

# ST. THOMAS MORE ACADEMY PARENT & STUDENT HANDBOOK 2020-2021



**St. Thomas More Academy**

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**Mission Statement:**

St. Thomas More Academy is an independent school rooted in the Catholic faith, providing a classical liberal arts curriculum, inspiring hearts, educating minds and nurturing the souls of our students.

**Vision Statement:**

St. Thomas More Academy is recognized and respected for academic excellence, producing successful, well-rounded students who are critical thinkers, confident in their faith.

**Values:**

As Saint Thomas More Academy (STMA) strives to realize its vision and achieve its mission, our collective actions are characterized by the following values:

Christ-Centeredness – Rooted in our rich Catholic Tradition, STMA’s religious education extends beyond the classroom to permeate all aspects of our shared experience as a school community.

Caring Teachers – The heart of STMA is our faculty who joyfully extend themselves to ensure that each student develops a firm foundation on which a lifelong commitment to, and love of, learning can mature.

Individualized Instruction – Our commitment to a teacher-student ratio of no more than 20/1 and small class sizes ensures that each student receives the personal attention they require to accelerate and optimize their learning.

Development of the Whole Child – Established with a firm commitment to a Classical Liberal Arts education, STMA’s curriculum stresses religion, a comprehensive reading program, writing, math and critical thinking with strong attention to language, music, art, and physical education as essential to a core of instruction immersed in a spiritual, loving environment.

Community – STMA prides itself on the partnership we establish between our students, parents, teachers, administrators and the community. These relationships focused on the presence of Christ promote a nurturing environment that is evident in all our encounters.

Integrity – Consistent with our attention to Gospel values, our interactions with others are characterized by honesty, respect, and trust.

Stewardship – STMA invites all members of the community to generously share their time, talent and material resources in assisting us achieve our mission.

## STUDENT CODE OF HONOR

I will honor God with my actions and words.

I will cooperate with those in authority.

I will strive, as a Christian student, to do my personal best.

I will always be honest, trustworthy, kind, compassionate, and set an example for others to follow.

## SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY

We believe that St. Thomas More Academy students are entitled to an excellent education provided in a caring atmosphere with Christian values. To assist us in meeting this goal we must have a strong Catholic Identity, varying educational techniques, and active parental support. We strongly encourage parents to become involved in the life of the school, just as the school seeks to support the life of the family.

## CATHOLIC IDENTITY

The student's growth in faith is the central purpose for St. Thomas More Academy. Students are challenged to achieve their highest potential. They are encouraged to live their faith in word and deed in their church and larger community.

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## Board of Directors

Saint Thomas More Academy Board Members must be practicing members of the Roman Catholic Church, they must state their loyalty to the Holy Father, profess an absolute commitment to the magisterium, affirm that they are living in accordance with the laws of the church, recognize the importance of a classical liberal arts education, and advocate the Catholic position that the parents are the primary educator of the child.



## PARENT-TEACHER ORGANIZATION (PTO)

The STMA PTO believes the development and nurturing of the school community is best accomplished in an atmosphere of trust and cooperation with the consideration and respect of the distinctive qualities, talents, abilities, and needs of each person. By providing a vehicle for service, social, and fundraising activities in support of the school, the STMA PTO recognizes the importance of its role in affirming the school community and its members as living expressions of God's love.

The St. Thomas More Academy's Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) is comprised of dedicated parents and teachers who work together to provide activities and funds to the school. With the hard work and commitment of our families and staff, our school is able to make strides. The STMA PTO provides an example for our students that together we can make a difference in our community and make it a better place.

# GENERAL INFORMATION

## Accreditation and Certification

St. Thomas More Academy is certified by the State of Maryland and accredited by the National Association of Private and Independent Schools. The classroom teachers are degreed in accordance with the Maryland State Department of Education regulations.

## Enrollment at St. Thomas More Academy

All families must sign an Enrollment Contract for the school year. This contract includes, but is not limited to, the recognition that the school must develop a working budget, and parental obligation to pay tuition for the full academic year is unconditional. No portion of such fees, paid or outstanding, will be refunded or canceled. In the case of absence, withdrawal, or dismissal of children from the school, any and all of the tuition and fees are immediately due and payable.

## Tuition

Please refer to the school's website for current tuition rates. Family discounts are available for multiple children of the same family enrolled during the same school year. A limited amount of financial assistance is available to families each year. See **Tuition Assistance** below. **Tuition is paid through FACTS.**

## Tuition Assistance

Parents should first apply for financial assistance through FACTS. The Frederick Parish Tuition Assistance Fund utilizes the FACTS system to determine awards for families registered in Frederick County Catholic parishes. Each January, STMA families in need are also eligible to apply to FOCE (Friends of Catholic Education) for scholarships and tuition assistance for the next school year. Finally, all families are encouraged to use the SCRIP and the FOCE gift card programs to receive tuition credits each month, at no cost to STMA.

A referral program is offered to current families who refer new families to St. Thomas More Academy. A \$500 tuition credit may be awarded if an existing family refers a new family that enrolls children at STMA. The credit is applied once the new family submits their signed contract.

### Withdrawal of Students

Families withdrawing students from St. Thomas More Academy should notify the school in writing and / or submit the withdrawal in RenWeb as soon as possible. Once all financial obligations are met and a Release of Records form is received from the new school, official school records will be mailed directly to the new school.

### Parent –School Agreement

As the primary educators of their children, parents/guardians freely make the choice of a Catholic education for their sons/daughters. Registration and acceptance at St. Thomas More Academy, and signing of appropriate documents required by the school, constitutes an agreement by the parent/guardian to accept and abide by the rules and regulations of the institution and to support its philosophy of education.

### Parent Communication

Open communication between parents and school is always crucial to the success of the whole organization. You are welcome to contact the teacher whenever you have a question or concern about your child's education. Conferences with individual teachers must be arranged through the office or individual teacher. Appointments can be made before or after regular school hours.

Please use the “**Notes from Parents to School**” (see attached form) for all written communications. Make copies of the form as needed.

In the event there is a concern involving your child, or St. Thomas More Academy Policies, or procedures the appropriate chain of command is:

1. Discuss the issue with the teacher concerned.
2. If you have approached the teacher and if problems persist, make an appointment with the Dean to discuss the problem.
3. If the concern or problem persists a school board member may be asked to intervene.

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## Student Information

It is very important that we have accurate addresses and phone numbers and emergency numbers. If you move or change your phone number, please let the office know immediately. If you will be out of town you must write a note and share a copy with the office and your child's teacher(s) indicating who is in charge of your child in case an emergency should occur.

## School Directory

A school directory, listing all STMA students/families, is distributed in early Fall and will have families' names, addresses and phone numbers. If you do not want to be included, please indicate this in writing to the school office.

## School Property

Student desks and lockers are the property of St. Thomas More Academy. They may be opened and searched at any time by school administration or law enforcement agencies. St. Thomas More Academy reserves the right to search student items brought onto school property.

## Smoking Policy

Smoking and vaping are not permitted on school grounds or in the school.

## Cell Phones and other Electronic Devices

A student in possession of a cell phone or other electronic device (i.e. i-pod, etc.) must ensure that it is put away and turned off between 8:30 am and 3:15 p.m. unless it is an approved device for academic accommodation. If needed, the school office phone is available for students during these hours. If a cell phone or other electronic device is used, seen, or heard during school hours, it will be confiscated. It will be released to a parent or legal guardian.

## SCHOOL DAY

### Daily Schedule

6:45am-8:10am - Before School Care

8:10 a.m. – 8:30am - Students may go to classrooms

8:30am - Announcements/Prayer

3:15pm - Students dismissed

3:30pm-6:00pm – After School Care

3:30pm-4:00pm – Teachers are available for homework help or quick parent conversations.

4:00pm - Teachers depart

### Lunch and Snack

We provide a time for morning snack break. Children should come to school each day with a nutritiously healthy lunch and snack, as well as milk, water or juice from home. STMA does not provide microwaves to heat lunches. Parents are discouraged from delivering restaurant lunches for their children. If a student forgets their lunch, a Lunchable may be offered with parental permission and the family's tuition account

will be charged \$5.00. Students will eat in their classrooms during the 20-21 school year. Grace is said before meals. Students will be expected to clean up after themselves, with responsibility increasing with age.

## Recess

Children in grades PreK through 8 go outside for recess daily, weather permitting. Please be sure your child is dressed appropriately for the weather. No child may be excused from recess without a daily written excuse or phone call from the parent or guardian. Excuses are only accepted for situations such as acute asthma or environmental allergy, fractures, etc.



## Arrival and Dismissal

Students arriving for Before Care should use the side doors facing the library. Before and After Care will be in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade classroom.

***Front Doors will be locked until 8:10am.***

Staff members will greet children in their cars and take temperatures. If no fever is present, the students may enter the school building. Please email the office and your child's teacher or use the "Notes from Parents to School" to communicate any updates about your child's schedule.

## Early Checkout

A parent picking up a student early should email the office and your child's teacher or send a "Notes from Parents to School" that morning. The child will be called from the classroom when the parent reports to the office. The parent must sign their child out.

No child, under any circumstance, will be allowed to leave school during the school day with an adult other than a parent or guardian without prior permission from the parent/guardian.

## **Tardiness**

A student is tardy if he/she arrives after 8:30 a.m. on regular school days.

## **Dismissal Procedures**

Student dismissal will begin at 3:15 pm on regular school days. Parents / Guardians are asked to wait in their cars in the carline which forms in front of the school on Prospect Street. Please note there is no parking in this area during drop off or pick up times. Students will be escorted to their vehicles by STMA staff or Safety Patrol members. Only passenger side doors should be used for student loading. Please wait for the cars in front of you to move before moving forward or pulling out of car line. If the line backs up to the end of Prospect Street, please circle around the block so we don't cause a traffic jam in our residential neighborhood.

Students who are not picked up by 3:45 pm on regular school days or 12:30 pm on early dismissal days will be taken to After Care. A discounted \$5.00 fee will be charged for any child picked up within 15 minutes. The full After Care rate will apply to students picked up later than 4:00 pm.

## **Attendance**

If your child is absent from school, a parent must report the absence, **NO LATER** than 9:00 a.m., by calling the school office or emailing ([info@stmamd.org](mailto:info@stmamd.org)). If you do not contact the school office, expect to be called by the school staff to verify your child's absence. Whether you call or email when your child is not going to be at school, please leave the following information:

- child's name
- grade/teacher
- reason for absence
- homework plan if applicable

In the event of an absence, assignments can be made up and full credit received if the reason is:

- illness of student
- death in the immediate family or family emergency
- court appearance
- quarantine
- exposure to contagious disease
- medical and dental appointments that cannot be scheduled outside school hours

“Notes from Parents to School” are to be sent by parents for each absence. If a student is absent for four consecutive days or more, a doctor’s excuse must accompany the student upon return.

Vacations are discouraged during school days. Students are required to turn in missed work. If the missed work is not completed with appropriate effort or in a timely manner it will receive a zero. Tests will be made up by the student for a grade. Tests missed due to an absence will be given the first day back to school. Homework may not be available in advance of a student’s absence. If your child will be absent, notify the school office.

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### **Inclement Weather/Snow Day/Emergency Closing Procedures**

STMA will observe the Frederick County Public Schools’ decision for weather related closings and delayed openings. Parents should sign up for Remind text messaging service for emergency school closing information. The school will send an email as well when schools are closing. Weather related closings and delays will post on the school website and social media.

If weather conditions indicate the possibility of an early closing, parents should listen to the radio for FCPS school closing announcements. If parents cannot arrive at school on time for the early closing, they should have a friend or family member assist them by picking up their child(ren). In this instance, the office staff must be notified by telephone or email. Frederick County will usually make the decision by 11:00 a.m. for an early dismissal. Parents should plan in advance for the care of their children during these emergencies. **Before Care will not be available on delayed opening days due to inclement weather. After Care will not be available on any day school closes early for inclement weather.**

## **Safety**

For the security of our school community, all doors are locked at 8:30 a.m. They remain locked throughout the day. Those wishing to enter the school must use the doorbell located to the left of the main set of doors.

## **Visitors**

Parents and other visitors must report to the school office upon entering the building. During the 20-21 school year, visitors are limited and are granted building access before or after school hours due to our health / safety protocols. Parents dropping off a lunch, or other items, are to leave the item with office personnel who will deliver them or call the child to the office.

## **Emergency Drills**

To ensure orderly and safe evacuation of the school in emergency situations, monthly drills will be held. Students will be taught how to evacuate safely in the event of fire, to shelter in place during a lockdown, and how to protect themselves during a weather emergency.



## **Health**

An Annual Student Health Survey form is required for each student for updating the student's health file with current and pertinent information.

In the event of a serious accident during school hours, we will attempt to notify parents before any medical care is given. If an accident occurs during a field trip, the nearest medical care facility will be utilized.

According to the Maryland Department of Education a student should be temporarily excluded from school for:

- A temperature of 100 or higher – any fever should be gone for at least 24 hours before the student returns to school
- Most inflammatory eye conditions, such as pink eye
- Rashes or eczema that is known to be contagious or infectious
- Head cold of any consequence, especially with a persistent cough and excessive drainage
- Sore or inflamed throat -- if strep throat is diagnosed, the student needs to be on medication for at least 24 hours before returning to school
- Discharge from the ears
- Body lice or head lice
- Diarrhea

If your child is sent home ill with a possible contagious condition during the day, he/she will not be permitted to return to school that same day. Students who were sent home, or have been absent during the school day, may not participate in extra-curricular events that day or evening. Any fever should be gone for at least 24 hours before returning to school. Children who vomit at school must go home and remain home for 24 hours.

St. Thomas More Academy has implemented several health and safety protocols this year as outlined in our 20-21 reopening plan document. It is required that all students and staff adhere to these protocols. We ask that parents remain vigilant throughout the school year in monitoring their children's health, keeping their children home when necessary, and openly communicating with school administration about any health concerns or illness.

# Protect our school. Protect your family.



*By sending your student to school today you affirm and accept the personal responsibility that your child does not have any of the following:*

## Symptoms

Temperature 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher

Sore throat

New uncontrolled cough that causes difficulty breathing (for students with chronic allergic / asthmatic cough, a change in their cough from baseline)

Diarrhea, vomiting, or abdominal pain

New onset of severe headache, especially with a fever

## Exposures

Had close contact (within 6 feet for at least 15 minutes) with a person with confirmed COVID-19

Traveled to an area where the state health department is reporting a large number of COVID-19 cases

## **Medication Policy**

All medication will be kept in the front office in a locked medicine cabinet.

1. The school administration will administer all medications. Students are not permitted to medicate themselves at any time, with the exception students who are authorized by their doctor to self-administer inhalers or Epi-pens (see allergy alerts).
2. All prescription medication to be administered during school hours must be in the original prescription container marked with the student's name, the name of the medication, the accurate dosage, and when it is to be administered. Any dosage changes must have a doctor's written statement (which may be faxed to the school) or a new original prescription container. All prescriptions must be current within the year.
3. All prescription medication, including inhalers that are administered on a regular basis, must have a completed "Prescribed Medication Permission Form" on file. This form can be obtained from the school office.
4. Medications, such as antibiotics, that are ordered to be given 3-4 times a day which necessitate a dose to be given during school hours, please request an extra bottle from the pharmacist so just the amount of medication needed at school can be sent in to avoid having the student carry the medication back and forth each day.
5. Non-prescription medications to be given must also be in the original container (please, no baggies) with written authorization from a parent/guardian detailing when the medication is to be given and the reason for giving it.
6. If it becomes necessary to give a student medication that is not kept at school, a parent/guardian may come to school and administer the medication. Please inform the office beforehand.

## **Allergy Alerts**

It is the parent's responsibility to alert the school staff to allergies. Once informed, the school staff will take the necessary time to understand the child's allergies and will develop a plan that both reasonably protects the child and creates the least restrictive environment for the other children in the classroom and school.

If a student carries an EPIPEN or inhaler with him/her, the physician's order must state this requirement.

## **Providing treats in school**

Because we do have children with allergies, parents must first contact the teacher to inquire if treats are acceptable in class. The teacher will then take appropriate steps to ensure the safety and participation of everyone.



## **CURRICULUM**

St. Thomas More Academy provides a classical education for children in a faith centered environment. Our days start with prayer, and we actively teach children to be kind, sensitive to others, and confident. In addition to reading, language arts, math, science, and history, and Grades 3 - 8 study Latin. Art, music, and physical education are also offered.

Using the classical method, the order to our world is stressed in everything we do and throughout all the subjects our students study. Our children learn "how" to learn, acquiring the tools of learning which make this possible. Respecting the classical trivium, we strive to feed the soul as well as the intellect. Children respond beautifully to this approach to learning, quickly becoming people who love to learn.

## Assessment

Report cards may use a variation of the grading scale as deemed appropriate by the classroom teacher. Grading in Kindergarten, First and Second Grade depends upon intellectual development and ability, growth in knowledge and skills, neatness, completion of work, and on task time.

In addition to the above, grading in Third through Eighth Grade depends upon: tests, quizzes, class participation, homework/daily work, projects/reports. The grading scale is 100 – 90 = A, 89 – 80 = B, 79 – 70 = C, 69 – 60 = D, and any grade of 59 and below is failing (F).

## Honor Roll

Students in grades 4-8 have the opportunity to achieve Honor Roll. To determine honor roll status a student's class percentages are added for the trimester. Main courses count 2 times and Specials count 1 time. Honor Roll – averages 89.5 – 100. A grade of a D or an F in any subject will eliminate a student from being on the Honor Roll.

Conduct and Effort grades are not included in the overall average. However, if a student's Conduct or Effort grade is unsatisfactory, the student will not be on Honor Roll.

## Field Trips

Field Trips are suspended for the 20-21 school year.

## Homework

Homework is an essential part of the learning process. A certain amount of homework is necessary to reinforce what is taught at school. The student who successfully learns the process of completing homework also is mastering self-discipline, independence, initiative and responsibility. If minimum work requirements cannot be met, students will be placed on academic probation and placed on a program to assist them.

The purpose of homework is to foster habits of independent work-study, to reinforce learning that has taken place at school, and to relate school learning to out-of-school interests.

Parents are asked to foster an atmosphere conducive to doing homework and stress the importance of the responsible completion of homework to the student.

Homework includes written and/or study work, projects, and purposeful reading. Students at all grade levels are expected to complete homework assignments and turn them in on time.

Assignments missed because of excused absences must be completed in the same amount of days that the student is absent.

Homework should provide:

- An extension of classroom activities
- An evaluation tool for both the teacher and student
- A positive learning experience emphasizing quality not quantity.
- Additional opportunities to learn time management and organizational skills

Teachers will:

- Check assignment book each day in class
- Provide assignments relevant to class work
- Use assigned homework as an assessment tool

- Consider the age and capabilities of the student when preparing assignments
- Consider the time required to complete an assignment

Parents will:

- Check assignment book each day at home
- Provide adequate time and a suitable place for the student to complete homework
- Be available for questions, but remember that homework is the child's responsibility
- Contact the teacher when their child consistently has difficulty completing assignments

Students will:

- Clarify homework instructions with the teacher
- Take home materials needed to complete assignment
- Budget time
- Return all completed work to the teacher by due date
- Students in all grades will use the provided assignment notebook

## Make-Up Work

Students who have an excused absence have the same amount of time missed to make-up missed work. Example: If a student was ill 2 days, then they have 2 days, upon return to school, to complete and turn in missed assignments/activities.

Homework may be requested before 9:00 a.m. on the day of the absence. Homework will be placed in the school front office to be picked up.

## Physical Education

Students attend P.E. once or twice per week. Participation is expected except when a child has a note from a doctor releasing him/her from gym class. A doctor's note is required indicating the appropriate level of P.E. activity if a student has sustained a fracture or injury. If a student has worn a cast or a splint, a doctor's note is required to resume PE activity.

## Promotion and Retention

Students who have successfully completed grade requirements will be promoted to the next grade. However, a teacher/administrator may decide it is the child's best interest due to academic or emotional immaturity to retain that student in his/her current grade level. Parents will be notified by the beginning of the third trimester if a student is in jeopardy of being retained.

### Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten

A decision to retain a student in the PreK or Kindergarten program shall be based on the progress of the child, especially with regards to level of maturity attained and the ability to handle the academic program of the next grade. This decision will be a consultative one involving the teacher, parents, and administration.

### Grades 1-3

Inability to read causes more children to experience failure or lack of progress in school than any other single factor. The foundation in reading is laid in the primary grades, especially the first two grades. Hence, in the primary grades, promotion is to be determined mainly by the student's progress in reading. It is important to determine the overall ability of the student.

### Grades 4-8

Students in grades 4-8 are required to pass all core classes: Mathematics, English, Science, and Social Studies.

Promotion to the next grade also demands that students maintain a general average of 70% or above.

## Reports to Parents

Reports of your child's progress will be made during the year. Report cards are sent home at the conclusion of each trimester. A Parent/Teacher Conference is scheduled in the fall and spring. Additional conferences may be planned as deemed necessary.

If a teacher observes that a child is having difficulty with classroom work, parents will be notified by phone or in writing and an appointment may be made to discuss the child's progress. Report Cards and "Notes Home" are tools to communicate how your student is progressing in school.



## Discipline

### **Discipline Policy:**

The goal is to form disciples of Christ by encouraging virtuous living and clear expectations of behavior and the consequences for not following them.

The following have been determined by administration, faculty, and staff to be the non-negotiable essential requirements of a well-mannered STMA student:

1. Walk in the hallways and stairwells.
2. Listen while others are talking.
3. Keep your hands, feet, and objects to yourself.
4. Do not threaten another with physical violence or verbal abuse (includes name calling, humiliation, gossip, bad language).
5. Be honest. Do not steal or cheat.
6. Greet adults and each other with courtesy. Stand up when an adult enters a classroom and greets the class.
7. Be in full uniform each day.
8. Electronic devices are not allowed at school unless listed on the school supply list.
9. Participate in class and follow teacher assignments.
10. Take care of books and school property. Do not cause vandalism or damage.

**A Behavior Incident Report on the Notes Home will be emailed and sent home with any student who gets 3 misbehavior incidents in one week (from any teacher, in any class).**

Any family whose student either 1) threatens physical violence or verbal abuse or 2) cheats or steals will get an immediate phone call from the teacher or Dean. The family must make an appointment with the teacher and/or Dean within 48 hours.

In the case of physical violence, the student accused will not be allowed back in school until the parent conference takes place.

The consequence for pre-meditated intent to harm with physical violence:

1<sup>st</sup> offense – 1 day suspension, write out plan for improvement, letter of apology

2<sup>nd</sup> offense – asked to leave school, must pay balance of full year tuition

The consequence for verbal abuse:

1<sup>st</sup> offense: 1 day in-school suspension, letter of apology, write out plan for improvement

2<sup>nd</sup> offense: 2 day in-school suspension

3<sup>rd</sup> offense: asked to leave school, must pay balance of full year tuition

Vandalism and deliberate damage to property must be replaced at the expense of the parents. In addition, there will be in-school community service hours.

The Administration reserves the right to limit all school-related extracurricular activity participation based on a student's conduct and/or effort grade.

## **Harassment and Intimidation**

Harassment or intimidation shall include, but not be limited to, verbal or physical threats, offensive or threatening communications, gossip, unwanted or offensive contact, obscene or threatening gestures, or other form of willful conduct intended to place someone in fear or in physical danger. Students making such threats in any form face detention, suspension, and/or expulsion.

School Policy also strictly prohibits any form of sexual harassment, which shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- inappropriate or unwanted physical contact (e.g. grabbing or touching a person's private areas);
- inappropriate physical gestures (e.g. rude hand gestures or exposing private areas of the body);
- inappropriate language or suggestions of a sexual nature; and derogatory and/or offensive jokes and comments

## **Bullying**

Bullying is a form of violence that hurts others and it is strictly prohibited at St. Thomas More Academy. Parents and teachers should be alert to bullying at school or during school-sponsored activities where a student or group of students intentionally and repeatedly uses their power to hurt other individuals or groups. Bullies' power can come from their physical strength, age, financial status, popularity, social status, technological skills, or by association.

## **Cyber-bullying**

Cyber-bullying occurs when any person is tormented, threatened, harassed, humiliated, embarrassed or otherwise targeted by another individual or group using the Internet, interactive and digital technologies or cell phones. We reserve the right to discipline students for actions taken off-campus if actions are intended to have an effect on another student or they adversely affect the safety and well-being of a student while in school. Please also refer to the Acceptable Use Policy for the Internet and Technology Tools below.

## **Reporting Harassment or Bullying**

Any occurrence of bullying or harassment should immediately be reported to a student's teacher and / or the administration. The Dean of Academics will investigate the incident and take appropriate disciplinary action, if necessary.



## **Acceptable Use Policy for the Internet and Technology Tools**

Technology skills are necessary for our students now and in the future. Access to the Internet and technology tools (including software tools, web-based applications and services, computer equipment, iPads, and other personal electronic devices) allow students to conduct research, produce digital content, and communicate with classmates and teachers. The Internet and technology tools put enormous power at the fingertips of users. As such, they also place a great deal of responsibility on users. It is imperative that technology resources be used to build community, encourage critical reflection, and foster readiness for future learning.

Developments in technology at St. Thomas More Academy are to be used ethically, legally, and responsibly. As in other areas, our students are expected to make good choices. Individual users are responsible for their activity on the Internet and technology tools, including the material stored and information shared. In order to protect private and personal information, unauthorized disclosure, use, or dissemination of personal information is prohibited. St. Thomas More Academy reserves the right to edit Internet accounts for child-only configurations, and to run filtering software for students' protection. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that student users (and their parents) recognize the limitations St. Thomas More Academy imposes on the use of the Internet and technology tools and that they understand the standards of behavior the school expects of users.

All users of St. Thomas More Academy's network and technology tools, whether on a school-owned or personal device, are responsible for adhering to the following guidelines for acceptable use. Acceptable uses of the Internet and technology tools are for authorized academic and school-related activities that support learning and teaching and:

- Respect the privacy and property rights of others and the well-being of the School
- Are consistent with Roman Catholic values and morals
- Treat technology tools and computer equipment with respect

Unacceptable uses of the Internet and technology tools include but are not limited to:

- Violating the rights or privacy of others, including by photographing or filming an individual without consent
- Posting or distributing videos or photographs without consent of the persons depicted and the School
- Using technology to send profanity, obscenity, or other offensive or harmful language
- Unauthorized copying, downloading, or installation of content, software, or applications (including plagiarism or "pirating" music)
- Sending false information or sending messages to the School community that fail to identify the sender (including anonymous messages or messages using a pseudonym)
- Using any program designed to disrupt network performance or breach network security, such as software designed to capture passwords or break encryption protocols
- Revealing personal information beyond what is required for login while using Internet or webbased resources
- Responding to inappropriate messages from others (which should be reported to the School)
- Downloading or copying information onto disks or hard drives without prior teacher approval
- Accessing, downloading, storing, or printing files or messages that are

inappropriate or may be offensive to others (including pornography and other inappropriate images)

- Sharing of passwords or attempting to discover another's password (passwords should be changed frequently)
- Using or accessing another's account (network accounts are to be used only by those for whom the account has been established)
- Intentionally writing, producing, generating, copying, or introducing dangerous codes or programs designed to cause harm, including, but not limited to viruses, bugs, 'worms', etc.
- Intentionally damaging, altering, or tampering with any hardware, software, printers, keyboards, speakers, etc.
- Accessing or searching files, directories, or folders for which the user does not have authorization
- Intentionally erasing, renaming, or disabling of anyone else's files or programs
- Accessing social media, email, or other off-task websites or apps during school without explicit permission of a teacher or adult supervisor
- Violating St. Thomas More Academy's conduct rules or the law.
- Harassment/cyber-bullying of others online, whether against a student, non-student, or employee, is serious, is prohibited, and is contrary to the school's policy and values. Harassment/cyber-bullying whether it is initiated on campus or off campus, online or in person, should be reported immediately to a faculty member, and may lead to disciplinary action and possible criminal prosecution under Maryland's law prohibiting the Misuse of Interactive Computer Service ("Grace's Law").

Parents are responsible for:

- Reviewing and discussing this policy with their child as well as supporting the school in its enforcement
- Partnering with the school in monitoring their child's technology use
- Modeling appropriate Internet behaviors for their child
- Reporting any concerns regarding this policy or their child's use of the Internet or technology tools to school personnel. Failure to adhere to the policy guidelines

may result in a revocation of a student's Internet access and other technology privileges and disciplinary action up to and including suspension or expulsion.



## **School Uniforms**

School uniforms are designed to take the pressure off competition and economic status for students. Uniforms encourage a neat, consistent appearance and assist students as they concentrate on their studies. The uniform code is strictly enforced by the school faculty and administration. All uniforms should be clean, pressed, and free of holes. Shoes and socks must be worn at all times.

*Please refer to the Student Uniform Guidelines at [www.stmamd.org](http://www.stmamd.org)*

The administration reserves the right to determine the definition of appropriate school dress. Parents may be called to bring a change of clothes for students who are inappropriately dressed.

The children generally go outside, even when the weather is cold. During these times, it is necessary for them to have hats, gloves, scarves, etc.

Occasionally STMA allows students to have “Dress Down Days” where they may dress out of uniform. Children may wear jeans, khakis or other clean, casual type slacks with appropriate tops. T-shirts, sweatshirts, etc. may be worn, but they must be appropriate to the Catholic environment of STMA. It is permissible for girls to wear a casual skirt on “out of uniform” days, as long as the skirt follows the guidelines for uniform skirts and the hem touches the top of the knee or longer.

\*Note that “Dress Down Day” passes are non-transferable to other students and must be used within the school year issued.

## Personal Appearance Requirements for Students in All Grades

### Hair

Hair must be clean and neat

No dyed or spiked hair

No bizarre cuts or designs

Hair accessories should be simple; no scarves or dangling headbands may be worn

For boys, hair should be cut above the eyebrows and around the ears; hair should not fall over the collar

### Jewelry

For safety reasons no dangling earrings (including religious symbols) will be permitted. No bracelets or necklaces may be worn. For boys, other than a Christian medal on a chain, and/or a watch no jewelry is permitted.

### Makeup

No make-up or face glitter is to be worn by students at any time.

No finger nail polish

## Acknowledgment Page

I have read and agree to the guidelines in the Parent/Student Handbook.

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Parent Signature

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Student Signature

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please sign this handbook acknowledgement form and return it to the St. Thomas More Academy office. Retain the handbook at home for your reference throughout the year.