



St. Thomas the Apostle School

Parent/Student Handbook

2023-2024

**\*Right to Amend:** Please be advised that the principal and/or Pastor of the school retain the right to amend this handbook for just cause. If changes are made, parents will be given notification of the changes in writing.

Revised 2/14/2024

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## **School Mission Statement**

St. Thomas the Apostle School: supporting parents in providing children with a quality Catholic education centered on the teachings of Jesus Christ.

## **School Philosophy**

At St. Thomas the Apostle School, we believe that all children are unique, and created in the image and likeness of God. Partnering with parents, the school offers a quality, Catholic education based on the values and teachings of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Students strengthen their faith, sense of community, and commitment to social justice by participating in religion classes, prayer, social projects, and attending Mass. Students learn to be effective communicators by speaking, listening, and writing in the various curriculums. At St. Thomas School we educate the whole child. The goals are for students to become lifelong learners, ambassadors of hope to the world, and to develop a love of faith and respect for all human life.

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Dear St. Thomas Families,

Welcome! Thank you for choosing St. Thomas the Apostle School to provide your child with a Catholic education. This is the best gift you can give your child – a solid foundation that will serve them throughout their entire life. We are excited and honored to partner with you on this journey with your child.

This document represents an effort to improve communication between home and school and to serve as a guide for parents, students, and teachers/staff. The school reserves the right, without prior notice, to change, or delete, supplement, or otherwise amend the information contained in this handbook in the best interest of the students and the school.

As members of a Catholic School Community, we are committed to providing opportunities for children to assume their role in the Church Community. We do this by creating a Christ-centered environment for our classes. This is accomplished by involving the students in liturgies, special prayer services, and projects to develop a strong relationship with Christ.

In collaboration with you, the parents/guardians who are the primary educators of your children, we ask for your wholehearted cooperation, support, and effort to achieve the goals and objectives we have established. We believe that every family in the school community has a vital role to play while here at St. Thomas the Apostle School. We encourage your participation in all school events and invite you to join in your own faith journey.

We look forward to working together to create a positive and successful learning experience for your child.

Blessings,

Jeanette Morrow, Principal

## Schoolwide Learning Expectations (SLEs)

### TK-4<sup>th</sup> Grade

- A. To be Faith-Filled Catholics who:
  - a. Get to know God by praying every day and learning about the sacraments.
  - b. Know what the Catholic Church teaches.
  - c. Live like Jesus.
- B. To be Lifelong Learners who:
  - a. Love to learn and do new things.
  - b. Use thinking skills to make decisions.
  - c. Grow up to be what they want to become.
- C. To be Effective Communicators who:
  - a. Speak and write so others can understand.
  - b. Are good listeners.
  - c. Respect what others think and say.
- D. To be Responsible Citizens who:
  - a. Take responsibility for their actions.
  - b. Show respect for our world and take care of it.
  - c. Get along well with others.

### 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Grade

- A. To be Faith-Filled Catholics who:
  - a. Develop a personal relationship with God through daily prayer and sacramental preparation.
  - b. Have knowledge of Catholic teachings and practices.
  - c. Live Gospel values.
- B. To be Lifelong Learners who:
  - a. Have a love for knowledge and apply it to future growth.
  - b. Use critical thinking skills in decision making.
  - c. Set practical goals for future development.
- C. To be Effective Communicators who:
  - a. Articulate ideas clearly in both written and oral forms.
  - b. Listen critically and compassionately.
  - c. Show respect for the opinion of others.
- D. To be Responsible Citizens who:
  - a. Take responsibility for their actions.
  - b. Show respect and appreciation for the world.
  - c. Collaborate well with others.

# SCHOOL HISTORY

St. Thomas the Apostle School was established on September 12, 1946, staffed by the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia. The first classrooms were located at Sherman Indian High School where Saint Katherine Drexel also taught. The Sisters' leadership at the school lasted more than 50 years and currently the school is staffed by dedicated lay teachers and staff. The Franciscan order of priests led the parish until 2001 when St. Thomas the Apostle became staffed by Diocesan priests. Fr. Ted Drennan is the current Parochial Administrator supported by Fr. Celestine Afugwobi, Parochial Vicar, and Deacon Raul Michel.

St. Thomas began as a first through eighth grade school and has grown over the years. A portable building was added in 1981 which housed our first Kindergarten class. The campus continued to grow and in 2002 additional portable buildings were installed that housed a library, bookkeeper office, and extra classroom space. In 2013 the first Transitional Kindergarten (TK) program was opened using the newer classroom portable.

Over the years, there have been several improvements made to the campus: security fencing, covered eating area, additional structures, updated playground, full basketball court, large play structure and swing set, an updated permanent field building with restrooms for students, double-pane security classroom windows, and updated doors. In 2022, new A/C/Heating units were installed in the classrooms and the school converted to LED lighting throughout. The school is wired with fiber optics, has acquired iPads and chromebooks for all students, mobile charging carts, and laptops and iPads for all teachers. All classrooms are also equipped with large Interactive Mimeo boards to engage learners and streamline lessons. Technology is used to support the students in their learning and to ensure that they are prepared for the future.

In 2020 St. Thomas purchased several portable keyboards and converted the Computer Lab into a music room. The school now offers weekly lessons for all students with a dedicated music teacher. Student talents are showcased each Spring with a yearly Music Recital.

St. Thomas the Apostle School recently celebrated 75 years as an educational cornerstone in the community. The school continues to enjoy a close relationship with a very supportive parish. We look forward to a bright future continuing to provide a supportive, loving, and creative learning environment for many years to come.

