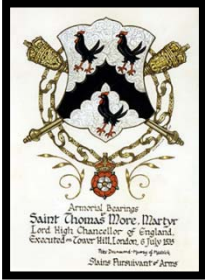


St. Thomas More Catholic School

Parent/Student Handbook



2010-2011



Principal: Dr. Roseanne Williby

**School Office Phone #551-9504
3515 South 48th Avenue
Omaha, NE 68106**

School Website: stmbengals.org

This Parent/Student Handbook is provided for informational purposes only and does not constitute a contractual agreement between St. Thomas More Catholic School and any student or any parent of any student. The information contained in the Handbook provides a general description of rules and regulations. The school reserves the right to add to, modify or abolish any of the Handbook provisions without notice. Non-enforcement of any of the rules or regulations does not serve as a waiver of their future enforcement. This Handbook does not create any restriction upon St. Thomas More Catholic School's right to institute any course of disciplinary action, which, in St. Thomas More Catholic School's sole discretion, it believes is necessary and consistent with its Catholic educational mission.

Table of Contents

Welcome Letter from the Principal	4
Section I—Philosophy	
Mission Statement.....	5
Philosophy	6
Exit Outcomes of Graduates and Grade Promotion	6
Section II—School & Family	
Tuition Policy.....	7
Delinquent Tuition Procedure.....	8
Communication.....	9
Weekly Newsletter.....	9
Parent-Teacher Conferences.....	9
Classroom Visitation.....	9
Confidentiality.....	9
Problem Resolution.....	9
Parental Dissatisfaction	10
School Board.....	10
Access to Student Records.....	10
Rights of Non-Custodial Parents.....	11
Home and School Association.....	11
Parent Participation Program.....	11
Section III--Admission	
Non-Discrimination Policy.....	13
Records Required for Admission	13
Preschool Admission	13
Transfer Student and New Student Admission.....	14
Section IV—School Schedules and Attendance	
State Requirements.....	15
School Day Start, Dismissal Times, and Use of the Parking Lot.....	15
Morning Drop-Off of Students.....	16
Lunch Program.....	16
Lunch Tickets.....	17
Recess.....	17
Weather and Emergency Dismissals.....	18
Make-up Work, Absences and Tardies	18
Excessive Absences.....	19
Truancy.....	19
Section V—Academics	
Curriculum.....	20
Multicultural Education.....	20
Special Education.....	21
Homework.....	21
REACH.....	21
Graduation for Eighth Graders.....	22
Student Evaluation and Honor Roll (Grades & Report Card).....	22
Academic Difficulties.....	22

Academic Sports Eligibility.....	23
Computer Usage.....	24
Standardized Testing.....	24
Field Trips.....	24
School Library.....	25
School Counselor.....	25
Extra-curricular Activities and Clubs.....	26

Section VI—Code of Conduct

Code of Conduct.....	27
The Well-Managed Classroom.....	27
Girls and Boys Town Social (Life) Skills.....	28

Section VII--Dress Code

Dress Code.....	29
Violations of Dress Code.....	31

Section VIII—Health & Safety

School Nurse.....	32
Child Protective Services.....	32
Immunizations & Physical Exams.....	32
Head Injury.....	33
Communicable Diseases.....	33
Medications.....	33
Asthma Protocol.....	34
Tobacco Policy.....	34
Fire and Disaster Drills.....	34
Asbestos Notice.....	34
Cooperation with Law Enforcement.....	34
Safety and Security	35
Safety Plan.....	35

Section IX—Roles and Responsibilities

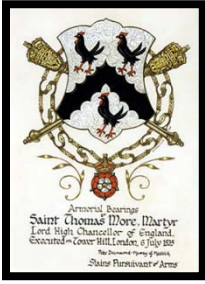
Roles and Responsibilities.....	36
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Section X—Behavior and Consequences

Levels of Consequences.....	39
Definitions.....	39
Discipline Response by Grade Level	42
Specific Behaviors That Are Not Allowed and Consequences.....	44
Student Use of Social Networking Sites.....	46
Academic Integrity Violations.....	47
Technology Violations	47
Electronic Devices (Cell phones & pagers).....	47
Tobacco and Substance Abuse.....	48

Section XI—Miscellaneous

School/Principal’s Right to Amend Handbook.....	49
Student Technology and Internet Agreement	50
Student/Parent/Staff Compact.....	53



Welcome Letter from the Principal



Dear Parents and Guardians,

The school administration and staff wish to extend a heartfelt welcome to you and your family. **We hold dear the trust you place in us to responsively enable your child to become a better human being and a more successful individual while growing every closer to God.** We recognize your child as a special precious gift from God. Fostering an environment that inspires and nurtures our journey of faith is key to our mission as a Catholic school in the Archdiocese of Omaha.

With an enrollment of nearly 260 students, St. Thomas More Catholic School educates pre-school through the eighth grade. It is said that student outcomes are based upon a school's values. Students of St. Thomas More Catholic School have a long tradition of successfully competing in local and state academic contests and excelling in high school. Our low student to teacher ratio and a tradition of strong family support contribute to a healthy learning environment for students, strong values that have stood the test of time.

To ease the anxiety of starting the new school year, be sure to attend our **“Sneak a Peek”** evening when parents accompany their children to meet new teachers and find new classrooms for the first time. Also, please plan to attend our **Curriculum Night** in September when parents will receive a formal presentation on curriculum from their children's teachers.

We are so happy you have chosen our school for your child. Please contact us with any concern you may have, so we can serve you and your family better.

Roseanne L. Williby, Ed. D.
Roseanne L. Williby
Principal

Section I---Philosophy

Mission Statement of St. Thomas More Catholic School

The mission of St. Thomas More Catholic School is to provide spiritual formation in the Catholic faith, to educate students according to the highest standards of academic excellence, and to form a strong foundation of life-long habits that will build strong character and self-discipline.

Belief Statements

Catholicity : We believe that it is important to bring Catholic faith perspective into all curriculum areas and that all faculty and staff demonstrate a positive faith life for students and colleagues.

Communication: We believe that open lines of communication need to be in place to effectively educate children.

Environment: We believe that through a diverse and differentiated learning environment that all students will have the opportunity to succeed.

Discipline and Character Formation: We believe that students should develop the self-discipline necessary to become responsible community-minded adults.

Technology: We believe that students should acquire the proficient technological skills that allow them to access and process information so that they can apply what is learned to be responsive to ongoing changes in technology.

Fine Arts: We believe that students should acquire an appreciation for learning to express their creativity through the fine arts.

Service: We believe that service to the community is key to living a life that is Christ filled. Our service efforts take many forms and include supporting the rights of the unborn, poor, aged, sick, and marginalized.

Philosophy of St. Thomas More Catholic School

St. Thomas More Catholic School provides a Catholic environment where children from preschool to the eighth grade can learn and be given the opportunity for intellectual, physical and spiritual development. We believe that the cooperation of the faculty and staff, parents and student will result in the development of mature Catholic citizens.

The Catholic tradition holds that parents are always the primary educators of their children. Accordingly, all that the school provides is meant to complement the efforts of parents in providing similar faith development experiences at home. When both the family and the school community make continuous efforts to assist students in the formation of their faith, students grow in and become committed to their faith. The church is strengthened in its mission of proclaiming the Gospel.

We ask that you continue your efforts in all of the above areas and continue to model for your children the discipleship of Christ, which is the fruit of our adult faith. Our own commitment to prayer, to the Eucharistic liturgy, to the sacrament of reconciliation, to the service of others, and to offer assistance to those in need will form children in rituals and practices that will enable them to deepen their relationship with God.

As a member of the Catholic Schools of the Archdiocese of Omaha and in accordance with I. R. S. Form 5578, the **Annual Certificate of Racial Nondiscrimination**, St. Thomas More Catholic School admits students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin.

Exit Outcomes for Graduates and Grade Promotion (K-8)

Graduates of St. Thomas More Catholic School will demonstrate:

- Religious knowledge, virtues and practices
- Knowledge of core disciplines and the fine arts
- Higher order thinking skills
- Effective communication skills
- Competence in the use of technology
- Effective social interaction skills
- Independent learning skills
- Knowledge of practices essential to sound health, effective citizenship, stable families, life-long learning, and responsible stewardship.

Students will demonstrate competency in content areas and earn a grade promotion by earning passing grades in all subjects taught. When students fail to demonstrate grade proficiency despite efforts made by staff to provide additional instructional assistance, graduation and promotion to the next grade may be in jeopardy. Semester grade failures in three core subject areas constitute sufficient cause for a formal review of student progress to determine if grade promotion has been earned. Parents will be contacted for consultation whenever grade retention for any student is being considered. A full review of applicable information will be made by the administration, teaching staff, and parents to determine the course of action that will provide greatest benefit to the student.

Section II---School and Family

Tuition Policy

All parish families are expected to contribute to the parish subsidy of the school through their weekly stewardship offering made to St. Thomas More Church. St. Thomas More Catholic School strives to keep tuition within the means of our school families. Tuition payments cover approximately 40% of the costs of educating our students, while the parish subsidizes the remainder of the costs.

The **Tuition Assistance Program (T.A.P.) Committee**, formed in 2008, replaces the previous Tuition Board. It is possible to receive tuition assistance from the parish by completing the necessary application process. All families who receive tuition assistance also incur an obligation to work a minimum of two Qwest Center events in our *Qwest for Cash* program selling concessions. Funds earned through this program will be contributed to TAP so that future tuition assistance awards can be offered to families.

Important to remember: It is the family's responsibility to contact the TAP committee through the parish office at 556-1456 when tuition assistance is needed.

Any family who wishes to minimize their total tuition cost **in the coming year**, can accrue credit toward tuition by selling concessions at designated events in our Qwest for Cash program. Credits earned by working the events will be applied to the family's tuition account in the school year that follows the school year in which it was earned.

