☞ If you're a volunteer for a school function and will not be leaving until dismissal, please park your car facing Trinity and display your carpool number.
- ☞ ***Please refrain from using cell phone during afternoon carpool.***
- ☞ Last, but not least, please be cheerful and courteous!

YOUR CHILD'S SAFETY IS OUR PRIMARY CONCERN!

Students, parents, and siblings are not allowed to play on the playground during dismissal or during Aftercare hours. During out-of-school hours, students may play on the playground, if accompanied by the parent and directly supervised by the parent. Please do not drop your child off to play on the playground, unattended by an adult. During school functions, children may not play on the playground or in the gym or anywhere on the school property without the constant supervision of an adult.

If you walk to school to meet your child at dismissal, please do not bring your family pet. Please do not bring your pets to school at any time unless it has been approved by your child's teacher for Show & Tell purposes.

CONSEQUENCES FOR FAILURE TO PICK UP YOUR CHILD ON TIME:

- ☞ All remaining students are sent to the Middle School building where they may study until your arrival.
- ☞ Late pick up will result in a fine that will be billed by the Extended Care Department. These fines are expected to be paid at the time invoiced. Failure to pay these fines will result in consequences, such as report cards being held or re-registration being denied.
- ☞ Fines are as follows:
 - \$10/child until 4:00 p.m.
 - \$15/child after 4:00 p.m.

2005–2006 Non-Discretionary Expenses and Approved Fund Raising

School department	August	September	October	November	December
<i>Business Office</i>	TUITION	TUITION	TUITION	TUITION	TUITION
<i>Miscellaneous school-related fees</i>	Milk money \$30 Hot lunch \$3 per lunch Extended care (ongoing)				
<i>Development</i>			ANNUAL FUND	ANNUAL FUND	ANNUAL FUND
<i>Athletic program</i>		Basketball registration \$95			
<i>PTO</i>	Sally Foster	Magazine sale		Christmas Wreaths	
<i>Miscellaneous fundraising</i>	Athens Pizza night	Chik-Fil-A Spirit Night	More Festival		
<i>Miscellaneous fees</i>	Parent workday fee \$50 if absent (one workday required) (Summer) school uniforms		(Winter) school uniforms		

January	February	March	April	May	June	July
TUITION	TUITION	TUITION	TUITION			TUITION
School re-registration \$75/family \$25 per yearbook New student application \$100 per student		Summer school tuition (optional)	8th grade graduation fee \$110	Summer bridge book \$11 (optional)		
ANNUAL FUND	ANNUAL FUND	ANNUAL FUND	ANNUAL FUND	ANNUAL FUND		
	Auction		Golf tourney			
				School supplies sale		
			(Summer) school uniforms			

Archdiocese of Atlanta
Field Trip Permission Slip

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Your son/daughter's class will be participating in a field trip. This field trip will take place under the guidance and supervision of teachers and parent volunteers from _____ School. A brief description of the activity follows:

Grades _____

Educational Purpose of Trip _____

Destination _____

Date and Time of Departure _____

Date and Time of Return _____

Method of Transportation _____

Cost Per Person _____

Total Due with Permission Slip \$ _____

(Detach and return bottom half)

Destination _____ Date _____

Please complete, sign and return the following permission slip.

I hereby give my child _____ permission to attend the above listed field trip. I understand that authorized vehicles to the designated place will transport my child.

I hereby waive and release any claim against the _____ School for any injuries suffered by my child during the above listed field trip. In the event of an injury suffered during the transportation to and from the school, I agree to look solely to the insurance carrier providing insurance on the transporting vehicle for compensation.

Signature of Parent/Guardian _____

Emergency # (_____) _____ Cell/Pager # (_____) _____

Deadline to return form by _____

Saint Thomas More Catholic School 2003-2004
Confidential Clinic and After School Information

(BLANK PAGE)

Family name _____
Home phone _____
Home address _____

Children live with: () Both parents () Mother () Father () Other

Email address (mother) _____
(father) _____
Second address if different from child _____

1.	STUDENT NAME	GRADE	ALLERGIES/MEDICAL PROBLEM	MEDICATION
2.	STUDENT NAME	GRADE	ALLERGIES/MEDICAL PROBLEM	MEDICATION
3.	STUDENT NAME	GRADE	ALLERGIES/MEDICAL PROBLEM	MEDICATION
4.	STUDENT NAME	GRADE	ALLERGIES/MEDICAL PROBLEM	MEDICATION

Mother's name _____ Cell # _____
Work # _____ Home # _____
Employer _____ Pager _____
Father's name _____ Cell # _____
Work # _____ Home # _____
Employer _____ Pager _____

Doctor's name _____

Phone # _____

Dentist name _____

Phone # _____

EMERGENCY NAMES AND PHONE NUMBERS

Name _____

Phone # _____ Relationship _____

Name _____

Phone # _____ Relationship _____

CHILDREN MAY BE RELEASED TO THE FOLLOWING, PLEASE INCLUDE ALL REQUESTED INFORMATION

Name _____

Phone # _____ Relationship _____

Address _____

Name _____

Phone # _____ Relationship _____

Address _____

Are there any physical problems, medical conditions (i.e. diabetic, asthmatic, drug allergies, food allergies), medical health disorders, or developmental disabilities, which would limit the child(ren)'s participation in school or after school activities? () YES () NO

Are there any special procedures required in caring for your child(ren)? () YES () NO

Please specify by child:

**Saint Thomas More Catholic School
Internet Permission**

Student

I understand and shall abide by Saint Thomas More School's *Internet Use Policy*. Should I commit any violation my access privileges may be revoked and school disciplinary and appropriate legal action may be taken. I assume responsibility for my actions in accessing network services.

User's full name (please print) _____

User's signature _____ Date _____

Parent or Guardian

As a parent or guardian of this student I have read Saint Thomas More School's *Internet Use Policy*. I understand that access to the Internet is designed for educational purposes and that precautions have been taken to reduce student exposure to inappropriate material. I will not hold the school or any employee responsible for any material acquired on the network. If I disapprove of any material this student receives on the Internet, I understand that my recourse is to withdraw my permission in writing. I hereby give my permission for the above student to be given access to the Internet.

Parent or guardian's name (please print)

Parent or guardian's signature _____

Date _____

Please return this signed form to the media center.