## Master Calendar 2023-2024

### **August 2023**

- 14 Teachers Return
- 18 Staff Opening Liturgy
- 19 Scholarship Dinner
- 21 Supply Drop-off
- 23 ½ Day First Day of school
- 24 ½ Day
- 25 First Full Day of school
- 28 Open House 5:00-6:30pm
- 30 First School Mass 9:00am

### **September 2023**

- 1 No School: WASC Workday
- 4 Labor Day: No School
- 6 School Mass 9:00am
- 10 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday Mass 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> Gr.
- 11-22 Star Testing
- 12 St. Thomas School's 77<sup>th</sup> Birthday
- 13 School Mass 9:00am
- 20 School Mass 9:00am
- 21 Cupcakes for the Homeless 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> Grade
- 22 Murder Mystery Dinner Fundraiser 6-9pm
- 27 School Mass 9:00am
- 27 Progress Reports

### **October 2023**

- 4 Mass 9:00am
- 6 ½ Day: WASC Workday
- 8 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday Mass 6<sup>th</sup> Gr.
- 11 School Mass 9:00am
- 18 School Mass 9:00am
- 20 No School: Fiesta Set-Up
- 21 Parish Fiesta
- 25 School Mass 9:00am
- 26 Cupcakes for the Homeless 6<sup>th</sup> Gr.
- 27 No School: Faith Formation
- 31 Happy Halloween

### **November 2023**

- 1 All Saint's Day Mass 9:00am
- 2 Día de los Muertos
- 3 ½ Day
- 4 Craft Fair & Car Show
- 8 School Mass 9:00am
- 9 End of 1<sup>st</sup> Trimester
- 9 Paint Night 6:00-9:00pm
- 10 No School: Veteran's Day
- 12 Second Sunday Mass 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> Gr.
- 15 School Mass 9:00am

- 16 ½ Day Parent/Teacher Conferences
- 17 No School: Parent/Teacher Conferences
- 20-24 Thanksgiving Holiday
- 23 Thanksgiving Day
- 30 Cupcakes for the Homeless 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> Gr.

### **December 2023**

- 1 ½ Day
- 7 Bishop's Golf Tournament
- 8 Immaculate Conception School Mass 9:00am
- 10 Second Sunday Mass 3rd Gr.
- 13 School Mass 9:00am
- 14 Christmas Program 6:00pm
- 15 ½ day No Extended Care
- 18-29 Christmas Break

### **January 2024**

- 1 No School: Observation of New Years Day
- 2 School Resumes
- 2 Endowment Application Start
- 3 School Mass 9:00am
- 5 ½ Day
- 10 School Mass 9:00am
- 10-26 Star Testing
- 12 No School
- 14 Second Sunday Mass 2<sup>nd</sup> Gr.
- 15 No School: Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- 17 School Mass 9:00am
- 17 Progress Reports sent home
- 25 Cupcakes for the Homeless 2nd Gr.
- 28-Feb 3 Catholic Schools Week

### **February 2024**

- 2 ½ day
- 7 School Mass 9:00am
- 9 Endowment Applications due
- 9 Fun Run!
- 11 Second Sunday Mass 1<sup>st</sup> Gr.
- 12 No School: Inservice
- 14 Ash Wednesday School Mass 9:00am
- 14 Valentine's Day
- 16 End of 2<sup>nd</sup> Trimester
- 19-23 No School: President's Week
- 28 School Mass 9:00am
- 29 Cupcakes for the Homeless 1st Gr.

### **March 2024**

- 1 No School: WASC Workday
- 6 School Mass 9:00am
- 8 Fun Run
- 10 Second Sunday Mass: Kindergarten
- 13 School Mass 9:00am
- 20 School Mass 9:00am
- 27 School Mass 9:00am



**28** ½ Day Holy Thursday  
**28** Cupcakes for the Homeless: Kindergarten  
**29** No School: Good Friday  
**29- Apr 5** No School: Easter Break

### **April 2024**

**1-5** Easter Break  
**8** School Resumes  
**10** School Mass 9:00am  
**12** ½ day  
**12** Casino Night Dinner Fundraiser  
**14** Second Sunday Mass: TK  
**17** School Mass 9:00am  
**17** Progress Reports sent home  
**24** School Mass 9:00am  
**25** Cupcakes for the Homeless: TK  
**29- 5/10** Star Testing

### **May 2024**

**1** School Mass 9:00am  
**1-10** Star Testing  
**3** ½ day  
**8** School Mass 9:00am  
**12** Second Sunday Mass: Student Leadership  
**15** School Mass 9:00am  
**20** Open House 5:00-6:30pm  
**22** School Mass 9:00am  
**27** No School: Memorial Day  
**29** School Mass 9:00am  
**30** Cupcakes for the Homeless: Student Leadership

### **June 2024**

**5** School Mass 9:00am  
**6** 8<sup>th</sup> Graduation 10:00am  
**7** ½ day  
**9** Second Sunday Mass: Summer School  
**11** End of Year Picnic  
**12** Kindergarten Promotion 10:00am  
**12** ½ day Last Day of School No Extended Care  
**17-28** Summer School  
**27** Cupcakes for the Homeless: Summer School

**All dates, times, and events subject to change. Watch for monthly school calendars for updated information.**

### **Office Hours**

Monday-Friday  
7:30am-3:30pm

### **Scrip Sales**

Tuesday 8:00-8:30am  
Thursday 2:30-3:30pm

## **St. Thomas the Apostle School**

### **PERSONNEL**

Superintendent	Dr. Sam Torres
Parochial Administrator	Fr. Ted Drennan
Parochial Vicar	Fr. Celestine Afugwobi
Principal	Mrs. Jeanette Morrow
Administrative Assistant	Ms. Valerie Lopez
Bookkeeper	Mrs. Patty Hinojos
Maintenance	Mrs. Coralia Ortega
Transitional Kindergarten	Mrs. Raquel Alexander
Kindergarten	Mrs. Flavy Marta
Grade 1	Ms. Yvette Hasty
Grade 2	Mrs. Natalia Pedersen
Grade 3 / Vice Principal	Mrs. Jasia Martinez
Grade 4 /5	Mr. Richard Thomas
Grade 6	Mr. Adrian Sabalones
Grade 7/8	Ms. Alyssa Woodward
Instructional Aide	Mrs. Elizabeth Cabrera
Instructional Aide	Mrs. Sandra Baquedano
Instructional Aide	Mrs. Gloria Gutierrez
Instructional Aide	Mrs. Mariela Limon