To provide objective, comprehensive, and affordable financial need analysis of each applicant that applies for tuition assistance, an independent company known as **Financial Aid Independent Review, Inc. or FAIR** is employed. Families who successfully complete the application process and qualify for assistance will be notified by the TAP Committee before school starts.

Payment for kindergarten through eighth grade tuition begins in June of the new school year using monthly electronic fund transfers or EFT's. When tuition assistance is awarded, the monthly EFT will be lowered accordingly.

Pawprints Preschool tuition will be applied at a rate different from that for students in kindergarten through the eighth grades. Preschool tuition is paid through the same EFT payment method as that mentioned for other STM students but runs for 10 months starting in August.

During the month of May, a Final Registration folder for each family is sent home with students. The Enrollment Agreement form, which will list the tuition and early registration fee, must be signed by a responsible parent/guardian. Any outstanding balance on the previous year's tuition must be paid by August 15th or the student will not be enrolled. The Final Registration folder is due back by the designated May date. At the time of Final Registration in May, all families must complete a monthly Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT) for tuition payment from June through May. If tuition assistance is awarded, or credits are made, the EFT will be adjusted. Tuition can be paid in full at any time.

Delinquent Tuition Procedure

When tuition payments are 30 days past due, the tuition payment is considered **delinquent**. It is the family's responsibility to contact the parish office at 556-1456 if they are unable to fulfill their obligation to stay current with their monthly tuition payment schedule or if they are notified that their tuition EFT was not completed due to insufficient funds.

When tuition payments are delinquent, the primary goal is to establish contact with the family to determine when the payment schedule can resume (a) while creating minimal ill will with the parents, and (b) minimizing the negative impact on the student.

Deliberate Action to Obtain Payments that are 60 or More Days in Arrears

At the point when a family has failed to contact the parish office and has failed to deliver tuition payment for 60 days, the family jeopardizes the future enrollment of their student(s) and risks suspension.

Obligations of the Principal

Due to a serious conflict of interest, the principal is not responsible for the collection of tuition, or the resolution of delinquent payments. When the principal is notified by the parish office that it is necessary to suspend a student due to lack of tuition payments, the principal will make every effort to contact the family ahead of time so that suspension might still be avoided. If the student arrives at school after the suspension period begins, the parents or guardians will be called by the school Principal. The student will remain in the school office until time when the parents can make arrangements for payment with the parish office or pickup their child. If the payment is not made "in good faith", and the processing of the payment fails to be completed, the suspension process will resume immediately.

At the end of the fourth quarter the parish office will notify the principal of those students whose tuition is delinquent and require the school principal to hold the student's report card until the matter is resolved.

If the student is in the fourth quarter of their eighth grade year at the time of the payment failure notice, the student will be unable to participate in the graduation ceremony until the account has been brought up to date and all fees have been paid. All fees, including graduation fees, lunch charges, library fines, along with tuition, must be paid-in-full prior to the eighth grade graduation day to enable the student to participation in the graduation ceremony.

For all students: all payments and fines are to be cleared by the school and parish office by the students' last full day of attendance.

Communication

Sycamore: On-Line Student Information System

Beginning in the spring of 2009, STM school made our Sycamore On-Line Student Information System available to parents. Through Sycamore parents are able to monitor classroom events, email teachers, view assignments, and review grades. Parents are encouraged to check Sycamore daily for special school news updates.

Weekly Newsletter: A weekly newsletter will be distributed for students to take home on the Thursday of each week. It will contain important information of upcoming news, events, opportunities, and the new monthly lunch menu. In addition, each Thursday is designated as Communication Day when other fliers and reminders for the week will go home. **It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to review and retain this information for future reference.**

Parent-Teacher Conferences: There are **two scheduled parent-teacher conferences each year, held at the end of the first and the middle of the third quarters. Parents are expected to be in attendance.** Parents should welcome this opportunity to confer with the teacher on the progress of their child and to receive information from the teacher about their child's progress. Teachers are available for conferences at other times during the school year. Parents should arrange these meetings with the individual teacher. Conferences for **Preschool** are also conducted but may be at a different time.

Classroom Visitations: Parents are welcome to visit classrooms to better understand their child in the school environment. Such visits must be prearranged with the teacher. **All visitors must report first to the main school office for a visitor's badge** before proceeding to the classroom. If parents need to deliver lunches, books, or messages to their child, they must report to the main school office.

Confidentiality: Parents are encouraged to make the school aware of personal situations or issues that may impact their child's school performance by means of a note or phone contact with the Principal. The Principal will share sensitive information about a student with faculty and staff only on a need-to-know basis, with the consent of the parent.

Personal information shared by a student with a teacher (or other school personnel) through any means, verbal or written, will be treated confidentially unless, in the professional judgment of the teacher, disclosing the information is necessary to protect student health or safety. The teacher will report concerns to the Principal, who will take action as warranted. This policy includes information shared in student journals as part of a class assignment.

Problem Resolution: Communication and cooperation between a parent/guardian and a teacher are essential to a student's success. **If at any time a problem arises, the parent must first consult with the teacher.** If a resolution of the problem is not achieved the Principal should be consulted by the parent. The Principal may choose to convene a conference to address the matter and may seek the advice of the Pastor. If a satisfactory solution is not achieved, the Executive Committee of the School Board consisting of the Pastor, Principal, President, Vice-President, and the Secretary of the School Board may be involved as an appeal board.

Parental Dissatisfaction: When parents are seriously dissatisfied with an aspect of the school's program or operation, which the administration deems as integral to or in the best interest of the school, and they have exhausted all efforts at a mutual resolution of the problem, they should exercise their option of choosing another school. When the dissatisfaction results in continued agitation on the part of the parent, the administration may exercise the school's right to withdraw permission for enrollment of the child or children.

School Board

The St. Thomas More Catholic School Board has been established to research, formulate, and evaluate policies for the school. The board assists the Principal and Pastor through the performance of the functions defined in their by-laws. The School Board does not deal with issues of discipline until all proper channels have been exhausted.

The School Board meets monthly. All meetings are open to the public. However, in order to speak at a meeting, a person must be put on the agenda 10 days prior to the meeting. This can be done by contacting the School Board President.

Any registered member of St. Thomas More Catholic Parish who is at least 18 years of age, and approved by the Pastor, may seek a School Board position. Elections may be held in May of each year, for three-year terms.

Access to Student Records

The student's cumulative record is kept on file in the School Office. Only those people who have a legitimate right to view these records may see them. Those with a legitimate right are the parents/legal guardians, and authorized school personnel.

Access to and disclosure of student records are provided according to the following guidelines.

- 1) Parents/legal guardians may view these records one working day after submitting a written request. While examining, an administrator or teacher must be present.
- 2) The school will consider a written request to amend a student record. Such a request needs to identify the proposed change and specify reasons for the change. If approved by the Principal, the student record will be amended.
- 3) Parents must provide written consent for release of student records, with the exception of disclosure to other school personnel with legitimate educational interests or disclosure upon legal requirement to provide student record information.
- 4) Release of official copies of student records is contingent upon written consent of the parent/guardian, and fulfillment of financial obligations to the school.
- 5) The school will release an elementary graduate's record upon the request of the enrolling high school, without written consent of parent/guardian. **Such release will only be made if all financial obligations to the school are fulfilled.**

Rights of Non-Custodial Parents

Below is the St. Thomas More Catholic School policy on the rights to school information of parents who do not have custody of their child.

- 1) **Court Orders:** At the time of registration, or as the parents become aware, court orders relevant to student and/or school information must be presented to the Principal by either or both parents.
- 2) **Records:** Non-custodial parents may submit written requests for their children's records unless a court order prohibits them from doing so. School personnel may assume the non-custodial parent has a right to the student's records unless a court order to the contrary has been provided. School personnel do not need permission from the custodial parent, but they will attempt to notify the custodial parent that they intend to comply with a request from the non-custodial parent.
- 3) **Conferences and Information:** Non-custodial parents may attend regular parent/teacher conferences or arrange special parent/teacher conferences unless they have been restricted from doing so by a court order. General school information, such as lunch menus or announcements of school events, is not considered part of a student's records. The school is not required to provide such information to non-custodial parents, but may comply with requests if it is feasible to do so.
- 4) **Other Contacts:** The school will not release a child to the non-custodial parent unless asked to do so in writing by the custodial parent. If custody has not been decided, the student may leave with either parent unless a court order to the contrary has been provided. Non-custodial parents may visit the classroom unless restricted by a court order. (See classroom visitation policy.)
- 5) **Joint Custody Information:** If parents have joint custody, each parent will have the same rights unless restricted by court order. The school may require a copy of the legal document indicating who is the custodial parent, and may also require identification from the non-custodial parent.

Home and School Association

The essential purpose of this group is to provide support to the principal, teachers, and students of St. Thomas More Catholic School through joint efforts of the school and the home. This is accomplished primarily through the coordination of volunteers for many areas of the school. The Home and School Association also organizes fund-raising events throughout the year, which help supply the school with needed items. A form is sent home in the Final Registration Folder for parents to sign up to volunteer in the many areas needed.

Parent Participation Program (PPP)

The success of St. Thomas More Catholic School depends on a spirit of cooperation and shared sacrifice of time and talent among parents and school staff for the good of students. There are many opportunities for parent volunteer service to the school or parish, such as helping with class field trips or celebrations, baking for teacher appreciation days, working concessions, coaching teams for the sports club, or working at the Bazaar. Parents of St. Thomas More Catholic School students are expected to contribute a minimum of 40 hours of volunteer service per year. (Single-parent families,

20 hours per year.) A handbook detailing the Parent Participation Program is available in the school office. This program is not a substitute for weekly tithing, but a school support program.

Section III---Admissions

Non-Discrimination Policy

Be it resolved that St. Thomas More Catholic School admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origins to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at this school. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in the administration of our educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

Records Required for Admission

St. Thomas More Catholic School observes all applicable Nebraska laws regarding records required for admission. All students must submit:

Immunization Card

Each student **MUST** have a completed Immunization Card on file in the school office. These cards are inspected by the Health Department for compliance. The Nebraska School Immunization Law requires that all students be immunized and **PROVIDE PROOF** of immunization before the students may be admitted to classes on the first day of school. See page 32 and 33 for listing of immunizations required.

Emergency Card

Each student **MUST** have an Emergency Card on file in the school office. These cards will be distributed at final registration. All families are asked to **complete** the card. Please inform the school office in writing if your home phone number, work number, or any other information on the card changes during the school year.

In addition to the above documents, **new students** to St. Thomas More Catholic School must submit:

- An original copy of their birth certificate
- Evidence of a recent physical examination, if transferring from another state.

State law also requires that each student entering Kindergarten or Seventh Grade provide evidence of a physical examination and vision test within six months prior to entering that grade. By state statute, no child will be admitted to kindergarten unless they will have reached the age of five years on or before October 15 of the current year.

Preschool Admission

To be eligible to enroll in the three-year-old class, your child must turn three by October 15th of the respective school year. Four-year-olds must turn four by October 15th of their respective school year. All preschoolers must be fully potty trained.

Transfer Student and New Student Admission

All transfer and new students shall complete a New Registration form with payment and submit it to the St. Thomas More Catholic School Office. Those families already having children in the school are expected to re-register each spring for the coming school year.

All applicants shall be reviewed by the Principal and assigned a priority in accordance with current admissions policy. There is to be an interview with the child and parents by the Principal and Pastor if requested. Pending the results of the interview, and on a space available basis, the parent shall be notified in verbally or in writing regarding acceptance or non-acceptance. Any application for admission, which cannot be honored due to classroom size shall be placed on a waiting list, and so advised in writing. The applicant will be assigned a position on the waiting list based on the admission policy. In order to remain on the waiting list, the applicant shall re-contact St. Thomas More Catholic School at the beginning of the next fall term.

It may be determined by the principal, that due to the circumstances associated with an applicant's prior school experiences, the student should be placed on a **Behavior Contract**. The purpose of the Behavior Contract is to clarify expectations of the school for the student and the parents. Students placed on a Behavior Contract are accepted conditionally and may be asked to withdraw if they are unable to comply with the mutually agreed contract. Applicants for admission, which do not meet the admission guidelines, shall be returned to the applicant with reasons for non-acceptance.

Students who are determined to have special education needs shall follow the guidelines set forth by the Archdiocese, which are on file in the Principal's office. Every effort will be made to collaborate with the public school district of residence to provide the designated services identified for a special education student in accordance with the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP).

All transfer students and their families shall be made aware that acceptance for admission is conditionally based upon the ability of the student to successfully acclimate to their new environment and to academically prosper. If after a sufficient time to allow for necessary adjustments to our new school setting, it is evident that the student is not progressing, the student and family may be asked to leave the school.

Section IV- School Schedules and Attendance

State Requirements

The State of Nebraska requires 1032 instructional hours for an elementary school and 400 hours for kindergarten. St. Thomas More Catholic School will meet or go beyond those hours. In accordance with the State of Nebraska, St. Thomas More Catholic School has established the following policies:

- Religion classes are incorporated into the school day as an essential part of the instructional program.
- First through eighth grade classes attend Mass at least once a week and whenever there are special all-school Masses.
- All field trips are planned as part of the instructional program and therefore are considered a part of the school day.
- Special events for the students are scheduled as part of the regular school program.
- During Kindergarten Round-Up, the current kindergarten is excused from school.
- The eighth-grade classes complete their attendance requirements on the day of the all-school Mass *celebrating their graduations*.
- Pawprints Preschool will have a graduation ceremony for the 4 and 5 year olds approximately one week before school ends for the other students.

School Day Start, Dismissal Times, and Use of the Parking Lot

The school day begins at 8:00 a.m. Students may enter the building at 7:55 a.m. or earlier with teacher permission. School dismisses at 3:10 p.m.

The morning session of **Pawprints Preschool** begins at 8:00 a. m. and dismisses at 11:00 a. m. Afternoon session of Pawprints Preschool will convene at 12:10 and dismiss at 3:00. Parents are asked to please escort their child to the classroom. Preschool students should not arrive more than 10 minutes before school is to start.

Student Safety Patrol members are on duty at street crossings near the school from 7:45 a.m. to 8:05 a.m. and from 3:10 p.m. to 3:25 p.m.

Students should not be on school grounds earlier than 7:45 a.m., or later than 3:25 p.m. The school is not responsible for supervision during these times. If transportation issues require a student to be on school grounds before 7:45 a.m. or later than 3:25 p.m., the parent/guardian should enroll the child in St. Thomas More's **Extended Care Program**. Extended Care Program hours are from 7:00 in the morning until 8:00 a. m., and in the afternoon from 3:10 until 5:00 p. m. There will be an additional charge after 5:15 p.m. Information on the program is available in the school office.

Bicycles are not to be ridden on the school grounds during school hours. Upon reaching the school grounds, the bicycle is to be walked to the place assigned for parking and should be locked. The school is not responsible for damaged or stolen bicycles.

Safety Patrol members will be on duty before and after school. Please remind your children that they should obey these patrol members. These students are there to help insure the safety of your children and deserve the respect of everyone. **Please do not ask your child(ren) to cross in the middle of the street, disregarding the crosswalk areas.** This is extremely dangerous, and disregards the patrols who, are there to cross your children safely. **Grover Street especially has a high volume of vehicle traffic.**

All students are dismissed from the parking lot east of the school. Parents who wish to pick-up their children should do so on 48th Street, between Grover and B Streets, which is one-way south during school times. **Parking is limited to the far south end of the school/church parking lot and has a restricted access so that students may safely cross the lot.** For the safety of all children, we ask all drivers to obey these rules, especially when the weather is inclement.

Morning Drop-Off of Students

To ease traffic congestion in the morning, it is asked that drivers observe the **ONE WAY TRAFFIC** and **NO PARKING** signs on the 48th Street section just south of the church on the west side of the street from 7:30-8:30 a. m. on school days. Parents are asked to pull as far up to the south end of the sidewalk as possible on 48th Street so that children might be dropped off safely at the curb.

To create a safe area in the parking lot for children to cross to the school entrance when they are arriving at school from 48th Street, cones will be placed to restrict parking to the far south end of the lot beginning at 7:45 a. m. Drivers are asked to respect this demarcation and park, when necessary, in the far south end of the east lot. Parents who need to park to walk their child into school, are welcome to park on the south end of the church/school lot or on the east side of 48th Street.

Lunch Program

In accordance with Federal law and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W. Washington, D. C. 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TY). USDA is an equal opportunity provide and employer.

Cafeteria Schedule (lunch periods last approximately 20 minutes)

Preschoolers:	11:17
Kdg. -3 rd	11:15
4 th -5 th	11:20
6 th -8 th	12:00

Every school family is asked to help **supervise the lunchroom** two times per school year. If you are unable to fulfill this obligation, please find a substitute.

Supervision of the lunchroom is limited to assisting the kitchen staff in the serving and cleaning-up of lunch. **Volunteers are not disciplinarians of students.** Should a

discipline problem occur in the lunchroom, it should be brought to the attention of the certified staff member on duty or the Principal.

Lunch Tickets

Lunch tickets may be first purchased at Sneak-a-Peek Night the Monday night of the first week of school. When your child needs a new lunch ticket, enclose the appropriate amount (checks made out to St. Thomas More) in an envelope with your child's name and homeroom number and send it to school with your child.

Prices for 2009-2010 school year:

Ten-day lunch ticket pre K-5 grades:	\$1.90 x10=\$19.00
Twenty-day lunch ticket pre K-5 grades:	\$1.90 x 20= \$38.00
Ten-day lunch ticket 6-8 grades:	\$2.00 x 10=\$20.00
Twenty-day lunch ticket 6-8 grades:	\$2.00 x 20=\$40.00
Individual milk will be available	

Milk is already included with the cafeteria lunch. A milk ticket is available for students who bring their own cold lunch. Free and reduced-price lunches are available to families who qualify. Application forms are available in the school office.

Students are free to go to their own homes for lunch if their parents wish, but no patrollers are on duty. However, students may not go to the home of another student or to a restaurant unless accompanied by their own parent or guardian, or with special permission. If there is an emergency situation, which makes it necessary for a student to go to another home, the parents must call the school office with the necessary details. Students who go home for lunch must be back at school by 11:45a.m. for primary grades, 11:50 a.m. for intermediate grades, and 12:30 p.m. for middle school.

Recess

Children who are in grades pre K thru 5th will be expected to go out for the regular recess periods. Students cannot be left in the rooms while the teacher is supervising the rest of the class. Any exception to this rule will be determined by the parents, the teacher, and the Principal.

Whenever time and weather permit within the lunch period, 6th-8th grade students will be taken outside after they have eaten (for approximately 10 minutes).

St. Thomas More School employees are solely responsible for the safety and supervision of students during recess. For the safety of our students, volunteers and other visitors are not permitted to approach or engage students during recess for any purpose. When attempts are made by volunteers and/or visitors to interact or engage students during recess they will risk the right to be a guest of the school in the future.

Weather and Emergency Dismissals

Hot Weather: Classrooms are equipped with window air-conditioning units, so special dismissals due to heat are no longer necessary.

Snow Days: In the event of snow or ice storms, St. Thomas More Catholic School will follow the Catholic School Office policy concerning closing. The decision to close school will be announced on radio station KFAB (1110 am) and most local television stations before 7:00 a.m. and identified as ***Omaha Catholic Schools***.

Emergencies: If there is an emergency during the day, which requires an early dismissal, it will be announced on radio station KFAB. Students will be held at school until picked up by their parents, unless other arrangements have been indicated on the student's Emergency Card on file in the school office.

Make-up Work, Absences, & Tardies

Make-up Work

Students are responsible for making up work missed as a result of a tardy or absence. **Upon the day of their return**, students are required to visit with each teacher to determine what effort they must make to complete missed assignments, projects, quizzes, and tests in a timely manner. Most often, students will have the same number of days to make up work as they were absent. However, they are strongly encouraged to engage in efforts to reclaim missed instruction and complete all work as soon as possible.

Tardies

If parents anticipate that their child is going to be tardy in arriving at school, the parent/guardian **must send a note** explaining the child's late arrival before the child will be admitted to class. The child is to report to the office with their note to receive a tardy slip before going to the classroom. **After 10 tardies per quarter, a letter will be sent home to make parents aware of the learning opportunities that have been lost.** This also creates additional work for the teacher and administration. For chronic tardy problems of more than 10 per quarter, additional tutoring may be recommended so that students are able to meet learning standards.

Absences

If a child is going to be absent from school due to illness or other **unexpected cause**, the parent/guardian must contact the school office on the first day of the absence. When the student is able to return to school, he/she must bring a written note, with a parent signature, listing the date of the absence and the reason for the absence.

When a student will be absent from school due to **a planned absence**, a note should be sent to school prior to the absence giving the reason for the absence and the dates. If the teacher is given enough notice, lessons that will be missed, may be sent home to be done during the time the student is gone.

If a child becomes ill during the school day, the parents will be contacted before the student is allowed to leave school. The call will be made by a staff member. The child

will never call home directly. Parents should make sure two reliable persons are listed on the Emergency Card on file in the school office, who can be contacted in case it is impossible for the school to reach the parent. These should be people who can come to the school if it is necessary.

If a child has to leave school early, he/she must present a written note, with parent signature, to the homeroom teacher. The child should check in at the office before leaving school.

If you usually pick up your child after school and find that you will be late, please contact the school office so that we are able to inform the child. Younger children become very anxious if they are not picked up at the usual time.

Excessive Absences

The progress of a child at school depends on punctuality and regular attendance. Absences can prove to be a serious detriment to progress. **This should be kept in mind when scheduling family vacations and medical or dental appointments.**

Any student who misses more than fourteen days per semester, at the discretion of the teacher and Principal, may be required to attend one tutoring session for each day over fourteen days missed. The tutoring will be done by the homeroom teacher or another designated teacher. There may be a fee which will be given to the tutor. A student who is habitually tardy and thereby consistently missing a class may also be required to attend tutoring sessions, at the discretion of the faculty, staff, and Principal. If a student fails to attend these assigned tutoring sessions, an “incomplete” may be recorded on the report card. Unless this “incomplete” is removed, it will become an “F” at the end of the school year and will be recorded as such on the student’s cumulative record.

Truancy

Truancy is the violation of Nebraska’s Compulsory Attendance Law through excessive absences from school. The administration carefully reviews cases of excessive student absences. Unexcused absences may be interpreted as truancy. Unexcused absences are times when a student is absent and the school is unsure of the student’s whereabouts due to lack of notification by parents or guardians. All St. Thomas More Catholic School parents should be aware of the following guidelines and procedures.

When a student’s unexcused absences exceed five days or equivalent hours per quarter, or twenty days or equivalent hours for a given year, the school shall:

- 1) Notify parents of the potential for charges of truancy.
- 2) Work with the parents in documenting a plan to limit excessive absences.

If the student fails to meet the conditions of the documented plan, the school will serve written notice to the parent or guardian, warning him or her to comply with the Nebraska Compulsory Attendance Law and advising him or her that failure to do so will be reported to the county attorney. Upon the next failure to meet the conditions of the plan, the school shall file a report with the county attorney.

Section V---Academics

Curriculum

St. Thomas More Catholic School will hold a Curriculum Night in the fall to provide information to parents about what their child will learn in core subjects (Religion, Reading, Math, Science, Social Studies, Language Arts) and in “specials” (Music, Physical Education, Computers, Spanish, Art, and Library). St. Thomas More Catholic School follows a standards-based curriculum prepared by the Archdiocese of Omaha Catholic School Office that provides clear expectations for education standards as well as specific Nebraska Standards relating to each essential program standard.

St. Thomas More Catholic School is accredited by the State of Nebraska. As an accredited school, we are in compliance with all the numbered provisions under Title 92, Chapter 10 as regulated by the Nebraska Department of Education.

Classroom teachers will periodically update parents on activities and topics being covered in classes. Also, students will often bring home completed homework papers and tests to show their parents; sometimes these will need to be signed and returned. Parents should remember to check the contents of their child’s backpack frequently so as not to miss important information. Papers are frequently sent home on Thursdays.

Religious Instruction and Non-Catholic Students

St. Thomas More Catholic School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in the administration of our educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs. While accepting students of many faiths, it is understood that students enrolled in St. Thomas More Catholic School will participate in all faith liturgies and practices, and be held accountable for all religious instruction. This includes the learning of prayers and the completion of all assignments and assessments.

Multicultural Education

It is the policy of St. Thomas More Catholic School to utilize the resources of curriculum, instruction, in-service, counseling, and guidance to reflect the racial, ethnic, language and cultural heritage of both historical and modern-day United States of America by observing the following objectives:

- 1) To select materials and methods that will eliminate bias and stereotypes in our schools.
- 2) To conduct in-service programs for our faculty and staff that will assist them to understand a multicultural approach and to reflect this in their teaching and administrative duties.
- 3) To encourage all students to grow in self-esteem and to understand and develop their academic and human potential.
- 4) To guard against grouping of students that reflects racial, ethnic or cultural bias.

Special Education

Recognizing that individual differences exist among students, St. Thomas More Catholic School makes reasonable adjustments and accommodations to help students develop skills affecting academic growth. Differentiation of instruction is one strategy employed by teachers so that students receive effective instruction. Teaching staff will gather to review student progress when concerns are warranted by the Student Assistance Team (SAT). When developmental delays and/or behavioral impairments exist to the degree that academic progress is impaired, the school administration, after consultation with parents, will help initiate a referral to an appropriate agency or resource if necessary.

After diagnosis by qualified personnel, suggestions for helping the student will be implemented by school staff. If this assistance does not result in significant progress within a specified time, the school administrator will assist parents in identifying a more helpful educational situation for the student.

Homework

In order for students to more fully benefit from the instruction at St. Thomas More Catholic School, homework is assigned as a matter of policy. This homework may be extra practice on topics covered in the classroom, or special enrichment material to enhance the student's learning.

Parents should provide a place and time where homework may be done without distractions. A regular schedule should be established and followed faithfully. When the students do not have a specific assignment, they should be encouraged to read for pleasure or spend some extra time on a particularly difficult subject.

Classroom teachers will inform parents of their grade level specific policies on homework early in the school year. It is to be expected that children entering junior high will experience a significant amount of additional homework. However, if you find that your child is spending an inordinate amount of time on homework, you should contact the classroom teacher. A conference may help discover what type of problem exists.

Students and parents should expect that when homework assignments are not completed regularly and to the student's level of capability, student's grades may suffer. In an effort to encourage the student to complete missed assignments and improve performance, time after school in "Study Center" may be assigned at all school levels.

REACH

The R.E.A.C.H. enrichment program acronym stands for **Really Eager And Climbing Higher**. This program is offered for 3rd through 8th grade students during second semester. *Terra Nova* standardized test scores are reviewed to determine placement. According to the Nebraska State Gifted Guidelines, students qualifying should be in the 95th percentile range in reading and /or math. Some may also qualify by teacher recommendation. Certificates are awarded at the end of the year to participants. A grant

is written yearly through the archdiocese to help fund this enrichment activity. Curriculum may include exposure to a foreign language, a class in photography, or some other stimulating enrichment activity.

Graduation For Eighth Graders

All eighth grade students who fulfill graduation requirements are expected to participate in the graduation ceremony held in St. Thomas More Catholic Church. At the end of each year the cost of graduation (which includes flowers, diplomas, graduation gowns, and other incurred expenses) will be totaled and distributed evenly among the graduates. This graduation fee must be paid prior to the eighth graders' last full day of school along with all other outstanding fees and tuition for each eighth grader to participate in the graduation ceremony.

Student Evaluation and Honor Roll (Grades and Report Cards)

Report cards are issued quarterly. Parents/Guardians are urged to take a healthy interest in their student's progress report, letting the student understand that progress and behavior in school are matters over which parents keep close watch. Pay attention to indications on the report card that your student may need to improve in some habit or attitude. Growth in desirable habits usually helps to promote better academic progress. It is important that the student be commended for accomplishments and encouraged to work on designated areas.

Generally, St. Thomas More Catholic School uses a letter grading scale (**A, B, C, D, F**). In addition, **Satisfactory and Unsatisfactory** are used to indicate whether the student is working at his/her level of competence and to indicate behavior or attitude in class.

Honor Roll will be calculated based upon a calculated grade point average (GPA) for seventh and eighth grade students at semester reporting. The following designation will be used:

High Honors	4.00 to 3.70	A to A ⁺
Honors	3.69 to 3.50	B ⁺

Some progress reports will be given in the primary grades for individual subjects. In the intermediate grades and junior high mid-term progress reports are sent home halfway through each quarter. Parents are asked to study these carefully and discuss them with their student. A conference with the appropriate teacher may be indicated and should be arranged. If there are any questions, please contact the appropriate teacher directly to help to clarify understandings of the progress report and what positive responses can be taken to redirect the student towards more productive student achievement.

Academic Difficulties

When a student fails to complete or hand in an assignment they may need to attend Study Center after school where it will be necessary to complete the homework before they leave with the teacher who assigned it.

Tutoring help may be necessary and is available after excessive absences. Parents should be aware that when students are frequently absent, recovering missed learning may be extremely difficult for them.

What happens when poor performance persists?

The parents, the teacher, and the principal may work together to develop an academic strategy or contract for the student. If the student is capable of completing the work and adequate progress towards meeting the requirements of the contract is not seen within two weeks, the student may be excluded from school-sponsored extracurricular activities for the remainder of the semester. If progress is still not being made, further consequences will be considered. Most importantly, we want to work together to inspire and motivate our students to excel because they know we care for and believed in them

The Sports Club in collaboration with the school administration has a policy on **Academic Sports Eligibility**, which makes it clear to coaches that if a student's participation on a team interferes with academic progress, the coach will honor and cooperate with a decision to temporarily limit participation. **When students are failing any subject or have an 'incomplete'** as indicated by a **progress report or report card**, those students lose the right to participate in Sports Club sponsored sports and/or school sponsored extracurricular activities for at least two consecutive weeks. The Sports Club president is notified by the principal regarding those students under temporary suspension. Grades must be raised to passing for the student to be reinstated to participate again. More details on this policy are provided under the section titled "Academic Sports Eligibility" listed below.

What happens if the teacher is concerned that a student should repeat a year?

When poor academic progress suggests that a student might benefit from retention of a grade, parents will be notified prior to the end of the third quarter. Through a conference with the parents, teacher, and Principal, a decision will be reached based on the maturity level and the academic achievement of the child, and the result of the *Light's Retention Scale*, an objective assessment of student retention. If a parent decides to send their child to the next grade against the recommendation of the administration, a waiver must be signed by the parents. Final approval on this decision rests with the Principal.

Summer School Recommendations

Recommendations for those students needing summer school will be sent to the parents during the last quarter of the school year. When this recommendation is made, it is the parent's responsibility to follow the recommendation.

Academic Sports Eligibility

In order to better assist students in managing an equal balance between activities and academics, **students** who participate in Sports Club sponsored sports and/or school sponsored extracurricular activities must adhere to the following guidelines to maintain eligibility to participate:

- **All student grades must be reported above a grade of "F" on their progress reports and report cards. Incompletes and "F's" will cause the student to become ineligible.** The period of ineligibility will last for a **minimum of two weeks**.

At the end of the two week period, the student may request a grade update from the teacher of the class(es) in contention. **Initiation of the grade review for the purpose of reinstatement of eligibility rests solely with the student.** Therefore, the student must make the request made known to the teacher.

- After a request for a grade review has been completed and the grade(s) is (are) no longer an “F” or incomplete, a *Student Eligibility Update* form will be completed by the teacher and sent home to the parents, and sent to the Sports Club President so that he may notify the associated team coach. The teacher will notify the students of their updated grade status.
- All students must behave in a respectful and Christian manner in school and at all school related activities.

Computer Usage

At times teachers will instruct students to research on the internet. Students’ access to the internet will be limited solely to those websites that will facilitate their search for identified information as directed by the teacher. The computer teacher will be reviewing the agreement statement for all students using the computer to insure their compliance with this policy. Guidelines for Social Networking are provided in Section X—Behavior and Consequences. The internet use agreement can be found in **Section XI : Miscellaneous** of this handbook. A signature on this agreement form was required at Final Registration.

Standardized Testing

The *Terra Nova*, *The Third Edition Complete Battery* is required for grades 3, 5, and 7 are administered to students in September. The *Explore* high school readiness exam will be administered to all 8th graders. This change in type of standardize testing (formally *Iowa Tests of Basic Skills*, ITBS) was directed after thorough review by the Catholic Schools Office to begin in the fall of the 2010-2011 school year. The results of these tests will be provided to parents so that they may monitor their student’s progress. It is recommended that when analyzing a student’s test results, parents and educators examine the NPR or National Percentile Rank score since this compares students to other students of the same grade who took the same test at the same time throughout the nation.

The Catholic High Schools Placement Exam is given in January to 8th graders planning to attend Catholic High Schools in the fall. Contact the Catholic High School of your choice to register your child for this exam.

Field Trips

Many times a student’s learning can be enhanced by traveling to an educational site outside the school building on a field trip. Field trips are privileges afforded to students; no student has an absolute right to a field trip. Students can be denied participation if they fail to meet academic or behavioral requirements. Since they are of an educational nature, students will be held responsible to attend and participate in field trips as a class when they are scheduled.

In order to attend a field trip, a student must have a signed parent permission form. These are sent home with the student prior to the field trip and must be returned to the teacher by the designated date. The permission form includes all information of which the parents need to be aware: destination; date and time of departure from school and arrival back at school; teacher or person in charge of the students; cost involved; educational purpose of the trip; and method of transportation.

If the student does not return a signed parent permission form and verbal permission is not delivered over the phone, he/she will not be allowed to attend the field trip. The student will be assigned to a supervised location at school for the duration of the trip.

Parents who volunteer to help on field trips must have a completed Driver Information Form on file in the school office and are recommended to have completed the Safe Environment Training class. All parent helpers need to be fully aware of their responsibilities, and should not bring any children with them other than the students assigned to them. Parent drivers should take the most direct route to and from school to the place of the field trip, and must be sure that each child is seat-belted in an appropriate seat in their vehicle. When parents regularly volunteer to assist with student transportation and chaperoning, parents are expected to complete and retain current *Safe Environment* certification.

School Library

The goal of the St. Thomas More Catholic School library is to bring students and information together for intellectual, physical and spiritual development. Through the use of the Auto Librarian Computer Program and other resources, students will acquire location skills in the Dewey Decimal System, reference, research and reporting, periodicals, vertical file, biography, fiction and nonfiction, and literature appreciation.

Book talks will introduce authors and series of books to help students learn how to choose a book and read for enjoyment and for learning facts.

The Accelerated Reader Program set up through the library and coordinated with teachers in each classroom will enhance the students' interpretation skills. This involves reading books and taking quizzes to evaluate comprehension and retention. The library can be accessed by students and staff during all school hours on all school days and is located on the main floor.

School Counselor

St. Thomas More Catholic School contracts with Catholic Charities to provide a part-time school counselor. The counselor is available for classroom visitation, to consult with teachers, and to see students individually. A student can be referred to the counselor by a parent, teacher or Principal, or the student may initiate the contact.

Each family is asked to sign a permission form that will allow a student to see the counselor. This form is provided in the Final Registration folder. The counselor will only see a student individually if there is a signed permission form on record for that

year. The counselor will contact the parent if he/she thinks that the child should be referred to an outside agency for further counseling. The counselor can provide parents information that may be helpful to their child's development, and lists of appropriate community agencies and resources.

The counselor may come into classrooms to teach all students, working together with classroom teachers to deliver curriculum in the areas of academic and career planning, and personal and social skills development.

Extra-curricular Activities and Clubs

St. Thomas More Catholic School offers students the opportunity to participate in a variety of extra-curricular activities throughout the year. Some of the school activities and clubs include but may not be limited to the following:

Savio Club--a service oriented eighth grade club

Angel of God Club—a positive incentive program that meets weekly with Kdg-8th graders

The More Store—a positive incentive program that allows students to exchange tokens they earn for good works for prizes and gifts

St. John Bosco's Vox Christi—a vocation discernment group for 3rd-8th graders that meets monthly at the school

Section VI—Code of Conduct

Code of Conduct

St. Thomas More Catholic School’s Code of Conduct is to provide guidelines for the community so that students, parents, and staff will live and grow in their love of Jesus Christ and His teachings. The rules and their consequences are intended to assist parents, students, faculty, and staff in this task. The cooperation of all involved is required to fulfill our mission.

Discipline is a system of rules and regulations that govern the conduct of the students and staff enabling them to create a positive, productive learning environment. Just as academic learning is an on-going process, so too is the mastery of discipline skills so each student will ultimately become self-disciplined and self-directed. Positive methods of discipline will be used and encouraged.

Appropriate behavior in school is a responsibility to be shared by students, parents, and staff, the School Board, and the St. Thomas More Catholic School community. Self-discipline skills will be taught to students and integrated with all other instruction throughout the school day.

The Well-Managed Classroom

The administration and teaching staff are trained in a Boys Town Education model known as *The Well-Managed Classroom*. This discipline model provides instruction for strong, positive teacher-student and peer relationships, instructional methods that motivate students, management techniques that maximize students “on-task” behaviors, and problem-solving and behavior management techniques that empower students to responsibly manage their behavior.

Teaching social skills is imperative if we are committed to help students achieve success in school and beyond. By giving students the basic tools for social interaction, we are shaping their success experiences in the classroom, with their peers, and in future employment opportunities.

The administration and staff instruct students on the 16 social (life) skills of *The Well-Managed Classroom* to help students to become good self-managers. A partial list of these life skills is presented on the following page.

Girls and Boys Town Social (Life) Skills

Following Instructions

1. Look at the person.
2. Say "Okay."
3. Do what you've been asked right away.
4. Check back.

Accepting "No" for an Answer

1. Look at the person
2. Say "Okay."
3. Stay calm.
4. If you disagree, ask later.

Getting the Teacher's Attention

1. Look at the teacher.
2. Raise your hand and stay calm.
3. Wait until the teacher says your name.
4. Ask your question.
5. Listen to the other person.

Making an Apology

1. Look at the person.
2. Use a serious, sincere voice.
3. Say "I'm sorry for ..." or "I want to apologize for..."
4. Explain how you plan to do better in the future.
5. Say "Thanks for listening."

Having a Conversation

1. Look at the person.
2. Use a pleasant voice.
3. Listen to what the other person says
4. When there is a break in the conversation, ask a question or share your thoughts.

Asking Permission

1. Look at the person.
2. Use a calm and pleasant voice.
3. Say "May I...?"
4. Accept the answer calmly.
5. Ignore distractions and interruptions from others.

Sharing Something

1. Let the other person use the item first.
2. Ask if you can use it later.
3. When you get to use it, offer it back to the other person after you are finished.
4. Work on tasks until completed.

Listening

1. Look at the person who is talking and remain quiet.
2. Wait until the person is finished talking before you speak.
3. Show that you heard the person by nodding your head, saying, "Okay," or "That's interesting," etc. needed.

Accepting Criticism or a Consequence

1. Look at the person.
2. Say "Okay."
3. Stay calm.

Greeting Others

1. Look at the person.
2. Use a pleasant voice.
3. Say "Hi" or "Hello."

Disagreeing Appropriately

1. Look at the person.
2. Use a pleasant voice.
3. Tell why you feel differently.
4. Give a reason.

Accepting Compliments

1. Look at the person.
2. Use a pleasant voice.
3. Say "Thank you."

Asking for Help

1. Look at the person.
2. Ask the person if he or she has the time to help you.
3. Clearly explain the kind of help that you need.
4. Thank the person for helping.

Staying on Task

1. Look at your task or assignment.
2. Think about the steps needed to complete the task.
3. Focus all of your attention on the task.
4. Stop working only when instructed.

Working With Others

1. Identify the task to be completed.
2. Assign tasks to each person.
3. Discuss ideas in a calm, quiet voice, and let everyone share their ideas.

Appropriate Voice Tone

1. Listen to the level of the voices around you.
2. Change your voice tone to match.
3. Watch and listen for visual and verbal cues
And adjust your voice as needed.

Section VII—Dress Code

Dress Code

In adherence to our philosophy, proper dress will enhance the learning environment. Personal appearance, cleanliness and hygiene should reflect an attitude of self-worth and school pride on the part of the student. It is the parents' responsibility to know and ensure their child(ren) follow the uniform code for students in kindergarten through the eighth grades. Preschool students do not wear uniforms, but clothing is expected to be neat and tidy. Students out of uniform will be sent to the office and the parent/guardian will be called to rectify the problem. Demerits or card signatures in the primary grades may be issued or a small fine may be assessed for violations of the dress code.

At the Dennis Uniform Company and for only \$3, a permanent school monogram of St. Thomas More's logo can be placed upon any white or navy uniform polo shirt. New shirts can also be purchased with the monogram on it. The school encourages students to proudly wear their school logo on their uniform shirts.

Young Ladies – The uniform for girls is the Campbell plaid shift (K-3rd grade) and Campbell plaid box pleat skirt or skort (4th-8th grades.) Shifts/skirts must be no shorter than 3 inches above the knee. Girls may wear navy slacks (K-6th grade) or khaki slacks (7th & 8th grade) in place of the plaid shift, skirt or skort. (Slacks must be similar to those sold by Dennis Uniform—no cargo, corduroy, wind pants, etc.) If slacks have belt loops, a plain dark colored belt must be worn. If blouses are worn, they are to be long or short sleeved, tailored, and collared. Navy or white knit shirts may be worn as long as they meet the same standard (no logos). Shirts must be tucked in at the waist. No t-shirts with writing or designs that show through the shirts are allowed.

Beginning in the fall of 2008 girls in K-6th grades are also allowed to wear navy blue **Capri pants** and 7th & 8th grade girls can wear khaki Capri pants.

Young Men – The uniform for boys is solid navy slacks (K – 6th grade) and khaki slacks (7th & 8th grade). (Slacks must be similar to those sold by Dennis Uniform—no cargo, corduroy, wind pants, etc.) All slacks originally made with belts loops must be worn with a plain dark colored belt. Shirts are to be long or short sleeved, tailored, and collared. Navy or white knit (polo) shirts may be worn as long as they meet the same standard (no logos). Shirts must be tucked in at the waist. No t-shirts with writing or designs that show through the shirts are allowed.

Shorts – Uniform navy (K – 6th grade) and khaki (7th & 8th grade) walking shorts may be worn by students from **April 15 to October 15** and at other times as determined by the administration. Shorts should be knee length. Shorts must be similar to those sold by Dennis Uniform—no cargo, corduroy, nylon, etc. All shorts originally made with belt loops must be worn with a plain dark colored belt. Shorts are to be worn with uniform blouses/shirts.

Sweatshirts – An official St. Thomas More Catholic School sweatshirt may be worn as part of the school uniform with a collared white shirt underneath. This official sweatshirt will be the only sweatshirt that will be allowed to be worn at school. Junior high students

may wear an official St. Thomas More Catholic School navy blue sweatshirt with the St. Thomas More Catholic School logo. Students in kindergarten through 6th grade may wear an official green sweatshirt with the school's logo. Sweatshirts can be ordered at **Final Registration in May with the form provided. There are a limited number of times each year that these official sweatshirts can be ordered. They are delivered during our Sneak-a-Peek evening, the Monday of the first week of school in August.**

Socks – Plain (no logos) white, gray or navy socks or tights are to be worn with the uniform. **Socks must be worn at all times that rise above the ankle and cover the heel.**

Shoes – Athletic shoes are required for gym class and may be worn at other times. They must be neat, clean and in good condition. Shoes with laces must be properly tied. Please avoid wearing dark soled shoes that leave marks on our floors, During cold and/or wet weather, appropriate boots should be worn; however, no boots may be worn in the classrooms. No sandal type shoes may be worn.

Hair – Hairstyles must be simple and not obstruct students' vision. Hair must be kept neat and clean. If a style or extreme hair coloration causes a disruption in the learning environment, it is inappropriate. Above the collar is acceptable length for young men's hair. Administration will provide final approval of questionable hairstyles/color.

Fingernails- Finger nails are to be kept clean and cut to a reasonable length. Black, dark, or bright nail polish is not acceptable. Only clear or very light nail polish is acceptable for junior high girls.

Jewelry – Jewelry should be kept simple and appropriate. Dangling earrings are not allowed. Necklaces and bracelets will be limited to religious styles. Students may not wear jewelry on any visible pierced body parts other than the ear. Boys may not wear earrings.

Other Adornments – Excessive makeup is not appropriate. Students may not have temporary or permanent tattoos on any visible body part(s). Any makeup that is distracting to the teacher or the learning environment may be asked to be removed.

Dress-up Days/Dress-down (Spirit) Days – Out of uniform days will be announced and defined by the administration in advance. On Dress-Up Days students may wear dress-up (nice) clothes, but NO t-shirts, wind pants, jeans, sports clothes, or sweatshirts. Shorts may be worn as long as they are the length of the uniform shorts and in season by the dress code. Skirts must be the length of uniform skirts. NO flip-flops or slippers at any time. Shoulders and waists must be covered and shirts must be of sufficient length to reach the top of the waist band. All non-uniform apparel must be of a modest nature. The administration reserves the right for final clothing approval. Dress-down or Spirit Days require special administrative approval and are normally designated for the purpose of support and fund raising or as a spirit builder during special events. The weekly newsletter will provide dates and additional details when these days are approaching.

Clothes for P.E. –**Separate gym attire is required for the third through eighth grades.** Students are expected to change into a **spirit shirt (gold shirt with the STM**

logo sold through the school) and black shorts, which are to be as long as their uniform shorts. Other casual attire is no longer acceptable. Gym shoes must be an athletic-type of shoe that does not leave a mark on the floor.

Uniform Guidelines

- All uniforms must be consistent and color fast. Uniform items may be purchased from any vendor, but must be consistent with the dress code as described previously and must meet administrative standards. Plaids on girl's skirts must be consistent with the plaid available at Dennis Uniform Company.
- Additional uniform restrictions will be applied by the administration in response to changing styles and fads if they become disruptive to the learning environment.
- The administration will be the final judge in the enforcement of this code.

Some uniform supplier's include *Dennis Uniform Company*, 740 North 109th Court, Omaha, NE 68154 and *Educational Outfitters* at 2528 South 130th Avenue, 402.333.1099. Non-plaid uniform items may also be purchased through *Heartland Enterprises* and other retail outlets.

Violations of the Dress Code

Students out of uniform will be sent to the office and parent/guardian will be called to rectify the problem. Demerits or card signatures may be issued for minor violations of the dress code.

Section VIII--- Health and Safety

School Nurse

St. Thomas More Catholic School contracts with the *Visiting Nurses Association* for a school nurse. The nurse is responsible for maintaining student health records, and conducting health screenings. The nurse is on-site a designated number of hours per year.

Child Protective Services

When there is reasonable cause to believe that Child Abuse/Neglect has or will occur the state law mandates a referral to the authorities. In this case, a **verbal report** needs to be provided to either Child Protective Services (CPS) or to our local Law Enforcement agency. Keep in mind that if the child has physical indications/injuries or there are immediate safety issues, law enforcement (not CPS) has the authority to take immediate protective custody if necessary. The state and the Catholic School Office mandates that schools cooperate with CPS and law enforcement personnel in order to conduct their investigations.

By state statute 28-710 the child abuse mandatory reporting provisions define abuse or neglect as knowingly, intentionally, or negligently causing or permitting a minor child to be:

1. Placed in a situation that endangers his or her life or physical or mental health;
2. Cruelly confined or cruelly punished;
3. Deprived of necessary food, clothing, shelter, or care;
4. Left unattended in a motor vehicle if such minor child is six years of age or younger;
5. Sexually exploited by allowing, encouraging, or forcing such person to solicit for or engage in prostitution, debauchery, public indecency, or obscene or pornographic photography, films or depictions.

Immunizations & Physical Exams

Students are required to comply with the Nebraska School Immunization Rules and Regulations **before attending classes**. Exception to the immunization requirement is made only if a medical reason is documented by a physician assistant or nurse practitioner or for valid religious objections.

Before attending classes or at registration, the school must obtain the student's birth date, social security number, and immunization history. The Nebraska School Immunization Rules and Regulations require the following immunizations before attending classes: Grades: kindergarten, 7th, and out-of-state transfer students

- 3 doses DtaP, STP, St or Td vaccine with at least one dose given no earlier than 4 days before 4 years of age
- 3 doses of polio vaccine
- 2 doses MMR vaccine with first dose given no earlier than 4 days before the first birthday and the 2 doses separated by at least 28 days

- 3 doses of pediatric hepatitis B vaccine, or if the alternate hepatitis B vaccination schedule is used, 2 doses of adult hepatitis B vaccine specified for adolescents 11-15 years of age
- 1 dose of varicella vaccine before the 13th birthday OR doses at least 28 days apart if the first dose is given on or after the 13th birthday. Written documentation (including year) of varicella disease from parent/guardian or health care provided will be accepted.

All Other Grades

- 3 doses DtaP, DTP, DT, Td vaccine with at least one dose given no earlier than 4 days before 4 years of age (except grades 6 and 12)
- 3 doses polio vaccine
- 2 doses MMR vaccine given no earlier than 4 days before the first birthday and the 2 doses separated by at least 28 days
- 3 doses of pediatric hepatitis B vaccine, or if the alternate hepatitis B vaccination schedule is used, 2 doses of adult hepatitis B vaccine specified for adolescents 11-15 years of age (except grades 6 and 12).

Head Injury

A report will be made and parents contacted when their student receives a head injury. The report will contain a list of symptoms associated with head injury. Parents will be encouraged to contact their doctor if the student displays any of those symptoms.

Communicable Diseases

Evaluation of each situation involving a student with a communicable disease will be on a case-by-case basis. In the cases of some diseases, state law will be applicable. In cases in which blood borne pathogens are possible, the emergency response procedures provided by the Catholic Mutual Group will be followed.

Based upon information on Contagious and Infection Diseases from the Visiting Nurses Association, made effective 12/10/98, Title 173, Chapter 3 states criteria for minimum isolation and control measures for specific diseases. Since the incubation period, symptoms of illness, and infection periods are unique to each disease, appropriate responses to infections vary. St. Thomas More Catholic School will follow these guidelines.

Medications

School policy dictates that no student is to be given any medication without a written order from a physician. This includes aspirin, acetaminophen or any other type of pain reliever. The school does not purchase any medication, including pain relievers or cough medication, to give to students.

Parents wishing any child to take a prescribed medication during school hours must send a written, signed, and dated permission statement from a physician, along with the

medication, clearly marked, and in its original container (including inhalers). The medication will be kept in the school office unless it is required to be with the child.

If a student wishes to take cough drops, a note must be sent to school for the classroom teacher. The cough drops must be turned over to the classroom teacher for dispensing as needed.

Any child who brings medication to school and fails to notify the office with the appropriate authorizing permission must be sent to the office. The office will confiscate the medicine and attempt to contact the parent or guardian.

Asthma Protocol

Designated St. Thomas More Catholic School personnel have been trained to implement the Emergency Response to Life-Threatening Asthma or Systematic Allergic Reactions (Anaphylaxis) protocol mandated by the Nebraska Board of Education in Rule 59. Trained responders will be available to provide an EpiPen injection and Albuterol nebulizer treatments to any student or school employee should an emergency arise in the school building or grounds while school is in session.

Tobacco Policy

St. Thomas More Catholic School building is a smoke-free building in accordance with the Nebraska Clean Indoor Air Act (1979—LB3440). There are no designated smoking areas inside the building.

Fire and Disaster Drills

In order to insure the safety of the students, plans have been developed in case of either a fire or tornado emergency. These plans are practiced periodically throughout the year to be sure that the students are aware of the procedures.

The tornado shelters have been inspected and approved by the Omaha/Douglas County Office of Civil Defense to be sure that they are safe for the students. In case of a tornado, students will remain at school until they may safely return home.

Asbestos Notice

Our building materials contain asbestos. There is no danger to anyone as long as the material is not disturbed. Parents may view our state approved management plan by contacting the school office.

Cooperation with Law Enforcement

In cooperating with Law Enforcement Personnel or other Governmental Agents requesting access to students, St Thomas More administrators will grant such access in accord with the expressed wishes of the student's parents or legal guardian whenever possible while respecting the authority and directives of Law Enforcement Personnel.

Exceptions to parental wishes must be made in the case of warrants for arrest, police investigations of alleged crimes, and in the case of suspected child abuse as defined in Nebraska statutes. Step by step procedures for these occasions are contained in the Catholic School Office guidelines established by the Archdiocese of Omaha.

Safety and Security

St. Thomas More School staff work to insure the safety and security of its students during school hours when they are in or about the school building and grounds. One of the procedures followed is to keep all doors to the school building locked during school hours. On occasion this may not be the case due to a function going on in the school. Our policy simulates that at all other times, all visitors are asked to come to the main entrance and ring the buzzer, whereby approved admittance to the school office will be given after visual review of the visitor on camera. Many security cameras are located near all entrances/exits and inside the school building for added security.

Safety Plan

In the event of a school emergency, St. Thomas More Catholic School will initiate the school's Safety Plan to insure the safety and security of the students and staff. A manual has been written to provide procedures for a number of possible emergency scenarios that could occur in the school building and surrounding areas. These plans specify designated people, who will be called upon to assume roles of responsibility, and designated off-site evacuation locations. The manual does not cover every possible development; therefore, it may not always be in the safety interest of the students and staff to follow every procedural step. The Plan is a guide to follow that allows for rational judgment by those who assume the roles of responsibility at the time of each emergency.

Section IX—Roles and Responsibilities

Roles and Responsibilities-At the beginning of each school year the student, parent, and teacher will be required to sign a **Student//Parent/Staff Compact**. This Compact summarizes each member's responsibilities toward serving the mission of the school.

The **Student** is responsible for:

1. Participating fully and actively in liturgies and put his/her faith into practice daily.
2. Behaving in a manner that does not interfere with the rights of others.
3. Respecting and cooperating with all authority figures in the school.
4. Attending school daily, on time, and in uniform.
5. Listening, following directions and asking questions when clarification is needed.
6. Learning the essentials of good communication skills.
7. Working together to resolve problems.
8. Knowing and abiding by the St. Thomas More Catholic School rules and regulations.
9. Completing assigned school work to his/her full potential and abilities.

The **Parent** is responsible for:

1. Setting an example of respecting the worth of other persons and Jesus Christ's teaching.
2. Making sure their child attends school daily, on time and in uniform.
3. Reading, reviewing, and abiding by the school rules and regulations with family members.
4. Monitoring the academic progress of the student and timely completion of assignments by checking assignment notebooks and book bags.
5. Responding to a teacher or principal's request for information by returning a phone call, email, written note, or signing a permission slip or evaluation.
6. Cooperating with school and church officials when discipline is necessary.
7. Seeking from school and community agencies help in correcting their child's behavior.
8. Making restitution for any willful damages done by their child to the school, staff or student property.
9. Notifying the teacher and/or administrator of a child with special needs (i.e. a child having been diagnosed or in the process of being diagnosed with a learning disability and /or behavior impairment).
10. Keeping the tuition payment current and paying all fines and assigned fees.

The **Teacher** is responsible for:

1. Setting an example of respecting the worth of other persons and Jesus Christ's teachings.
2. Treating each student with dignity and respect.
3. Consistently enforcing school rules and regulations.
4. Reviewing with students the rules and regulations. Classroom rules will be posted.
5. Communicating with students and parents if student behavior is not appropriate.
6. Promptly reporting to the Principal continuous student misbehavior or any misbehavior that will or may result in suspension or expulsion.

7. Giving consideration as appropriate in regard to students who are determined to have special needs. (i. e. a child having been diagnosed or in the process of being diagnosed with a learning disability and /or behavior impairment).
8. Communicating with parents in a timely manner when a student demonstrates consistently poor academic progress.

The **Principal** is responsible for:

1. Developing rules, regulations and procedures to implement school policies and curriculum standards, in accordance with state and Archdiocesan requirements.
2. Communicating school rules and regulations to parents, faculty and staff and students.
3. Setting an example of respecting the worth of other persons and modeling Jesus Christ's teachings.
4. Consistently enforcing school rules and regulations.
5. Communicating to parents, with the teachers, any problems or issues involving their child.
6. Assisting teachers and parents to resolve student behavior problems.
7. Functioning as the instructional leader.
8. Managing the school facility.
9. Providing a safe environment for students, faculty, and staff.
10. Hiring and retaining a high quality faculty and staff.
11. Providing for the health and welfare of students.
12. Assisting as needed in conflict management.
13. Functioning as a liaison between the school, parish committees, and the business office.
14. Providing staff development for teachers.
15. Forming bonding relationships with staff and students.
16. Collaborating with staff so that they function as a team.
17. Recruiting new students.
18. Managing the school office.
19. Evaluating and sharing a review with faculty and staff annually.
20. Providing needed instructional materials through purchase and utilization of the Textbook Loan Program through Omaha Public schools.
21. Initiating school improvements that enhance the school's ability to offer an effective and up-to-date educational experience for students.
22. Working with staff to complete all necessary steps to follow the guidelines and processes prescribed by the Archdiocesan School Improvement Plan (ASIP).
23. Ensuring the school is in compliance with the Nebraska Department of Education to maintain its status as an accredited or approved school by engaging the staff in necessary improvement practices.

The **School Board** is responsible for:

1. Assisting the administration as an advisory body.
2. Evaluating policy.
3. Recommending improvements.
4. Assisting in efforts to build productive public relations.
5. Serving as a representative and liaison for the school parents and families.

The **Pastor** is responsible for:

1. Ultimate oversight of the school.
2. Working closely with the administration for the realization of school goals.

The **St. Thomas More Catholic School Community** is responsible for:

1. Providing inspirational, financial, and moral support so the school can accomplish its goals.
2. Acting as Christ-like role models for young children.
3. Cooperating and supporting the Pastor and school administration.
4. Supporting the enforcement of school rules and regulations.

At the beginning of each school year the student, parent, and teachers will be required to sign a **Student/Parent/Staff Compact**, which summarizes these responsibilities. This document holds each party accountable for their unique responsibilities serving the mission of the school. A copy of this compact located in Section XI Miscellaneous will be placed in the Final Registration folder and must be signed and returned by the student and parent as a requirement for Final Registration.

Section X --- Behaviors and Consequences

Positive discipline will be used and encouraged. Appropriate consequences for specific misbehaviors will be determined by the teachers, Principal, and Pastor. Each issue will be dealt with on an individual basis. Legal authorities will be contacted when a violation of local, state or federal law occurs. Unless otherwise noted, behavior and consequences apply to time spent in school and to all school-sponsored activities.

Levels of Consequences

Consequences for disrespectful and irresponsible behavior include, but are not limited to, the following. These consequences are defined in more detail below.

- Demerit
- Detention
- Parent Conference
- In-School Suspension
- Disciplinary Written Assignment
- Saturday School
- Behavior Intervention Team
- Behavior Contract
- Suspension
- Expulsion

Definitions

Demerit—When a demerit is issued, the student will be required to take his/her card home for a parent/guardian signature. When a student has accumulated three demerit card signatures in a quarter, he/she will be required to serve a short term detention. If a student accumulates five demerit card signatures in a quarter, he/she will be required to serve a long-term detention. Each subsequent demerit in a quarter will result in further disciplinary action to be determined by the teacher and/or the Principal. The teacher determines when a violation requires a demerit.

Detention— For primary students, grades K—3, **short-term detentions** are 15 minutes in length and will be served the day the infraction occurs. Due to the short nature of this detention, the school will not make an attempt to notify parents when this detention is served. **Long-term detentions for primary** students mean one 30-minute detention served. Parents **will be notified** of a long-term detention.

For grades 4-8 short-term detentions are 30 minutes in length and are often served the same day they are assigned. Long-term detentions are one 60-minute time period and maybe served as two 30-minute detentions or as one 60-minute detention following the infraction. Parents receive written notification on the student's demerit card. Students in detention may be required to write an explanation for the situation in which the detention was assigned describing how they could have handled the situation in a more appropriate manner. **A parent or guardian will be required to sign the student's demerit card.** The demerit card and the explanation shall then be returned the next day to the teacher assigning the detention. Failure to serve any of the detention will result in additional time

to be served. **Several missed detentions can be transmuted by the principal to an in-school suspension.**

Parent Conference—A parent/guardian conference is a meeting between school personnel and the parent/guardian of the youth who is experiencing behavior problems. Failure of a parent/guardian to attend a scheduled conference without an acceptable excuse may result in additional disciplinary measures.

In -School Suspension—A student who earns an In-School Suspension (I.S.S.) will report to the school office, and will be isolated from his or her peers for the duration of the suspension, most often completing school work in the library. While in I.S.S. the student will be responsible for all class work missed, and may need to write a Disciplinary Action Assignment. While in I.S.S., the student may lose their privilege to participate in school-sponsored extracurricular activities.

Disciplinary Written Assignment—The Disciplinary Written Assignment is a writing assignment. The topic and extent of the essay will be determined by the administration. Spelling, grammar, and age-appropriate quality of work will be graded; insufficient work will be returned to the student for revision. The administration will determine when the assignment is satisfactorily completed.

Saturday School—Saturday School will be assigned by the principal for more serious or repeated disregard for school rules. Saturday School sessions will be held from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Saturday mornings. If a child is unable to attend Saturday School, it is the responsibility of the parent to notify the school office 24 hours in advance (by 9:00 a.m. Friday) so that another date can be arranged. Extracurricular activities and sport practices or competitions are NOT valid excuses. Non-attendance to a Saturday School will result in a 2-day In-School Suspension, Disciplinary Action Assignment and possible Intervention Team Conference.

Behavior Intervention Team—A conference with a team of teachers can be convened in a case when a student repeatedly shows disregard for the rules of St. Thomas More Catholic School, despite disciplinary action. The team will be made up of teachers, the Principal, and possibly the Pastor. Creation of a Behavior Contract could be implemented at this time.

Behavior Contract—Once the student and parents meet with the Intervention Team, he/she will enter into a Behavior Contract with the school. The Behavior Contract will detail the acceptable behaviors for the student and the outcomes expected of him/her. Students who breach the Behavior Contract will be reviewed by the Intervention Team for possible expulsion or withdrawal of the student from St. Thomas More Catholic School. Behavior Contracts may also be written for other students as is needed.

Suspension—Suspension is the temporary exclusion of a student from school and school activities. St. Thomas More Catholic School personnel strive to resolve discipline problems in a Christian manner with parent and student involvement and cooperation. However, in serious situations, it may become necessary to discipline a student by suspension. Suspension may be one of two types, In-School Suspension (ISS), or Out-of-School Suspension (OSS). Parents are notified prior to the suspension of every student.

The following procedures will be followed for suspension:

1. The decision to suspend a student rests with the Principal, but the Pastor may be notified. The majority of suspensions will be in-school suspensions.
2. The student will be removed from the situation and taken to the Principal.
3. The Principal will investigate by discussing the circumstances and situation with person(s) making the complaint of misbehavior and the student accused of the misbehavior.
4. If suspension is necessary, the parent/guardian will be called and informed by the Principal. The student and parent/guardian will be notified of the reasons for the suspension, the length of the suspension and the conditions for returning to class. The student will be expected to complete all missed schoolwork and may be responsible for writing a Disciplinary Written Assignment.

Expulsion—Expulsion is the permanent exclusion of a student from school and school activities. St. Thomas More Catholic School will use expulsion only when all other means of discipline have failed and the student’s conduct is a hindrance to the welfare and progress of the school community and/or evidence of repeated disregard for the philosophy, policies, rules and regulations of the school. The following procedures will be followed for expulsion:

1. The decision to expel a student rests with the Principal and Pastor.
2. The student will be removed from the situation and taken to the Principal.
3. The Principal will investigate by discussing the circumstances and situations with person(s) making the complaint of misbehavior and the student accused of the misbehavior.
4. Parent/guardians will be involved in the procedures leading to expulsion.
5. Upon expulsion, the student’s parent/guardian must be notified in writing of the measure being taken, the reasons for the expulsion, and their right to a hearing.
6. As a result of a special hearing requested in writing from a parent/guardian, the expulsion may be reconsidered by the Principal and the Pastor.

EMERGENCY SUSPENSION MAY BE IMPOSED FOR A PERIOD OF TIME AS LONG AS THE STUDENT’S PRESENCE IN THE SCHOOL PRESENTS A DANGER TO HIMSELF/HERSELF OR OTHERS AND/OR UNTIL ALL THE FACTS CAN BE ASCERTAINED.

Discipline Response by Grade Level

Primary: Kindergarten Through 2nd Grades

Students are assigned a **Behavior Card** each quarter beginning the first week of school that is retained by the teacher. Offenses that may earn a demerit include but are not limited to hitting, disrespect, inappropriate language, and disobedience of school and general safety rules. Students are provided new clean Behavior Cards at the beginning of each quarter. Detentions for demerits will be assigned as follows:

- After a student receives 3 demerits or mark on the Behavior Card, that student will receive a 15-minute detention, from 3:10 until 3:25. A home phone call may be made home if requested by a parent.
- After a 5th mark in the same quarter, a note will be sent home and a 30-minute detention is served.
- After a 6th mark in the same quarter, along with a 30-minute detention a meeting will be held with the parents to determine an appropriate course of action.
- If the student accumulates an additional 3 marks, a 30-minute detention will be served.
- Excessive demerits or severe violations of the rules may require a visit with the principal.
- Students will most often be expected to complete a Detention-Problem-Solving Sheet during their detention period, which must be signed by the parent and returned the next day.

Intermediate: 3rd Through 5th Grades

Each student is provided a **Demerit Card** the first day of each quarter beginning. These cards are carried by the students when they attend their Special classes. Offenses that may earn a demerit include but are not limited to:

1. Dress code infraction, twice in one week
2. Tardy to class (3 times in 1 week)
3. Disturbance in hall
4. Misbehavior in cafeteria/on playground
5. Not having card
6. Not prepared for class, missing supplies
7. Missing or incomplete assignments (3 times in one week)
8. Disruption in class
9. No absence note when returning to school
10. Not following directions
11. Papers or forms lacking an adult signature
12. Disobedience (gum chewing)
13. Homework room in 3 subject areas in 1 day
14. Assignment book not signed 2 days in a row.

Students are provided new clean Behavior Cards at the beginning of each quarter. Detentions for demerits will be assigned as follows:

- After a student receives 3 demerits or marks on the Demerit Card, that student will receive a 30-minute detention.
- After 4 marks, an hour detention (or 30-minutes for two days)
- After 5 marks, a parent will be called for a conference and/or a meeting will be held with the Principal. Further consequences to be determined.
- Excessive demerits or severe violations of the rules may require a visit with the principal.
- Homework Room will also be implemented when a student fails to come to school with completed homework.

Junior High: 6th Through 8th Grades

Students are provided new clean Behavior (Demerit) Cards at the beginning of each quarter.

Please note the following change: To better address the reoccurrence of minor infractions and to recognize and reward students' positive responsible behavior, staff will utilize the back of students' demerit cards to address:

- ✓ Dress code
- ✓ Readiness for class
- ