



Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic Academy

2019-2020

Parent/Student Handbook

87-49 87th Street
Woodhaven, New York 11421
718-847-3904

Thomas R. Piro, Ph.D., Principal

AMENDMENTS TO HANDBOOK

The principal has the responsibility and the right to carry out, interpret and amend the handbook for just cause during the school year. Parents will be given prompt notification when changes are made. These notices will be through the regular newsletter, Option C or in a special memo to the parents.

Fall 2019

Dear Students and Parents,

In order to maintain a safe, nurturing and supportive environment for our students, we are sharing this important document with you. We rely on your cooperation in this process of collaborative responsibility. Please review these school policies with your child so that they understand their importance.

The following pages are the rules, policies, procedures, and regulations for Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic Academy. Please note, that upon registering your child, you are entering into a one-year contract with the academy for that academic year, stating that you will abide by the policies included in the handbook. We ask that you read each rule/policy carefully, referring to them when in doubt, and helping the academy enforce the policies as stated. Violations of any of the policies contained in this handbook; on, but not limited to the vicinity of the academy, may result in disciplinary action, which are outlined in the Discipline Policy section of the handbook.

Each child has the ability to become the best version of themselves; however, they need the full support of all of the adults in their lives in order to do so. I strongly believe that both academy and home should be partners in nurturing our students' talents, skills, and passions, as well guiding them in their development of their faith. Only together can we bring on the success of our students! I encourage all of our families to be as active within the St. Thomas the Apostle community as is possible. Please know that our doors are always open!

I look forward to working closely this year with everyone!

Sincerely,

Thomas R. Piro, Ph.D.
Principal

St Thomas the Apostle Catholic Academy

ACADEMY MISSION

St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Academy is led by a firm belief that every child can learn and fulfill their potential. Rooted in our belief that Christ is our center, we instill in the students that God loves us, accepts us always, and forgives completely. As Christian educators we commit ourselves to live in the spirit of the Gospel and create an environment where students are inspired to grow spiritually, morally, intellectually, personally, and socially. The academy community of St. Thomas the Apostle encourages equality and a belief in the dignity of every person. All our efforts as Christian educators are based on the conviction that Christ is "the way, the truth, and the life." (John 14:6)

Vision Statement

St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Academy is committed to educating students in Roman Catholic values and traditions, developing a firm foundation in academics, and fostering respect and service. Our faculty and staff strive each day to provide all students with the skills and habits of learning, grounded in our faith, necessary to succeed in college and in life. Students are instructed with rigorous, individualized, research-based strategies that engage and develop their excitement for 21st century learning. Families are an essential part of the learning process and we support them with information and tools that in turn, support their child's academic success.

St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Academy

Each student at St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Academy is in formation to become:

An Active, Christ-Centered Individual who

Knows the teachings and follows the traditions of the Catholic Church and participates in Sunday Mass
Makes moral decisions based on the teachings of Christ
Practices an active faith life, both personal and communal
Promotes peace and social justice issues
Serves the needs of the local and global community

A Responsible Member of Society who

Respects self, other people, and ideas
Shows compassion and generosity to all
Works cooperatively with others
Practices the principles of good citizenship, both at local and global level
Expresses tolerance and understanding of diverse cultures within society

An Effective Communicator who

Develops fluency and effective usage of the spoken language
Reads and writes with comprehension and accuracy
Learns and utilizes appropriate technological skills for the 21st Century
Cultivates leadership skills

A Life-Long Learner who

Builds a solid foundation in basic subjects upon which to expand knowledge
Acquires the skills to become an independent and critical thinker
Develops organizational skills so as to complete tasks and accomplish goals
Expresses a passion and joy for learning and for experiencing life

A Well-Rounded Person who

Appreciates his/her talents and gifts and those of others
Grows in knowledge and appreciation of the Arts in one's life
Develops good health practices and a respect of the sanctity of the human body
Possesses a strong self-discipline and a positive self-image

**St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Academy
2019-2020 Academic Calendar**

September

3 **School Closed:** Faculty and Staff Planning Day
 4 Grades K - 8 students return. **Full day of school**
 5 First Full Day of School for Students
 6 First Friday Mass. **Full day of school for all grades**
 9 Back to School Night for Parents 6:30 pm-8:00 pm
 15 Catechetical Sunday Mass

October

4 First Friday Mass. Full Day
 14 **School Closed:** Columbus Day
 15-25 TERRANOVA TESTING, Grades 3-8

November

1 All Saint's Day Mass, First Friday Mass. **Full day of school for all grades**
 4 Class Photo Day
 9 TACHS EXAM
 11 **School Closed:** Veteran's Day Observed
 18 Individual and Graduate Photo Day
 27 Thanksgiving Recess **Dismissal 12:30 p.m.**
 28-29 School Closed: Thanksgiving Holiday

December

3 2nd Trimester Begins
 6 **Report Card Distribution 1:00 pm to 6 pm; K-8 -12:30 pm dismissal**
 6 First Friday Mass. **Full day of school for all grades**
 9 Feast of the Immaculate Conception. **School Closed: K-8**
 24-Jan 6 **School Closed:** Christmas Holiday

January

6 Return to School
 17 **School Closed:** K-8- Professional Development Day
 20 **School Closed:** PreK - 8 -Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
 26 9:30 am Mass/ Open House 10:30 am -1:30 pm
 26-31 Catholic Schools Week

February

7 First Friday Mass. **Full day of school for all grades**
 17-21 **School Closed:** Mid-Winter Recess
 24 Return to School
 26 Ash Wednesday. **Full day of school for all grades**

March

6 First Friday Mass. **Full day of school for all grades**
 18 3rd Trimester Begins
 20 **Report Card Distribution 1:00 pm-6 pm; K-8 -12:30 pm dismissal**
 25-26 **NYS ELA TESTING Grades 4, 6 & 7**

April

3 First Friday Mass. **Full day of school for all grades**
 8 Easter Recess Begins. **Full day of school for all grades**
 9-17 **School Closed:** Easter Holiday
 20 Return to School
 21-22 **NYS MATHEMATICS TEST Grades 4, 6, & 7**

May

1 First Friday Mass. **Full day of school for all grades**
 18 **NYS SCIENCE PERFORMANCE TEST 4 & 8**
 15 School Closed: K-8- Professional Development Day
 21 Ascension Thursday. **Full day of school for all grades**
 25 **School Closed:** Memorial Day Observance

June

1 **NYS SCIENCE WRITTEN TEST 4 & 8**
 5 First Friday Mass. **Full day of school for all grades, 8th Grade Dinner Dance**
 7 Graduation Mass
 12 Graduation- Grade 8

ACADEMY CONTACT INFORMATION/OFFICE HOURS

Address: 87-49 87th St., Woodhaven, NY 11421
Telephone: (718) 847-3904 Fax: (718) 847-3513
Website: sta-catholicacademy.org

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SaintThomastheApostleCatholicAcademy>

Email: info@sta-catholicacademy.org

Office Hours: M-F 8:00 AM to 2:30 PM (for official business)

****Appointments can be made to meet with teachers, support staff, or the principal by emailing them on their emails, which are available on the academy's website, or by calling the office.**

****In our mission to provide for the safety of our students, during dismissal time (2:30 - 3:00 PM), the main office will not be attending to any business.**

Notices Home: Every so often, letters and notices go home with the students by hard copy, through posts on the academy's Facebook/website, and by email. Please ensure that each form of communication is checked on a semi-regular basis so as not to miss any information. Some matters are time-sensitive, so please check at least every other day, if possible. A monthly calendar is one of the items that will be sent out by hard copy and will be given out every month of the year to each student. If you need an extra copy, please stop in the office to pick one up. We do have an online calendar as well, which is available to view on our school website – www.sta-catholicacademy.org and through the students' Gmail accounts. Please read the calendars carefully, especially regarding dismissal time on half days. **Students must be aware of who is picking them up.** If anyone is late for more than 15 minutes, your child/children will be sent to our after-school program and you will be charged accordingly.

School G-mails/Google Apps for Education: Faculty and parents (through their children) are given access to G-mail accounts by the school as a means of open communication between home and school. Be advised that these accounts are provided through the school, ending with @sta-catholicacademy.org, and will be monitored by the school. In order to ensure our students' safety in all school locations (physical location and digital/cyber locations), we ask for your assistance in supervising and monitoring the usage of the accounts. If possible, please try to have these emails forwarded to a preferred personal email account so that this avenue of communication is open. Workshops will be offered to parents who are interested in becoming familiar with Google Apps for Education during the course of the year. For more information, please refer to the Technology/Online Policy.

Contact between Teacher and Home: Teachers will only check their emails twice a day, before school starts and at the end of the school day, or at their discretion. Individual teachers will determine their schedules for communication with parents through emails and over the phone. For matters that are time-sensitive, contact the school. They can also be reached through OptionC.com.

STUDENT/PARENT RIGHTS/RESPONSIBILITIES

ON SENDING YOUR CHILD/CHILDREN TO SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC ACADEMY, YOU MAKE A CONTRACT WITH US TO:

1. Pay tuition at the time it is due. If you are not up-to-date with your tuition at the time of the first trimester report card distribution (the beginning of December) you may see your child's/children's teacher(s) and sign the report card, but you will not receive a copy of the report card until the balance has been paid. Therefore, if tuition payment is not up-to-date, you will not be able to see your child/children's teacher(s), nor the report card(s) for the second trimester. Also if tuition is not up-to-date and the student is transferring to another school (or graduating) the records (and diploma) will not be released. Please note, that OptionC will also be disabled for parent/student accounts if there is a balance for tuition, and privileges that are outlined in the Privileges Policy section may be taken away.
2. **Attend Family Masses throughout the year, if your child has been registered as Catholic.**
3. Attend the parent conferences held at the beginning of the school year, and the two conferences for report card distribution. If an emergency arises, it is the parents' responsibility to make an appointment with the teacher(s) at a convenient time for both parties. This should be done within a week of the report card distribution.
4. **CONTACTING THE SCHOOL IF THERE ARE ANY CHANGES IN ADDRESS, TELEPHONE NUMBERS, EMAIL, AND/OR EMERGENCY NUMBERS. ALL NEW CONTACT INFORMATION MUST BE REPORTED IMMEDIATELY TO BOTH THE OFFICE AND HOMEROOM TEACHER.** This is to be done to ensure that contact between home and school is most efficient.
5. Notification of absences (partial/full-day): Notify the school of any absences your child may have, be they part day (most commonly for doctors' appointments) or full day (when a child is sick). All parents are expected to call the school office – (718) 847-3904 – by 10AM on the day a child is absent.
 - a. Absences – All students must bring in an absent note the day they return from their absence. This note should state the reason for the absence, the date(s), and the child's name. A doctor's note is necessary for any communicable disease or if the child has been absent for three or more days. All parents are responsible for this. If an absent note is not sent to the homeroom teacher, that absence is considered illegal according to NYS law. Please bring a physical copy of the absent note to the school; we do not accept absent notes by email. For more severe/long-term illnesses, please contact the office immediately.
 - b. Partial-day excuses/appointments during school hours – For medical (or other) appointments during school hours, a note is required before the date of the appointment. Please do not take your child from school because of personal needs. Try to make doctors' appointments for after school, on Saturday, or on half days. In order for the child to leave early, an adult must come to the office, sign out the student, and then take the child for the appointment. **Only persons whose names appear on the emergency sheet may pick up the child.** If someone else is to pick up the child/children, a note from the custodial parent must be provided.
6. Fundraising: Fundraising is an essential part of our financial commitment to the school. **EVERY CHILD MUST SELL AT LEAST ONE BOX OF CHOCOLATE DURING OUR CHOCOLATE DRIVE IN THE FALL, AND ANOTHER FOR THE SPRING SALE (optional).** Please note that these are just two fundraisers, and that the school needs you to support any other smaller fundraisers that follow. **The total fundraising fee per family is \$300.**
7. Donation of Time and Talents: Each family is expected to donate 20 hours of their time to assist the school. This assistance may include, but is not limited to: organizing/assisting at a fundraiser or school event, participating on a committee for the

HAA, or offering some kind of assistance in your child's classroom or to the homeroom teacher. If interested, contact the main office or the Principal.

8. Allergies/Medical Conditions – If your child suffers from allergies, the school must be notified on the child's first day of school. The homeroom teacher should be notified of any allergies or medical conditions. Written notification should be sent to the school nurse and the administration. Such records must be updated on a yearly basis. Also, please note that if your child is to be given medicine during the day, the school nurse and administration must be notified as well.
9. OptionC.com - Each parent and student has an OptionC account created for him or her. Teachers will be updating grades on a weekly basis, so it is up to the parents (students too, especially in the middle school) to check their grades online. For more information or your login information, contact the main office. Please be aware, that OptionC accounts may be disabled by the main office for several reasons including, but not limited to non-payment of tuition, or upcoming report card distribution.
10. Arrival/Dismissal – It is crucial for all students to be in their classrooms on time, and to stay there until dismissal. For more information about those procedures, please go to Arrival/Dismissal Policy.
11. A monthly school calendar is sent home on or before the first of each month to keep parents and guardians informed of all parish and school activities. The calendar should be kept in a safe place or somewhere that it can be seen regularly. Please note any early dismissal days, days school will be closed or any special events taking place during the month. We do also have Google calendar, which is found on our school's website – www.sta-catholicacademy.org/calendar/.

ADMISSIONS POLICY

Students are admitted to St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Academy upon verification of:

1. Immunization records as required by NYC and NYS
2. Birth certificate
3. Baptismal certificate
4. A recent medical examination/physical
5. Parish affiliation form
6. Communion certificate (if applicable)
7. Individualized Education Plan (IESP, if applicable)
8. Registration fee of \$150 per child/\$300 per family – **non-refundable**

The following is required for any students transferring to St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Academy:

1. Current and past report cards
2. Standardized test scores (Terra Nova, NYS exams for ELA, Math, and Science, etc.)
3. IESP (if applicable)
4. Meeting with the principal
5. Three-month probationary period

Students currently attending St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Academy are invited to re-register each school year. The re-registration fee is published each year and forms are sent home detailing the procedure in the beginning of each calendar year. Class placement for all students is at the discretion of the administration.

TUITION POLICY

As St. Thomas the Apostle is a Catholic academy, there is a tuition that is charged of all parents who choose to enroll their children at the Academy. Tuition is collected the 1st of the month, ten times a year. We start collecting payments in July and accept them monthly from July through April.

The first tuition payment must be brought to school in July and be paid for before the beginning of the new school year. The other payments should be sent in an envelope marked with the child's name and class and should be given to the homeroom teacher immediately. A receipt will be sent home as soon as possible. It is preferred that payments be made by check or money order. There is a \$35.00 fee for checks that are returned to the school for insufficient funds (bounced check).

****Failure to comply with this policy may mean that students will not be permitted to attend the end of the year celebrations/graduations and/or senior/end-of-the-year trips. Report cards will not be given, nor will transfer requests be issued until tuition payments are up-to-date. THIS APPLIES TO ALL STUDENTS. Students may also be kept from participating in school activities/trips if tuition is not current. IF PROBLEMS ARISE DURING THE YEAR REGARDING TUITION PAYMENTS, PLEASE SEE THE PRINCIPAL IMMEDIATELY. DO NOT WAIT FOR REPORT CARD DISTRIBUTION DAY! You will not receive the report card on that day if you do.**

If tuition is not fully paid by the end of the year, the student may be prevented from registering for the following academic year. Note: There are parish rates available to church/neighborhood-affiliated parishes, as well as scholarships. These rates will be verified by the Parish Affiliation Form, which will be sent out at the beginning of the school year. For more information, please ask the school office.

ATTENDANCE/PUNCTUALITY/EMERGENCY PICK-UPS POLICIES

Regular attendance at school is necessary in order that students receive continuity in their instructional areas. Children must report to school on time!

1. A written excuse from a parent/guardian is required by state law when a student is late or absent. This must list the dates absent and reason(s) for the absence. It must accompany the student when they return to school. If the school does not receive an absence note within three (3) days, the absence is recorded as "unexcused" in the school register of attendance. Any unexcused absence will be recorded as "illegal" on OptionC. This is LEGAL document and is retained in the school indefinitely.
2. Parents/guardians of students in grades K-8 must call the school between 8:00 and 9:00 AM when a child is absent.
3. All communicable diseases, such as chicken pox, mononucleosis, etc., should be reported to the school office immediately! A child absent three or more days or having a serious illness may not be readmitted to class without a doctor's note to return to school with a clearly marked date of return. Upon return back to the school after a long absence, both the parent and student need to meet with the principal.
4. CHRONIC LATENESSES WILL NOT BE TOLERATED, and if continued, the child (in Grades 4-8) will be required to serve a detention. There will be one detention for every 3 days late. Parents of children in Grades K-3 will receive a communication from the principal if lateness persists. Full cooperation and compliance are expected. A student who is constantly late begins the day poorly and causes disruption to the class.

5. The office staff or school nurse will notify you if your child becomes ill in school. It is extremely important for each child to have a COMPLETED and SIGNED emergency form, and that the information is constantly updated.
6. Classes may not be interrupted once they are in session. If a child forgets an important item and it is brought to the school, it should be brought to the main office. The child can claim it at the office between classes. Please make sure that the item is clearly marked with your child's name and grade.
7. If your child is ill and absent from school, homework and books can be provided at the end of the second day of the absence. Please call the school office before 9:00 AM and materials will be ready for pick up at dismissal. Schoolwork and homework are to be completed in a reasonable amount of time to be determined by the child's teacher. All students are required to make up all work and tests missed during an absence. NO EXCUSES! Please confer with your child's homeroom teacher. Homework will also be posted up online (either on the class's page on the school website, or on Google Classroom).
8. "Take Your Child to Work Day" – Students who are participating in "Take Your Child to Work Day" are to obtain the approval of the principal. In order to be considered for approval to participate in this event, that child must be performing satisfactorily in school and must have a good attendance record. Students who participate are required to submit an agenda of the day's events on the letterhead of the participating company at least three days prior to the event. Such activities should ensure that the child would be taking part in an educationally enriching experience. Students not meeting these requirements will be marked illegally absent.

DOCTOR APPOINTMENTS DURING SCHOOL HOURS

We can honor a request to release a student from school only when it is an emergency. The parent/ guardian must come to the school to meet the student and sign him/her out of school. In addition, a note should be sent in the morning to the principal/main office stating the reason for the child's release from school. In general, all doctor's appointments should be scheduled after school hours. Doctor's appointments made during school hours are unexcused absences.

SCHOOL CLOSING/EMERGENCY INFORMATION

St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Academy follows the same decisions as the rest of the schools in the Diocese of Brooklyn and Queens, in case of inclement weather and school closings. If the New York City Public Schools are closed, we will follow suit. **Call the school office at (718) 847-3904 and a recording will be available with directives. Information will also be available through our School Reach communication system, posted on our website (stacatholicacademy.org), on our Facebook site (facebook.com/SaintThomastheApostleCatholicAcademy), by G-mail, and on your child's homeroom's Google Classroom.** If there is no announcement, parents/guardians should assume that the academy is open. If conditions are hazardous, parents' decisions in regards to their children's safety will be respected. Do not call the Rectory for information on school closings.

ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL POLICY

- Early drop-off – 7:30 AM
 - Available to all students. Students are to be brought to the 87th Street building *no earlier* than 7:30 AM. Details are available in the school office. Behavior during the early drop-off program must be the same as classroom behavior.
- 87th St Building – Grades 4-8

- Doors open at 7:50 AM. Students will wait in the lobby of the 87th St. building. There will not be supervision before 7:50 AM. Students are late if they are not in their homerooms by 8:00 AM. After 8:00 AM, students who are late must report to the main office to receive a late pass.
- 87th St. Building – Pre-K For All
 - PKA students will line up in the schoolyard at 8:00 AM with their teachers. They will follow the teachers in at 8:10 AM. If the child has to walk in through the front doors after the classes have gone inside, the child will be marked late.
- Dismissal Reminders
 - No child will be dismissed from school early without adult supervision and without written notification that is on file in the office.
 - Please be on time when picking up your children.
 - Cooperation by all will make this procedure successful.
 - For the safety of all, please do not pull up on the curb outside the entrances or double-park on the blocks. Students exiting and entering cars must cross at the corners. 87th Street is a fire emergency block.
 - Once dismissed, no student is permitted back into the school buildings for forgotten items such as books, assignments, or personal property.
 - Dismissal is as follows:
 - Pre-K - 2:30 PM
 - K-3 - 2:50 PM
 - 4-8 - 3:00 PM
 - Note: Any child that is not picked up by 2:47 will be brought to the after-school program (87th St. Basement) and charged the daily rate, and the registration fee (upon the first occurrence).

AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM

The Saint Thomas After-School Program is an organized program that supplies excellent supervision by teachers and aides. The program offers supervised homework time, organized playtime, and well-planned arts and craft activities. It is available every school day from 2:45 - 6:00, and 11:30 - 6:00 on half days. Prices and applications are available upon request from the office.

HOME ACADEMY ASSOCIATION

The Home Academy Association (HAA) is comprised of the parents or legal guardians of the students at Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic Academy in partnership with the administration, faculty and staff. The mission of the Home Academy Association is to support and enrich the educational endeavors of the academy. In a faith-based environment dedicated to the education of our students, the HAA must mirror the tradition, standards, and teachings of the Catholic faith. Through fundraising, teacher recognition, support, and school improvements, the organization works to promote a connection from home to academy. It is the objective and duty of the HAA to keep in mind the welfare of the students with regard to all issues.

- All parents and guardians of students of Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic Academy are members of the HAA and are encouraged to actively participate in the activities of the HAA.
- The HAA will be overseen by the Principal. The Principal will designate a teacher from the elementary grades and the middle school grades as the Education Liaisons to the

HAA at the start of each school year. The Principal or the Education Liaisons must be present at all meetings.

- The HAA structure will include the following officers: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Education Liaisons, and Homeroom Parents.
- Homeroom parents will be chosen based off of the sign-in sheets from the Back-To-School Night at the beginning of the school year to represent their child's homeroom class during HAA meetings. It is the Homeroom Parents responsibility to attend all HAA meetings to keep themselves and other parents in that homeroom aware of all HAA news.
- Committees within the HAA must work under the mission statement of the HAA, and must adhere to all policies within the Parent-Student Handbook.
- Any parents caught in conflict with the Parent-Student Handbook and the policies held within, will be asked to step down their HAA involvement.

SPLIT CUSTODY/GUARDIANSHIPS

In situations where orders of protection or special custodial agreements are in effect, parents are advised to bring these documents to the attention of the classroom teacher and/or administration. Copies of such agreements should be on file in the school office. It is the parent or guardian's responsibility to update the paperwork as necessitated by such agreements. Such agreements are legal agreements between the parties involved and subject to interpretation by civil law. The school cannot intervene or interfere in such matters.

UNIFORM POLICY/DRESS CODE FOR DRESS UP/DOWN DAYS

It is important for students to take pride in their appearance. Uniforms should be cleaned and maintained regularly. Students are to be in complete uniform at all times while in school. Only clothing from the uniform company, Flynn and O'Hara, is acceptable. Uniform sweatshirts may only be worn in school on gym days.

If for any reason the child cannot be in uniform on a particular day, they are to report to the principal first with a written excuse from a parent/guardian, then proceed to class.

Girls Uniform

Grades K-5 Plaid split front jumper or navy twill pleated slacks with a white collared blouse, red V-neck cardigan sweater with school logo.

Grades 6-8 Plaid skirt or navy twill slacks with short/long sleeve golf shirt with school logo, navy V-neck pullover sweater with school logo. Skirts must be no shorter than 2 inches above the knee and are not to be rolled up at the waist.

Grades K-8 **Shoes:** black oxfords or loafers heels no higher than ½". No "sport shoes" are acceptable.

Socks: navy or white knee socks, anklets or tights.

Boys Uniform

Grades K-5 Navy pleated pants with white knit short/long sleeve golf shirt with logo. Red V-neck cardigan sweater with school logo.

Grades 6-8 Navy pleated pants with white knit short/long sleeve golf shirt with logo. Navy V-neck pullover sweater with school logo.

Grades K-8 **Shoes:** black oxfords or loafers heels no higher than ½". No "sport shoes" are acceptable

Socks: navy or white crew socks.

All Students: *Optional K-8* White long sleeve turtlenecks with school logo may be worn.

Gym: Uniform Co. attire only. Gold tee shirt, sweat pants and shirt, sneakers (no wheels) white socks.

Optional: Company uniform gym shorts may be worn Sept.-Oct.15th and May through June.

Hair: Hair is to be neat and clean, off the face and not in the eyes. No "Mohawk" styles, "skin fades", shaved sides, designs or tails. **No colored or highlighted hair.** Narrow headbands only, up to 1 ½".

Jewelry: Only the following may be worn:

- Earrings - **girls only** - one pair, small post type. No other style permitted.
- A small religious medal, a watch on the wrist, a ring. No other necklaces or bracelets may be worn, except medical emergency identification. No jewelry may be worn during gym class.

No makeup or artificial nails are permitted. Girls may wear clear nail polish only.

St Thomas's dress code prohibits attire or accessories, which are libelous, which portray disruptive and/or obscene writing or pictures, or depict logos or emblems that encourage and/or condone the use of violence, prejudice, illegal drugs, tobacco products or alcoholic beverages. Students may not wear clothing that is distracting in nature and may interfere with the learning process. Clothing that bares midriffs, or display undergarments, blouses or shirts resembling undergarments; short shorts or miniskirts can cause distractions from the instructional process. They may also promote an unhealthy concern with physical appearance and are therefore not allowed in school. The responsibility of the students' dress and general appearance rests with the individual students and their parents.

Out of uniform forms will be distributed to any student not following the dress code. Parents must sign and return the form. After 3 infractions, disciplinary actions will be taken.

DRESS CODE FOR SPECIAL DAYS:

On occasion, the administration may choose to allow a "Dress Down" or "Dress Up Day", which usually carry a \$2 fee. On "Dress Down Days" students are permitted to wear t-shirts, jeans, and sneakers. "Dress Up Days" are days on which students are encouraged to dress up to resemble more of a business casual type dress. However, stylish, play clothes or dress clothes must remain modest and appropriate for our setting and be a reflection of the integrity of the person. Low neckline shirts, tank tops or blouses, short skirts, tight fitting slacks, or slacks worn below the waistline are **NOT** permitted. If shorts are worn on "Dress Down Days" they must be to the knee. **NO SHORT SHORTS, BEACH FOOTWEAR OR BACKLESS SHOES, OR "HEELIES" ARE PERMITTED AT ANY TIME ON SCHOOL PROPERTY.**

SCHOOL PROPERTY

Students are responsible for taking care of all books and materials supplied to them by the school and New York State. This includes all materials in the classroom, computers, furniture, and

anything else within the academy's walls. All books must be covered to protect them throughout the year, with either a book sock or some kind of other book cover. DO NOT USE LAMINATE TO COVER THE TEXT BOOKS! This damages the books' covers. Students who lose or damage a book while it is in their possession will be expected to pay for the lost or damaged book. Costs will be determined by the severity of the damage and the age of the book.

Care of school property is a responsibility shared by all. Graffiti, carving, putting gum on furniture, defacing property, or littering are not tolerated. Students involved in such behavior will be sent to the principal who will notify parents/guardians. Repair, cleaning, or restitution will be required, and disciplinary steps will be enforced, if necessary.

TEXTBOOKS

Textbooks are the property of The New York Board of Education, which are loaned to each student at the request of the parents. Students are therefore responsible for them. The student must pay for any damage or loss. To help with the care of the textbooks, we ask that they be *covered at all times and treated with care*. Note: If textbooks are not covered, the same disciplinary action that is taken with chewing gum and school uniforms will be enforced after the first warning.

STUDENT PERFORMANCE & EVALUATION

- *Progress Reports* are means of communicating to parents/guardians that their child is not progressing satisfactorily, either academically or behaviorally. We will inform parent/guardians during the 6th week of each 12-week trimester if a student is in danger of failure or is not working to his/her full potential. There will be sufficient time for improvement. Grades can also be checked throughout the year on OptionC.com.
- *Report Cards* are issued three times a year. In December and March, parents/guardians of all students must come to the school to receive them (check calendar for dates & times), and may briefly confer with the teacher(s). Once the report card is reviewed, and you, the teacher, or principal feels it necessary for further discussion, an appointment will be scheduled. In June, report cards are given to the students.
- *The Personal Progress* section of the report card is determined through consultation with all the teachers in Grades 5-8 and the principal. Satisfactory grades (S) or better, (G, E) must be earned in all special subject areas (art, music, computer, gym, health, library) and in the area of growth and development, this includes conduct and homework.

Poor or failing grades please refer to Promotion/Retention/Summer School. Please refer to that section for more detailed information.

STUDENT PROBATION (ACADEMIC/BEHAVIORAL): Students who exhibit repeated academic failure and/or excessive behavior problems may be placed on academic probation. Consequences may include academic contracts, summer school, outside counseling or a full academic evaluation. Re-registration will not be accepted for students on academic probation until faculty and administration have undertaken a review of the student's progress. All failing grades are reviewed and signed by the principal. Parents must also sign the test and return to their child's teacher the very next day.

GRADING POLICY/HONOR ROLLS/STUDENT OF THE MONTH AWARDS

St. Thomas's grading policy is in compliance with the Diocese of Brooklyn and Queens's mandates, as well as NYS grading policies. From 1st grade to 8th grade, a child's average is based on several things including projects, tests/quizzes, homework, and classwork, and is

represented by either a letter grade (grades 1-4) or a numerical grade (grades 5-8). Both grading scales are explained on the next page. For Kindergarten, the grade is based on teacher observation and individual test grades, and is represented on a 1-4 scale (1-not developed, 2-beginning, 3-developing, and 4-secure). Nursery is graded in a manner similar to Kindergarten.

Grading Breakdown (for Grades 1-8)

<i>Assignment Type</i>	<i>Percentage of Grade</i>
Homework	10%
Classwork	10%
Projects (cooperative or individual)	30%
Tests	30%
Quizzes	20%

Grade 1-8 Grading Scales

Numerical Scale: Students from grades 5-8 will be grade on a number scale through 100. Any grade below a 70 is considered a failing grade.

Alpha-Grade Scale: Students from 1st through 4th grades will be graded on an alpha-grade scale.

Letter Grade	Numerical Equivalent
A+	97-100
A	93-96
B+	89-92
B	85-88
C+	81-84
C	77-80
D+	74-76
D	70-73
F	Below 70

****If your child fails one subject for the year, they do have to attend summer school for that subject. Students/parents will be notified if they are in danger of failing for the year by the second report card. ****

****Retention may occur if your child fails two subjects for the year. Retention notices will go out with the second report card. ****

For more information on this issue, check the Promotion/Retention/Summer School Policies section on page 12.

Honor Roll and Other Awards

Scholarship is acknowledged and encouraged in various ways. Students participate in many academic contests on a school level and advance to the Diocesan level when possible. Students also enter various poster and essay competitions. Certificates are awarded for academic achievements as well as for good citizenship.

The criteria for Honor Rolls, which will be given out to students in Grades 1-8, is as follows:

Principal's List	97% - 100% in all subjects (A+)
First Honors	93% - 100% in all subjects (A)
Second Honors	89% - 100% in all subjects (B+)
Honorable Mention –	Average of an 85% or higher (B average)

Perfect Attendance will be awarded each trimester. The award is given to students who have NOT been out for a full day, half day, or early dismissal and have NEVER been late. Student of the Month awards are presented to the children who demonstrate good citizenship, and are given out on a monthly basis. Notices of student achievements and pictures will be posted either on the academy's website or Facebook.

TESTING PROGRAM

St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Academy participates in the Testing Programs deemed necessary by the Diocese of Brooklyn and New York State Department of Education. All students are required to participate.

- **Terra Nova Diagnostics** are administered in October to students in grades 3 to 8. The results are used to formulate lesson plans and plans for remediation.
- **New York State Tests** are mandated by NYS and are given in ELA, Math, and Science to Grades 4, 6, and 8. Dates are as follows:

	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Testing Class</u>	<u>Date</u>
	ELA	Grades 4, 6, and 8	End of March
	Math	Grades 4, 6, and 8	Beginning of
May	Science	Grades 4 and 8	
	● Performance		End of May
	● Written		June

PROMOTION/RETENTION/SUMMER SCHOOL POLICIES

St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Academy follows the Diocese of Brooklyn's promotion and retention policies. All promotions should be based on a total evaluation of a pupil's growth in all areas of development. Parents/guardians will be continuously involved and notified in writing of potential academic or behavioral problems. Students failing to achieve required program objectives in the basic areas of reading, writing, and math should be held over. The purpose of retention is to ensure students opportunities for success. **The final decision for a pupil's promotion or retention rests with the principal.**

Attendance at summer school is mandatory if a child:

1. Fails any of the major subjects for the year. Children attending summer school are not given grade placements until the successful completion of their courses.
2. Scores below competency standards on the NYS Assessments in ELA, Math, or Science.

A student who fails two or more subjects may be retained. If a student is in danger of being retained, the following procedures will be followed:

1. The parents/guardians will be notified by the end of the second trimester of the possibility of retention.
2. Meetings will be set up between the teacher and the child's parents or guardians. At these meetings, methods of remediation will be discussed and agreed upon. These methods will involve both the school and home environment, so it is mandatory that there is parental cooperation and input.
3. Reevaluation of the student and his/her progress will take place by the end of May.
4. The principal will make the final decision about a student's retention after summer

remediation has taken place.

8th Graders Note: Students who through early identification and assessment indicate difficulty in completing required program objectives are to be considered potential holdovers. These students should be provided with remedial instruction to aid in the mastery of required basic skills for that grade level by the end of the year. By the end of May, the academic status of the student should be re-evaluated and recommendations should be communicated in writing to the parents. If the recommendation of summer school attendance is decided upon, the student's diploma will be awarded after successful completion of the required course(s). If the student does not successfully complete the required course(s) the high school that accepted the student will be notified and the ultimate decision will be theirs. Students failing to achieve required program objectives in the basic areas of ELA (English/Language Arts - reading, writing) and Math should be held over. In addition to not being rewarded the diploma, the high school to which they were accepted would be notified that the student had not satisfactorily completed the requirements of grade eight. The students who are potential holdovers may participate in the public graduation ceremony but their diplomas will not be in the diploma case, therefore ensuring the privacy of the student's status.

CURRICULUM

St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Academy has a serious responsibility of assisting children in developing the basic skills and understanding that will insure a lifetime of learning. Central to every instructional experience is our religious education program. This program is a formal one and its attitudinal influence is extended to every part of our school day and hopefully into all the students' everyday lives.

In the basic subject areas of Math, Science, Social Studies, ELA, and Religion, we follow the Common Core State Standards, New York State standards, and the Diocese of Brooklyn and Queens's curriculum and standards. We strive to move towards each student's proficiency in reading, writing, computation, and understanding of our community, country, and world. We do this in light of individual student's needs and interests, aware of the differences in their personal growth pattern and learning styles.

Special subjects that will be offered include, but are not limited to Art (Visual Art for grades K-8, and Theater Arts for grades 4, 6, and 8), Computers, Music, Italian, and Gym. The students' efforts for these special subjects will be reflected on the report card for every trimester.

CLASS ASSIGNMENTS, TESTS, AND MAKE-UP WORK

Assignments serve as an educational instructional experience for the student. They are part of the student's grades and directly or indirectly affect the student's average in a particular subject. Assignments are given at the teacher's discretion and should be supervised by a parent or guardian. Study and reading assignments should be considered a daily task. Test papers should be examined, signed, and returned to the school the next day, along with corrections if deemed by teacher.

If a student is out for any length of time, he/she is responsible to get the daily work from the school website, Google Classroom, or a classmate and complete it within a reasonable time after returning to class. In cases of a serious illness, a parent/teacher conference should be scheduled to discuss class work and assignments. Teachers are not required to give work assignments ahead of time. Make-up tests and scheduled tests are given at the teacher's discretion.

Teachers publish their classroom policies, procedures, methods of assessment, and communicate them to parents at the first parent-teacher meeting in September. Our primary goal at St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Academy is to provide a learning experience that will develop the values, attitudes, knowledge, and skills necessary for our student to grow into mature Christian adults.

HOMEWORK

Homework is an integral and necessary part of the learning process. Homework reinforces and supplements the facts and concepts taught during the school day. It also gives the students an opportunity to practice and use skills they must master.

Homework is given daily, but may be of different types. All teachers expect students to study, review, and read for pleasure on the days when written homework is not given. All written homework is to be reviewed, signed by a parent/guardian, and returned to school the next day.

Homework Policy:

Grades K-2: Homework notebook and/or assignment must be signed by parent/guardian.

Grades 3-8: Homework will be averaged into that subject's grade each trimester.

Remember, homework is whatever the directive is from the teacher.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Each staff member at St. Thomas the Apostle accepts responsibility for the maintenance of discipline and for the promotion of a program for the development of wholesome and Christ-like human relations. A student's behavior should conform to acceptable standards of conduct as established by the principal (in regards to the whole school community) and by teachers in their classrooms.

One of the most important lessons education should teach is discipline. While it does not appear as a subject, it underlies the whole educational structure of a school. It is the training that develops self-control and character. Discipline is the key to good conduct and proper consideration of other people. Without discipline, it is impossible for teaching or learning to take place.

When a student does not follow the school regulations, they must face the consequences of their behavior. The consequences differ depending on the severity of the infraction and on the number of occurrences of the infraction. A student that behaves in a manner that contradicts school policies may face the following consequences:

1. **Detention** – Detentions are assigned when deemed necessary by faculty or staff. When detention is assigned the parent/guardian will receive a detention notice from school personnel or a phone call detailing the time and place detention is to be served.
2. **In-school suspension** - Incidents that deem it necessary to isolate the student from the class. Work will be provided and must be completed.
3. **Out-of-school suspension** - For serious incidents that involve disrespect or violent behavior, suspension will be immediate. **The child must be picked up by a parent/guardian as soon as the suspension starts.** A note explaining the reason and course of action to be followed will be relayed to the parent/guardian upon pick-up of the student. During a period of suspension, a student is required to complete all projects, class work, homework, and notes missed during the period the student was suspended. Students may not return to class until all work is completed. **Suspensions may range from 1, 3, 5, or 10 days, depending on the severity of the misbehavior in question.**

4. Expulsion - Weapons, or anything that can be used, as a weapon of any kind, as well as intentional physical violence against another human being, or use of alcohol or drugs will not be tolerated. Any infraction against this rule may result in immediate expulsion at the discretion of the principal and/or pastor.

Students are prohibited from using or bringing narcotics, tobacco or alcoholic products to school.

Violations of any of the disciplinary codes contained in this handbook; on, but not limited to the vicinity of the school, may result in disciplinary action.

Note:

- If a child's behavior does not improve after repeated warnings and disciplinary actions, the student may need to find an alternate learning environment.
- Students who continually miss homework may receive lunch detention or may be kept after school at the teacher's discretion. Students may also need to attend extra help classes before, during, or after school, as a consequence of failing grades.
- Any action performed while wearing a school uniform, whether on premises or not, at anytime of the day, will be dealt with as an in-school action. When wearing the school uniform students represent the academy, therefore they should act accordingly.

DRUG, ALCOHOL, WEAPON POLICY

St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Academy shares the concern of many of the availability of drugs and alcohol in our community. The following policy will be adhered to during the school day, at school-related activities, and at any time on school grounds.

1. Any St. Thomas student who feels that drugs or alcohol have become a personal problem is encouraged to approach in confidence any member of the faculty, administration or parish priest. After careful consideration and personal discussion between the two parties, a plan of action will be chosen.
2. Where a high degree of suspicion exists that a student is a drug user, the faculty member will refer him/her to the principal. After discussion, a plan of action will be taken.
3. Any student discovered to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol will be subject to the following:
 - a. The principal will be notified.
 - b. The student's parents/guardians will be immediately notified.
 - c. The student will not be allowed to attend classes.
 - d. Students may be referred to an outside agency and the principal on a monthly basis must receive professional and written evidence that the student is receiving appropriate help for the problem. If this evidence of treatment is not forthcoming, the student may be subject to suspension or expulsion.
 - e. Should the student be found under the influence of drugs or alcohol again, even while obtaining professional assistance, he/she would be subject to possible expulsion.
4. **WEAPONS ARE PROHIBITED!** If found in student's possession the student may be subject to removal from St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Academy.
5. Students found to be in possession, who are selling, or exchanging drugs in school, on school property, or at school-related activities will be subject to penalties commensurate with the gravity of their actions. The following procedures will be used in cases of possession, sale or exchange of drugs:
 - a. The student will be referred immediately to the principal.
 - b. The student will be suspended.

- c. The principal, parents/guardians and pastor will evaluate the case depending upon all the factors involved and will choose from the following alternatives:
 - Referral to an appropriate outside agency for assistance with the provision that evidence be shown that professional assistance is being rendered and the student's illegal behavior ceases immediately. Should the student repeat this possession, sale or exchange even while obtaining professional attention, it would be grounds for immediate expulsion.
 - Immediate expulsion

PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES

While St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Academy understands that reason behind sending children to school with cell phones or other personal electronic devices, it is strongly discouraged. **Please be aware, that the academy is NOT RESPONSIBLE for any electronics that are brought in from home.** Any devices that are brought onto school property are done so against our recommendation.

In the case that your child does bring in such a device to school, it must be **turned off** upon entering the building. Your child's homeroom teacher will be collecting these devices on a daily basis to prevent improper usage during the day. Any student found using their electronics during school hours and/or on school property without permission, will be asked to leave them in the office until dismissal. With repeated infractions, the child will have to serve a consequence including but not limited to confiscation of said device, detention, suspension, or expulsion, depending on the severity and occurrence of the offense, as outlined in our Discipline Policy on page 14.

TECHNOLOGY POLICY

This year, all of the students from K-8th grade will be getting school Gmail accounts, with access to all of the Google Apps for Education. The domain will be @sta-catholicacademy.org, and each account will be managed by the academy. St. Thomas the Apostle students will be taught how to use all of the apps either by their general subject teachers, or by the Computer teacher.

Any kind of offensive messages/language, harassment, insults, or threats sent via computer or phone will not be tolerated on school grounds or during school hours. In addition, any damage to our computers/systems may result in immediate suspension. Students, parents, and teachers that have websites or post information to a website such as but not limited to social media (Facebook, Twitter, tumblr, etc.) or any similar sites that portray the school, parish, or any member of the parish/academy community in a negative light, or threaten any individual, are subject to disciplinary action, which may lead to dismissal. Immediate action will take place if any of these actions are done during school hours and on school grounds. **Parents/legal guardians are responsible for monitoring the content of their children's posts online, after school hours.**

G-MAIL/GOOGLE APPS FOR EDUCATION POLICY: St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Academy has partnered with Google Apps for Education (GAPE) this year and has several resources to its disposal including G-mail accounts for all students from Kindergarten through 8th grades. These accounts were created to allow for student academic growth, to drive cooperation and collaboration among students, and to improve communication between home and school. Through these accounts, both parents and students have access to all of the Google Apps including: Google Classroom, Google Docs, Google Slides, and Google Sheets. **Any misuse, depending on the severity of misuse, will result in consequences including, but not limited to: suspension of the account, detention, suspension of the child (in-school or at-**

home), and even possible dismissal from the school. Workshops will be available through the academy for parents who are interested in learning about all of the Google Apps. Contact the school for more details if interested.

FIRE DRILLS, LOCK DOWNS, & OTHER EMERGENCY REGULATIONS

Fire drill procedures are posted in each classroom and are reviewed by the teacher with each class. St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Academy follows the NYC Fire Department and Diocesan guidelines of practicing 12 times during the course of a school year. To insure the greatest possible safety the following rules must be followed:

1. Students should proceed quickly in a single line, without running, to their designated meeting point.
2. Students should be alert for changes in normal procedures as directed by faculty members.
3. ***Silence*** must be observed for the duration of the drill.

If these rules are not complied with, then a **consequence may result, e.g. detention.** Emergency regulations are documented in the school's Crisis Management Plan. These plans are located in each teacher's desk for easy access. This document is reviewed and revised yearly and supplies are replenished. To insure the greatest possible safety:

1. Lock-down procedures will be practiced at least 2 times a school year.
2. Evacuation of any kind will follow the procedures of a fire drill.
3. Off-site evacuations may also be practiced during the course of the school year.

In the event we need to evacuate the building for an extended period of time, we would go to Mulz Hall (gym). If for any reason we need to leave the school block, we would relocate to St. Elizabeth. (94-01 85th Street, Ozone Park). A sign will be posted on the school door to inform you of our relocation.

GUIDANCE

St. Thomas has two part-time guidance counselors, on staff on Mondays, Thursday and Friday. Please feel free to contact them if you or your child/ren feels the need (718) 847-3904.

LUNCHTIME/RECESS PROCEDURES

Children are expected to behave properly. They are to follow all lunchroom and schoolyard regulations. They are responsible for cleaning up the area where they have eaten their lunch. Students are required to respect the authority of the teachers and teacher assistants. When the hand bell is rung, all talking is to stop, and students are to listen to the teacher for further instructions.

A student whose behavior is unsatisfactory may be subject to disciplinary action. The administration reserves the right to remove any student from the cafeteria and lunchtime activities who is not cooperating.

1. Upon entering the lunchroom, students should go to their assigned tables, and remain seated.
2. Students are not permitted to table hop, brush or comb their hair, throw food, or engage in other disruptive behavior.
3. Students' eating area is to be left in a neat and clean manner.
4. The teacher in charge will inspect each table. There should be no food, containers, or papers remaining on the tables or floors.
5. During inclement weather, schoolyard activities will not be possible. Books, puzzle-books, or work assigned by the teacher should be sent down with the students, so they will have a

quiet activity to occupy their time.

THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO RUNNING, ROUGH PLAYING, BULLYING OR BALL PLAYING PERMITTED IN THE SCHOOLYARD AT ANY TIME.

MEDICAL OFFICE AND POLICIES

The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene provides us with a full time school nurse. The nurse's office is located on the 2nd floor of the 88th Street Building. The nurse can be contacted at (718) 850-5486, during regular school hours.

In New York City, the Department of Health has established clearly defined protocols and procedures that must be followed by their nurses. These protocols and procedures have been designed to protect the students, the school population, and the local school. The protocol and procedures are available upon request at the school or nurse's office. Any medical conditions or allergies need to be reported to the nurse at the beginning of the school year.

ALLERGIES

Any medical conditions or allergies need to be reported to the nurse at the beginning of the school year. Parents should also communicate such with the child's teacher. We make every effort to keep children safe from allergic items but we need parents to follow up with proper medical procedures.

School personnel cannot administer medication, prescription or over the counter medication to students! Please consult with the school nurse about self-administration and use of asthma inhalers.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Academy does not discriminate by sex, race, color or national origin. St. Thomas the Apostle admits students of any race, color, national or ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. St. Thomas does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national, or ethnic origin in the administration of educational policies, admission policies, loan programs, and athletic or other school administered programs.

MISCELLANEOUS

- Any communication sent home through the school or student body must be approved and initialed by the administration.
- All visitors must sign in at the school office.

PHOTOS

- Twice a year students are invited to take individual portraits. Notification will be sent home regarding procedures to be followed. There is also a day when class pictures are taken. Students are to be in full uniform on that day.
- Photo Release Forms are distributed to parents in September. Parents can give consent or non-consent to have their child photographed for photos sent to press publications and/or websites.

PARENT-TEACHER COMMUNICATION

Parents are made aware of their child's progress in the following ways: through informal meetings; written notices; telephone calls; a mid-trimester written progress report; verbally at a trimester parent/teacher conference, through OptionC.com, and by email. Parents are made aware, in writing, of the possibility of retention (and in Grade 8 no diploma), or summer school (and in Grade 8 - hold over of diploma), on the second trimester report card, which is discussed at the parent/teacher conference. Teachers are required to keep a dated journal of all communications that occur with parents.

The school program provides an excellent systematic review of goals, methods, and means of evaluation by keeping track of the children's progress by:

- Holding an orientation in September and a mid-year meeting in January. Attendance at these meetings is mandatory. If a parent or guardian cannot attend the meeting they should arrange to meet with the teacher at a mutually agreed upon time.
- Providing students in grades 1-8 with a mid-trimester Warning Notice.
- Trimester Progress Report cards.
- Letters to parents when warning notices, tests, and homework papers are not returned or signed.
- Parent/teacher conferences at the request of the teacher or parent. (Parents can call or write for an appointment with the principal or any teacher.)
- Telephone communications or school G-mail

As problems arise they should first be brought to the attention of the classroom teacher. No situation can be resolved unless it is brought directly to the person(s) involved. If a matter is not discussed with a teacher first, upon questioning, the administration will refer it back to the teacher.

Written reports of all parent/teacher meetings are kept on file. Teachers keep a log of all communications and written notices.

PHONE CALLS

Students may not call home unless there is an emergency and must receive permission from the office personnel to do so. Students may not call home for lunch or any forgotten materials unless required to so by the principal or a teacher.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

All students must participate in the physical education program unless medical reasons make this impossible. This is a state and federal mandate. A doctor's note is necessary in order to excuse the student from physical education classes.

Students walk to the gym on 88th Street and Jamaica Avenue with their teachers are brought back by the teacher.

All students must participate in the physical education program unless medical reasons make this impossible. This is a state and federal mandate. A doctor's note is necessary in order to excuse the student from physical education classes.

Students must be in gym uniforms with sneakers on their assigned gym days. Safety is most important in gym class. Students not complying with rules and teacher directions may be prohibited from activities for that class or beyond.

RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES AND FAITH FORMATION

During the year, prayer services and liturgies for the entire school will take place in St. Thomas the Apostle Church. Each month a different grade level(s) will plan and host a celebration. Parents and members of the parish community are invited. The dates will appear on a monthly calendar.

One of the main purposes of our existence as a Catholic school is the religious formation of our students.

Because parents are the primary educators of their children, we need your cooperation in guiding their religious growth. Children are primarily influenced by example. Faith needs not be taught. It is more beneficial when it is shared and experienced. Listed below are ways for you to share your faith and provide for your child's religious formation:

SERVICE: Show children how good it feels to serve others. Make it easy for them to help and use their skills. Support school activities by actively joining and volunteering for committees and special events.

CELEBRATIONS: Family events, holidays, and special church observances are chances to focus on the spiritual nature of life. They are a good time to share family and cultural traditions.

BIBLE: Read age-appropriate Bible stories to your child. There are many children's and young people's editions available.

CHURCH: Encourage participation and join with your child in church activities. It's a great way to socialize, while enriching and deepening their faith.

STUDENT INSURANCE

To provide adequate coverage in case of an accident each student is insured under a Student Accident Plan. This insurance protects students traveling to and from school, at school, on school sponsored trips and activities and while attending or participating in any school sponsored extra-curricular activity. The school covers the cost of this insurance.

TRANSPORTATION

If your child travels to school on public transportation you may request a Metro Card from the school office. Metro Cards are distributed to eligible students as per the guidelines issued by the Bureau of Transportation. Lost cards are to be reported immediately. There will be a one-month replacement period. Students are strongly advised to take proper care of the Metro Card. Metro Cards are provided based on the distance the student has to travel between school and home. Metro Cards cannot be exchanged for different cards, or shared among students!

PRIVILEGES POLICY

Being that St. Thomas the Apostle is a Catholic academy everyone is expected to exhibit Christ-like behaviors. In order to encourage positive student behavior and a positive school environment, the staff of St. Thomas the Apostle has decided to allow students the benefit of some privileges. Privileges may include but are not limited to: participation at recess, jobs in the classroom, attendance on field trips, participation in extra-curricular activities, rewards in the

classroom, pizza parties sponsored by the class, a free dress-down/dress-up day, or homework passes. **Students are not entitled to privileges!** They may be taken away at any point, based on teacher, principal, or staff discretion, if a child misbehaves. Some privileges include:

- **Field Trips** - Because the academy assumes an important responsibility on planning these trips any student wishing to join a school group must bring the appropriate school form, signed by a parent/guardian, requesting permission to participate. Money for field trips must be submitted to the homeroom teacher in a timely according to the teacher's directives. It is requested that all trip money be paid by check or money order payable to St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Academy in an envelope marked with the child's name and class. If deemed necessary, a teacher may deny a student the privilege of going on a trip. If the permission slip is lost, please send for another one. Please be aware that all deadlines for permission slips and trip payments must be enforced. All school regulations apply on these trips. Students will not be allowed to participate on school/class trips unless tuition is up-to-date. Please be aware that a field trip is a privilege, not a right.
- **Parents chaperones**: The principal has the final approval on who can chaperone at trip. Any chaperone must supply proof of VIRTUS training. See the main office for details.
- **Birthday Parties**: This will be allowed only after checking with the teacher and at least one week in advance. **Store purchased cupcakes and juice boxes are the only acceptable treats. NO PEANUT INGREDIENTS ARE ALLOWED.** Please check with the teacher if any of the children in the class have food allergies, if the party was approved. **NO BALLOONS ARE ALLOWED IN ANY GRADES FOR ANY REASON.** Students in all grades have the option of dressing up or dressing down (not wearing uniform) on birthdays. For dress up and dress down procedures, please refer to the "Dress Down/Dress Up" section of the Uniform Policy.
- **Candy/Gum**: Candy and other treats are only allowed on special treat days at the discretion of the teacher. **CHEWING GUM IS NEVER ALLOWED ANYWHERE ON OR NEAR SCHOOL PROPERTY.**
- **Senior Activities**: 8th grade is an important year but we work to make it a memorable year for the students as well. 8th grade events such as Ring Day, Senior Trip, and Dinner Dance are announced at the start of the school year and require Parent permission as well as the approval of the 8th grade teacher who monitors the students' behaviors and agrees that the student is in good standing academically. Ms. Ciccone is the Senior Advisor.

ZERO TOLERANCE/ANTI-BULLYING POLICY (Diocese of Brooklyn and Queens Policy)

430.5 Anti-Bullying/Harassment Policy

Purpose:

The school communities within the Brooklyn Diocese believe in the sanctity of human life and the inherent dignity of the human person. We believe that all students, school employees and volunteers have a right to a safe and healthy school environment. All members of the school community, in turn, have an obligation to promote mutual respect, tolerance and acceptance. Research shows that students who learn in a safe and supportive environment succeed academically. Students have a right to learn in an environment free of any harassment that substantially interferes with their education.

Definition: (Cont'd on next page)

Bullying, bias-based harassment/intimidation are intentional, repeated, hurtful acts (physical, verbal, written) committed by one or more persons towards another person or persons. It usually involves an actual or perceived imbalance of power, which can be physical, emotional or verbal. If not addressed, bullying can lead to the creation of a hostile, offensive or intimidating school environment and can affect a student's educational opportunities. The behaviors include but are not limited to:

- **Physical:** physical violence, stalking, threats, aggressive or menacing gestures, exclusion from peer groups which is intended to humiliate or isolate the target (relational bullying).
- **Verbal:** taunts, teasing, derogatory language, derogatory jokes, name-calling/slurs, or spreading rumors
- **Written:** written or graphic material including graffiti containing comments or stereotypes that are electronically written and transmitted via internet, social messaging sites, blogs, instant messaging, text messages, cell phone, webcams. This would also include forwarding such messages if received. This generally constitutes cyber-bullying.

Reporting Procedures:

- the targeted student, parent/guardian of a student or other students in the school (bystanders), or any school staff who believe that bullying has occurred should report the incident to the principal.
- the principal needs to conduct an investigation by interviewing all parties separately.
- the parents of all involved students should be notified.
- if it is determined that bullying has occurred the child who bullied is to be subject to consequences per the school's disciplinary code.
- Parents should be advised to contact the appropriate law enforcement agency if the situation warrants such a report.
- Referral to counseling should be made for all parties if deemed necessary.
- The principal must follow up to see that the offending conduct has stopped.
- all students should be notified that retaliation against anyone who makes a report will not be tolerated and those that retaliate will be subject to disciplinary actions.

Communication of Policy:

Annually all staff, students and parents should be apprised of the policy and such a school policy will appear in the Parent/Student handbook and faculty handbooks.

MISCELLANEOUS

- Any communication sent home through the school or student body must be approved and initialed by the administration.
- All visitors must sign in at the school office.
- School staff may, but are not required to, write letters of recommendation for students.
- The Parent/Student Handbook is reviewed and revised each year. Parents and students are invited to send suggestions, or request clarification, regarding the content of this handbook, in writing to the administration. The faculty will consider such correspondence.

THE ADMINISTRATION IS THE FINAL RECOURSE AND RESERVES THE RIGHT TO AMEND THIS HANDBOOK AT ANY TIME DURING THE YEAR.

St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Academy
87-49 87th St.
Woodhaven, NY 11421
www.sta-catholicacademy.org

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT I HAVE RECEIVED THE ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC ACADEMY HANDBOOK FOR THE 2019-2020 SCHOOL YEAR.

- I UNDERSTAND THAT I AM RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CONTENT, AND I AGREE THAT MY CHILD/CHILDREN AND I WILL FOLLOW AND ABIDE THE STATED RULES AND REGULATIONS.**
- I UNDERSTAND THAT IF I, OR MY CHILD/CHILDREN, FAIL TO FOLLOW THE RULES, DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS WILL BE ENFORCED.**

Child's Name

Grade

Child's Name

Grade

Child's Name

Grade

Parent Signature and Printed Name

Date Signed