## **Administration and Acceptance/Admission of Students**

### **Administration**

#### **Administrative Officers**

**Pastor:** The pastor is the ex-officio chief officer of the parish school. In consultation with the principal and the Board of Education he establishes school policies in conformity with the diocesan policies and regulations.

The ordinary administration and supervision of the school program is the responsibility of the principal, not the pastor or the board.

The pastor is responsible for the financial administration of the school. They may delegate some of these responsibilities to the principal.

**Principal:** The principal is the immediate administrative officer of the school. As administrator, the principal is responsible for the effective operation of the school and makes the day-to-day decisions within policies formulated by the Diocese of San Bernardino.

#### **Administration/Nondiscrimination Policy**

The Catholic School in the Diocese of San Bernardino, which includes both Riverside and San Bernardino Counties, admits students of any sex, race, color, national or ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the respective schools. These schools do not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, national or ethnic origin in administration of their educational policies, admission policies, financial assistance, and athletic and other administered programs.

#### **Order of Acceptance**

New students will be accepted in the following order and as openings occur:

1. St. Thomas the Apostle School registered, supportive parishioners with children currently enrolled at St. Thomas the Apostle School.
2. St. Thomas the Apostle School parishioners enrolling children for the first time.
3. Catholic, non-parishioners
4. Non-Catholics

Students must provide required records, including Baptismal certificate, birth certificate, and immunization records. Transcripts are requested from schools previously attended by transferring students. No students will be allowed to enter class until the immunization record is complete and on file at the school.

### Transfer Students

All newly accepted students are probationary. During the probationary period, the student must show evidence of a successful experience both in schoolwork and classroom behavior.

### Age Requirements

Students entering Transitional Kindergarten must be four years of age by September 1<sup>st</sup>. Cases of exception will be decided by the principal.

Students must be five years of age by September 1<sup>st</sup> to enter Kindergarten.

A pupil entering first grade must be six years of age by December 1<sup>st</sup> of that year.

### Acceptance of Students with Disabilities/Exceptional Needs

**Policy:** A Catholic school will accept a child for whom an appropriate program can be designed and implemented following its prescribed enrollment procedures. Each child's admission and continued enrollment in a diocesan school should be based upon the emotional, academic, and physical needs of a child, and the resources available to the school in meeting those needs. The final decision in this matter is made at the local side. Enrollment is on a one-year probationary period to be reviewed after every 6–8-week period or at the discretion of the Student Success Team for up to 6 times a year at which time the case will be reviewed to see if the student's needs are being met. The Student Success Team can be composed of, but not limited to administrators, teachers, counselors, parents, and possibly the Pastor.

### Identifying and Planning for Students with Exceptional Needs

Each school needs to have a developed process in place for the identification of incoming and existing students who have exceptional needs (i.e., Student Success Team).

A school may request additional diagnostic information (i.e., psycho-educational assessment) for a student at any time to better develop an appropriate program for that student.

### Entrance Assessment and Acceptance of New Students

Entrance assessments of students should be utilized for diagnostic purposes only in identifying the learning strengths and needs of a student and in aiding the school in its determination of whether an appropriate program can be developed for a student. Schools should utilize a holistic approach in this assessment through the review of previous documentation, academic screening, parent/student interviews, and parish affiliation consideration.

Upon enrollment, parents need to report and provide documents of special education needs. Failure to do so could jeopardize the length of the probationary period.

### Assessment/Grading of Inclusion Students

Grading practices must be consistent with the guidelines of the Diocesan Student Learning Assessment system. A student who has been identified as needing Learning Levels 5-7 in any subject must have an accompanying adapted curriculum supplement (such as a Modified Instruction Plan or modification document). The marking of code CP (Continued Progress) or a 3 (Adapted Curriculum) from the comment code on the Standards Based Report Card may be used to indicate that inclusive measures were taken to achieve student success.

### Retention of Identified Inclusion Students

An identified inclusion student can be retained if it has been determined by the administration, teachers, and parents that the student would benefit from another year at that grade level.

### Eighth Grade High School Diploma

A student who has received instructional accommodations or curricular modifications within the school may receive an official Diocesan Diploma, Certification of Completion, or Letter of Attendance depending on the student's achievements. If the Eighth Grade/High School standards have been achieved, then a Diocesan Diploma may be issued. If the student improved yet remained at a lower grade level of standard achievement, a Certificate of Completion would be appropriate. If the student did not significantly improve, but faithfully attempted and attended the academic program, a Letter of Attendance could be considered.

### Alternative Educational Placement

If it has been determined by the administration, in consultation with the Student Success Team, that the school cannot continue to meet a child's needs, an alternative educational placement should be recommended. Alternative educational placement will be recommended after every possible school and outside intervention as well as support resources have been exhausted without success. It would be unjust to continue to attempt to serve a child when it is evident that the school is unable to do so.

## **General Administrative Policies and Procedures**

### **Absences and Attendance**

The parent/guardian should call the school office to report the absence prior to 9:00am. Homework requests by parents must be made by 10:00am and will be available for pickup by school dismissal.

Excused absences are defined as those due to illness, funerals, or serious illness of an immediate family member. Unexcused absences are defined as those due to family vacation, meeting other family needs, or truancy.

On returning to school, a written excuse signed by the parent/guardian or physician is required. If a student arrives more than 30 minutes late or leaves more than 30 minutes before dismissal, the student will be marked as a partial absence.

If a student has an excuse for not participating in PE, it must be submitted in writing from the parent stating the reason. If a student is not able to participate in PE for more than one day, a physician's note must be submitted to the school office.

Any student who arrives after 8:00am is considered tardy and must report to the school office before going to class. Any student that arrives after morning announcements, or 8:30am must be signed in at the school office by a parent or guardian.

Doctor and dental appointments should be scheduled after school if possible. For an excused absence, it is required by law that students have notes from the doctor's office when returning to school.

### **Accreditation**

All Diocesan schools are accredited through the Western Catholic Education Association (WCEA) and Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC).

### **Before School Supervision and Extended Care**

Before school care is provided from 7:00am-8:00am. After school care is provided from 3:00pm-6:00pm. Fees will be determined each year. Any parent who does not pick up their child by 6:00pm will be billed one dollar for every minute past 6:00pm. The school has the right to deny this service to any family who is delinquent in payment or whose children do not follow the rules and regulations established. All extended care programs are billed monthly and must be paid monthly.

### **Birthday Privileges**

St. Thomas the Apostle School students may wear free dress on their birthday. Arrangements will be made if birthdays do not fall on school days.

### **Cell Phones/Electronic Devices**

All cell phones must be turned off and left in backpacks during school hours and extended care.

The school will accept no responsibility if any cell phone is lost or stolen.

### **Communication/Conferences**

Any business to be transacted with a teacher or child must be taken care of at the school office. At no time should a parent go directly to the classroom.

Parent-Teacher conferences take place during the 1<sup>st</sup> Trimester. Grades 6, 7, and 8 have "Student Led Conferences." In addition to these conference times, parents are encouraged to check with the teacher periodically throughout the school year.

If a child is having difficulties in school, parents should first contact the teacher to schedule a conference during a time that is convenient for both parties. Teachers should be given sufficient time to prepare for the meeting and should not be expected to meet with parents during morning assembly or dismissal time. If a student is at risk of failure, the teacher will make efforts to contact parents in advance to discuss the possible outcome and develop a plan to prevent it.

The classroom teacher is responsible for all their students and should be the main point of contact for parents. The instructional aide or any other staff member should not communicate with parents without the teacher present. Parents should always communicate directly with the classroom teacher, and not expect any other staff to discuss their child without their knowledge. Parents are always asked to confer with the classroom teacher prior to an appointment with the principal.

Formal communication with the school should be done through email. All faculty/staff email addresses are listed on the school website.

A newsletter/memo is sent home with each student at the end of each week. It is important for parents to read school newsletters and stay informed. The newsletters provide important information about school activities, upcoming events, and notifications.

The BAND app is an informal form of communication used for general reminders. The school also uses additional information sources: weekly memo newsletters, monthly calendars, and general office announcements. We encourage families to check email messages regularly and to call the school office with any specific questions.

### **Confidentiality**

We are committed to keep the best interest of the child as our number one priority. When acting as a representative of the school, all information will be kept strictly confidential. Teachers will keep confidential information entrusted to them so long as no one's life, health, or safety is at risk. Teachers will always make it clear to students that they will keep

confidences unless health, life or safety is in jeopardy. This applies to journal writing, as well as conversation. Faculty/staff members are required to report to the administration immediately if someone's health, life or safety is in jeopardy.

### **Counseling**

Caritas Counseling, which operates within the diocese, performs team crisis and grief counseling for the school if a need arises. Parents can also contact Caritas Counseling at 909.370.1293. Their fees are on a sliding scale.

### **Curriculum**

Curriculum may be defined as all the guided experiences of the child under the direction of the school. It includes the content of courses of study and the climate in which learning takes place. It also embraces the development of the whole child as this is within the scope of the school. The school will assist the child in forming right understandings, attitudes, and habits, not only in connection with matter areas, but also in every school experience.

Daily religion classes are an integral part of the education program for all students at every grade level. Students are taught memorized and spontaneous prayers. They also assist in the planning and preparation of daily prayer assembly, school liturgies, and prayer services throughout the year.

The students plan and attend mass together once a week and on Holy Days of Obligation.

Parents are urged to exercise their responsibility as primary educators of their children's religious experience by becoming involved in the religious formation process. This can be done by taking time to talk with their children about the activities of their religion classes and deepening their own faith. Parents are encouraged to be supportive and involved members of the Parish. This is especially important as children prepare to receive the Sacraments of Eucharist and Reconciliation.

St. Thomas the Apostle School is committed to providing students with the tools to build a strong foundation in basic academic skills. It endeavors to make possible the quality education for each of its students.

The habit of regular attendance is a prerequisite to a successful school life and sets the framework for a positive, successful career. Students should be absent from school only in cases of illness or emergency. All other absences should be avoided as they interfere with the student's academic progress. Timely communication with the classroom teacher is important to gather any necessary make-up work. If a student misses an extended period of school time, all work must be made up within a week of their return.

### **Custody Issues**

The school understands that parents who do not have custody of their children still have rights to access information and to speak with school officials unless the school has on file a



certified copy of a court order to the contrary. Teachers will be informed of custody arrangements affecting their students. Custody issues are to remain confidential and not discussed in front of students, parents and/or staff members not involved. St. Thomas the Apostle School, at no time, will or can legally release student records, letters, attendance sheets, extended care forms, etc. or attend a court hearing by verbal request. We can only respond to the above if subpoenaed from courts in writing.

**Diocesan Policy 5445 States: Custody of Minors**

No unauthorized organization, agency or person may be allowed to assume custody of any student on school premises before, during or after school hours unless explicitly authorized by the parent or guardian.

In cases where custody is court ordered, the school must request, and the parents must provide, a copy of the court order for the student's file to verify the conditions of custody. The school will comply with court ordered custody conditions that are on file.

**Daily Schedule**

7:00-7:45	Morning Daycare
7:30	Office Opens
7:45-8:00	Student Drop Off
8:00	School/Instruction Begins
8:15	Morning Prayer Assembly
10:00-10:15	Recess TK-3
10:15-10:30	Recess 4-8
11:15-11:55	Lunch TK-3
12:00-12:40	Lunch 4-8
2:50	Dismissal
3:30	School Office Closed
3:00-6:00	After School Extended Care

**ON HALF DAYS**

11:45	Dismissal
12:00-6:00	Extended Care

**Department of Education Policies**

\*All school policies and regulations are contingent upon diocesan policies and regulations.

**DISCIPLINE POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

Each teacher will develop a uniform policy that conforms the general guidelines and philosophy of St. Thomas the Apostle School. Consequences of inappropriate behavior will be explained by the teacher in their classroom policy and procedure handout. This policy will be sent home at the beginning of the school year. Students and parents must sign the

policy stating that they understand and accept the classroom discipline procedures. The bottom part of the form is returned to the school by the designated time.

The principal has the right to suspend a student immediately for any of the following infractions or any other behavior which is harmful to others or to the school's reputation:

Harassment	Bullying
Fighting	Inappropriate Behavior
Use of foul language	Destruction of property
Disrespect	Stealing
Refusal to obey a teacher	Leaving the school grounds
Repeated failure to observe school rules	Cheating

The above continued negative behavior can result in an expulsion. The school has the right to require counseling before a student is admitted back to class or behavior becomes disruptive or threatening to the school environment.

Suspension will be in writing to the parents. A parent/guardian and principal conference must be held before student is admitted back to school.

The Principal Has the Right to Expel a Student Immediately for the Following Reasons:

1. Smoking/Vaping
2. Possession of/or being under the influence of illegal substances
3. Bringing a weapon of any kind to school
4. Continued harassment of any kind toward a student and/or staff member
5. Continued bullying or threatening another student.

Guided by the philosophy, it is the purpose of St. Thomas the Apostle School to:

1. Provide a classroom environment conducive to learning.
2. Help the students develop and appreciate the importance of responsibility.
3. Build Catholic Christian values and respect for others.
4. Make sure each student feels safe and secure at school and at all school activities.

### **Discipline/Behavioral Expectations**

It is expected that St. Thomas the Apostle School students and families be living examples of SLEs at all times, whether on or off campus.

Expected behavior while on campus:

1. Students are to be in proper uniform every day except on free dress days.
2. Respect school property.
3. All trash should be properly disposed in waste containers.
4. Classroom and desks should be kept orderly and clean.

5. Students use only the student bathrooms in the school breezeway.
6. Walk quietly in the patio/breezeway area to avoid disturbing classes.
7. Show proper respect at mass or any function of the Church.
8. Gum is not allowed on school grounds.
9. Students are expected to follow all directions given by any faculty and staff of the school.
10. Students are responsible for cleaning their lunch area before leaving the eating area.
11. Students enter classrooms only when the teacher/staff is present.
12. Students are expected to be consistently respectful.

**The following are some examples of unacceptable behavior:**

1. Disrupting class while the teacher is teaching
2. Refusing to accept correction
3. Showing a negative attitude
4. Arguing disrespectfully
5. Open, persistent defiance of authority
6. Cheating on class work, homework, or tests
7. Use of offensive language
8. Harassment or bullying
9. Fighting/physical encounters
10. Failure to follow dress code
11. Inappropriate use of technology/internet

Unacceptable behavior may result in the following consequences:

- Assignment of special tasks within a written behavior plan
- Teacher conference with the student
- Principal conference with the student
- Teacher and/or principal conference with the parent
- Denial of privileges
- On-campus suspension
- Warning
- Time outs
- Detention
- Suspension
- Expulsion

**Emergency Procedures**

See "Emergency Plan"

**Emergency Dismissals**

In the event of an emergency, school dismissals may be made at any time by the principal or their representative. Emergencies include sickness, accident, or emergency home conditions. If the emergency occurs outside of school hours, refer to a local news source for

instructions concerning school closure. Be aware of any urgent announcements or notifications from school administrators.

### **Extra-Curricular Activities**

St. Thomas the Apostle School provides the following extra-curricular activities:

- School Choir
- Student Leadership                      Grades 6-8
- Volleyball                                      Grades 5 – 8
- Basketball                                      Grades 5 – 8
- Flag Football                                  Grades 5 – 8
- Track    Grades K-8
- Soccer     Grades 1-4
- Dance (outside contractor on school grounds)
- Chess club (outside contractor on school grounds)

### **Field Trips**

Field trips serve as an educational supplement and must be earned through good attendance and academic performance. All students must meet the criteria set forth by the Diocesan Handbook before being given the privilege to attend a field trip. Those who do not meet these standards will be denied participation.

Parents/ Guardian chaperones must be fingerprinted through Live Scan and must pass a background check before being approved. Chaperones should serve as role models and set a good example for the students by being respectful of school policies and avoiding smoking, drinking, and inappropriate behavior. Chaperones should help support the teachers with students and activities. Have fun but be mindful of your role - create a safe and productive learning environment for everyone.

Parental permission is required for all field trips and must be obtained in writing. Teachers will provide parents with the necessary details, such as what their child needs to wear and whether food will be provided. Without this signed permission, a student will not be allowed to leave school grounds. It is important that everyone is safe and respects the written agreement submitted by the parent. Students must return the permission slip prior to the scheduled event.

### **Financial/Fee Policy**

Tuition and fees are listed in the registration contract of each school year. Registration fees, sport fees, and graduation fees are non-refundable. Tuition is only refundable if paid in advance and the student was not in school at any time during the month of the refund being requested.

### **Forgotten Items**

If you wish to drop off forgotten lunches, books, etc., leave them in the school office for delivery.

### **Gradelink**

St. Thomas uses Gradelink as the school information system. Students and Parents are given individual log-in information to access grades and class assignments, service hour totals, unofficial transcripts, and classroom information. Parents are encouraged to log into Gradelink often to keep informed of student progress.

### **Grading and Reporting System**

Report cards are given at the end of each trimester and designed to inform parents of the scholastic and behavioral progress of their child. Any questions concerning a report card grade should be directed to the classroom teacher. All Catholic schools in the diocese are required to use the Standards Based Diocesan Report cards. The final grades are based on weekly tests, class participation and completion of class and homework assignments. Student involvement and cooperation are a key component to their grades. Both parents and teachers are encouraged to contact one another when questions or concerns arise regarding a child's academic progress.

Progress Reports are sent home midway through each trimester.

If at any time during the school year a student drops below a C in any subject the parents will be notified by the teacher.

4th– 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Honor Roll Requirements:

1<sup>st</sup> Honors: A's – In all subjects and conduct

2<sup>nd</sup> Honors: A's or B's- In all subjects and conduct

Citizenship: Outstanding Conduct

### **Graduation**

Eighth grade graduation will be no earlier than one week preceding the closure of school.

All accounts must be current, including scrip and service hours, before the student can participate in any graduation activities.

Students will be invited to participate in several graduation activities that can include: breakfast with the principal, amusement park trip, retreat, painting of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade mural wall, and graduation mass planning and rehearsals.

### **Homework**

Homework is assigned each night to grades TK – 8<sup>th</sup>. Weekends are free from regular

homework assignments except for long-term assignments and special projects. All students will be given more than one weekend to complete long-term and special projects. The purpose of homework:

1. Reinforce concepts and skills that have been presented in class.
2. Foster student creativity and discipline through enrichment projects or research
3. Train the student to work independently and accept responsibility for completing a task.

Suggested homework times for grade levels are as follows:

Grades	TK – 1	10 – 20 Minutes
Grades	2 – 3	20 – 30 Minutes
Grades	4 – 5	40 – 50 Minutes
Grades	6 – 8	60 – 70 Minutes

### **Illness/Injury**

If a student be injured or become ill, the parents will be contacted. No student will be allowed to go home unless they are picked up at the school office and signed out by a person listed on the emergency contact list. If the parent cannot be reached and the illness or injury is serious enough to require medical attention, the principal will refer to the student’s emergency contacts in which authorization must be updated on a regular basis. People listed on emergency contact list, other than parents, must reside in the city boundaries and be able to pick up child within 15 minutes when called.

### **Immunization Records**

A California Immunization Record is kept in the school office for every student. Every child entering first grade must present proof of a physical examination. TK/Kindergarten and new students must have a current immunization record. All students entering seventh grade must have proof of receiving the hepatitis immunization series.

From California Department of Public Health:

Students Admitted at TK/K-12 Need:

- Diphtheria, Tetanus, and Pertussis (DTaP, DTP, Tdap, or Td) — 5 doses (4 doses OK if one was given on or after 4th birthday. 3 doses OK if one was given on or after 7th birthday.)  
For 7th-12th graders, at least 1 dose of pertussis-containing vaccine is required on or after 7th birthday.
- Polio (OPV or IPV) — 4 doses (3 doses OK if one was given on or after 4th birthday)
- Hepatitis B — 3 doses (not required for 7th grade entry)

- Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR) — 2 doses  
(Both given on or after 1st birthday)
- Varicella (Chickenpox) — 2 doses

Students Starting 7th Grade Need:

- Tetanus, Diphtheria, Pertussis (Tdap) —1 dose  
(Whooping cough booster usually given at 11 years and up)
- Varicella (Chickenpox) — 2 doses  
(Usually given at ages 12 months and 4-6 years)

### **Instructional Program**

Courses taught to all students in Transitional Kindergarten through Eighth Grade:

Religion, Language Arts (reading, grammar, spelling, composition), Mathematics, Social Studies, Science, Music, Art, and Physical Education.

In conformity with the state law the students are also taught the following at the appropriate grade level:

Public Safety and Accident Prevention, the nature and effects of alcohol, narcotics, restricted dangerous drugs and tobacco, fire prevention and protection and conservation of resources.

### **Library**

The library provides materials for students to obtain information, do research, and to enjoy reading. The privilege of going to the library will be denied if a student does not abide by the rules and guidelines. Library books that are lost or severely damaged must be paid for or replaced. Students are asked to conduct themselves in a quiet, orderly manner while in the library. Students may not check out additional books if they have an overdue or lost book from the library.

### **Lost and Found**

The lost and found bin is in the school breezeway and is emptied several times throughout the year.

Please label, in a permanent manner, all articles such as sweatshirts, lunch boxes, and personal supplies with the child's family name.

### **Lunch Program**

Hot lunch days are Tuesdays and Thursdays. A Hot Lunch Menu is sent home monthly with prices. It is the parent's responsibility to make sure their child has a lunch or lunch money. Subway is offered on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Forms are available each day in the office and need to be submitted in the morning. Subway is not offered on ½ days.

## **Medication Policy**

1. The school does not supply medication.
2. All medications require physician and/or parent/guardian authorization. This includes cough drops, lip balm, lotion, etc. Parents/Guardians are responsible for making sure medication has not expired or needs to be replaced.
3. All medications must be secured in the school office and proper forms filled out.

Parents should inform teachers, at the beginning of each year, of any chronic medical or physical condition or impairment, which may affect their child's performance in school. These conditions include, but are not limited to, vision, diabetes, cardiac conditions, diagnosed ADD or ADHD which is being treated, migraines, epilepsy, sleep or eating disorders, need for frequent trips to the restroom, etc.

All medication needs to be picked up by parent/guardian on the last day of the school year. Any medication not picked up will be thrown out.

## **Minimum Days/Half Days**

Minimum day dismissal is at 11:50am. The first Friday of each month is a minimum day. Please consult your monthly school calendar for other minimum days throughout the school year. No child should be picked up before 11:50am on minimum days except in case of an emergency.

## **Office Hours**

The school office is open from 7:30am until 3:30pm when school is in session. Special summer hours will be announced.

## **Orientation Meetings**

At the first Back-to-school Parent Meeting at the start of the school year, parents/guardians will learn their role and responsibilities as Catholic school parents. It is also a chance for them to familiarize themselves with policies, procedures, and school activities. The meeting provides a platform for parents to ask questions, meet staff, and form relationships with other families in the school community.

## **Parent/Community Involvement**

The school community consists of parents, teachers, and students who all support and benefit from each other's involvement. Parent volunteers are highly valued and encouraged, and all are expected to contribute based on their individual abilities and availability.

All volunteers at the school must follow the safety guidelines which include undergoing a background check and being fingerprinted via Live Scan using the school's fingerprint form. This ensures the safety of everyone on campus and that all volunteers have the appropriate qualifications.



St. Thomas the Apostle School is a cooperative endeavor in which every family in the school community has a vital role to play.

Parents can help in the religious formation of their children by:

1. Taking time to talk to their children about God and their own faith.
2. Taking time to pray together.
3. Giving examples of the living of faith in speech, action, and attitude
4. Taking time to celebrate Mass together on Sundays and special days.
5. Taking time to be informed about the religious concepts the children are learning.
6. Continually reaching out to develop their own faith life.
7. Participating in the Sacramental preparation programs, attending bible study and faith sharing groups
8. Be a registered, supportive parishioner.

Tuition and fees do not cover the total cost of education here at St. Thomas the Apostle School. The difference between our intake from tuition and fees and the expense for running the school is considerable. This difference is made up by fundraising.

We ask all parents to participate in Service Hours, Fundraising, and Scrip Program to contribute to the building of a strong school and parish community. We hope everyone will take an active interest, showing a willingness to volunteer their service and donate time, effort, and resources to this cause. Together, we can achieve even greater things!

### **Pastor**

The pastor's ultimate responsibility toward the school is that of insuring that a Catholic Christian atmosphere be established and maintained in the school and of guaranteeing the school's compliance with all policies and regulations of the Diocese. He has the right to be consulted before the school undertakes any activity which may involve publicity or fundraising. He has the right to serve as a member of the School Advisory Board and consulted on all related matters.

### **Personal and School Property**

Any student purposely destroying school property will be held financially responsible. Because of the problem it poses on floors, furniture, sidewalks, etc., students are asked to refrain from chewing gum anywhere on the school premises.

Chromebooks, ipads, and textbooks are the property of the school. Lost or damaged property must be reported and paid for immediately. No child will be re-registered if these fees have not been paid.

### **Physical Education Procedures**

1. On P.E. days, the P.E. uniform will be worn to school, unless otherwise noted. Everyone must purchase P.E. uniforms from Dennis Uniform. All students must wear

athletic/tennis shoes and socks (see Dress Code). Black sweatpants are permitted during cold weather.

2. If a student cannot participate in P.E., the student must have a written, valid doctor's excuse for non-participation. This also applies to recess participation.

### **Promotion/Retention**

Students who complete the necessary work of a particular grade in the basic skill areas will be promoted to the next grade. Students who are not able to complete the coursework or are working at a slower pace may be placed into the next grade.

In cases of slow progress, each student will be considered individually. Any decision concerning non-promotion must be made after considering many factors related to the student's development: emotional, physical, social, as well as intellectual and academic.

### **Registration/Acceptance**

1. Open enrollment usually begins in March of each year and continues until all classes are full.
2. If a parent is unable to register a child, an adult bearing verification of intent can register for the parent of the child.

Students entering St. Thomas the Apostle School for the first time will be accepted conditionally for their first 3 months of school. The probationary period of 3 months will conclude if:

1. This student receives passing grades in major subjects, as well as conduct.
2. All accounts are current: such as tuition, fundraising, etc.
3. There is evidence of parental support and cooperation with the school.

It is also required that all regulations and rules as specified in the St. Thomas the Apostle School Parent/Student Handbook be adhered to and understood. If a child is experiencing academic/social difficulties, a conference will be held as to whether the child may return to St. Thomas the Apostle School.

### **Religious Activities**

On-going instruction and religious formation are reflected in the class liturgies, paraliturgical services and sacramental preparations that are integrated into the curriculum of each grade. Because of the importance of the sacramental preparation program, parents are required to attend meetings and retreats held before their child receives the Sacrament of Reconciliation and their First Communion.

### **Room Parents**

Each year, room parents will be asked to assist in classroom functions. Meetings will be held at the beginning of the year to determine the ways they can best assist the teachers.

The room parents are to contact the classroom teachers before planning or doing any activities.

### **School Advisory Board and Parent Teacher Group**

See School Advisory Board Constitution

### **School Calendar**

Please note that the master calendar is subject to change. We recommend parents consult the monthly calendar for updated announcements and/or events.

### **School Dress Code**

The dress code for St. Thomas the Apostle School will be enforced. Students in violation of dress code will not be permitted into the classroom. Parents/Guardians will be contacted, and students will be allowed back in the classroom when in compliance with the dress code.

The Dress Code can be found on the school website.

### **School Pictures**

Pictures are taken twice during the school year. Fall pictures are taken in the school Liturgy uniform and Spring pictures are free dress. Information concerning prices and packages will be sent home prior to picture day.

### **School Visits**

Upon arrival to the school, visitors must sign into the school office. This includes all volunteers.

Permission to visit classrooms can only be approved by the principal and visits will be scheduled by appointment only.

### **Service Hours Policy**

Every family whose children attend St. Thomas the Apostle School is asked to give a designated amount of time to fundraising events of their choice. There is a 30-hour requirement for two parent/guardian families, and 15-hours for single active parent families. If there are any questions regarding the service hour policy, the principal must be contacted first. There is no carry-over of hours between school years. Hours may not be donated or accepted from another family.

Families must earn hours between June 1<sup>st</sup> to May 28<sup>th</sup>. Unearned hours must be paid for at registration for the following school year at the rate of \$40 per unearned hour. Unearned hours will be considered tuition delinquency and treated according to the Tuition Policy.

Each adult doing volunteer work will be responsible for signing in and out of the service hour forms. Forms are available to all chairpersons of volunteer activities. The work is to

be recorded at the time the work is performed. The completed forms are turned in to the school office and documented.

Service Hour status can be checked through Gradelink which will be updated throughout the year.

### **Sports Program**

St. Thomas the Apostle School participates in the Inland Catholic Sports League (ICSL) for all students. Eligibility requires all students to have a "C" average, no "F's" and a satisfactory grade in conduct to participate.

### **Student Drop Off and Pick Up**

Parents/drivers are asked to follow the instructions of the school Safety Patrol when driving automobiles in the parking lot.

1. All students are to be picked up and dropped off in designated areas. Students may not cross the safety cones at any time, except in the custody of a parent.
2. Please pull your car as far up as possible to enable more cars to pick up and drop off students.
3. St. Thomas the Apostle School is not responsible for children being picked up or dropped off outside of school property.
4. On rainy days or extremely hot days, parents may park in the parking lot and pick the students up from the classrooms.

### **Student Records**

Each student is required to have an updated emergency card contact list on file in the school office. Parents are requested to contact the school if emergency information should change during the school year.

The student's parents or legal guardian have the right to inspect their student's records in the presence of the principal or designated employee. The school has 45 days to comply with requests to review student records by parents which can be arranged by appointment.

Official transcripts must be mailed to the receiving school or delivered by a school official. Transcripts are never given to a parent or student for delivery to another school. Unofficial copies of the student's records can be obtained by parents/guardians through the Gradelink system.

### **Student Release/Doctor or Dental Appointments**

Doctor or dental appointments should be made after school. If the child is to be taken off campus during school hours, they must be signed out from the school office. It is now required by law that students have a note from the doctor/dental office when returning to school, otherwise the child is not legally excused. If a student returns from an appointment during the school day, they are to check into the office before returning to the classroom.

### **Tardies**

Any student who arrives after 8:00am is considered tardy and must report to the school office before going to class. Any student that arrives after morning announcements, or 8:30am must be signed in at the school office by a parent or guardian.

### **Testing**

The Star Test will be administered to the students three times through each academic year. Parents will receive a copy and explanation of the testing reports for each student. This test helps the school evaluate where student and school academic strengths and weaknesses are and set up a program of improvement for the school year.

### **Tuition/Tuition Agreement**

Each parent or guardian who enrolls a student in school shall sign a written agreement to pay specified tuition and fees and to comply with all diocesan and school policies and regulations.

Each family is required to register with FACTS Management Company to establish a tuition payment program. Automatic payments can be made from a checking or savings account. It is the responsibility of each family to pay tuition and any other fees on time. In addition to FACTS Management Company policy, the school will also assess \$50 late fees and \$40 NSF fees.

10 Month Plan: First payment due August 1, 2023. Last payment due May 1, 2024.

11 Month Plan: First payment due August 1, 2023. Last payment due June 1, 2024.

12 Month Plan: First payment due July 1, 2023. Last payment due June 1, 2024.

Tuition accounts that become one month delinquent will be referred to the principal for collection. Student(s) will not be admitted to school or extended care if fees are not current.

### **Tuition Refund-Addendum**

Tuition is paid in advance on a ten-, eleven- or twelve-month schedule. In the event a student must withdraw from school a partial refund of this tuition can be received if approved by the principal. If a withdrawal does occur during the first 2 weeks of a school month, a refund of any pro-rated tuition can be received for that month. Under no circumstance will a refund of any tuition be given unless all payments are current and complete.

Registration fees, sport fees, and graduation fees are not refundable.

### **Volunteers**

All volunteers at the school must undergo a background check and be fingerprinted via Live Scan using the school's fingerprint form. This ensures the safety of everyone on campus and that all volunteers have the appropriate qualifications.

Volunteers may directly assist teachers in their work with students, or assist in extra-curricular activities, and/or office work. The principal has the right to screen and select all volunteers. Each volunteer will be under the direct supervision of a specified member of the school staff. All volunteers must fill out the diocesan volunteer form and report to the school office when on the school grounds.

**Withdrawal On Grounds of Parental Behavior - Diocesan Policy 5220**

Normally a student is not allowed to be deprived of a Catholic education or otherwise penalized for actions of parents. However, the principal may recommend withdrawal of a student when parents have been persistently and/or overly uncooperative with school personnel, policies, regulations, or programs, have damaged the reputation of the school, or have interfered in matters of the school, administration, or discipline to the detriment of the school's ability to serve their own or other children.

After reasonable effort to elicit the minimum parental cooperation, principal may recommend student withdrawal. Documentation for this action and all the consultation with parents on the matter must be retained on file.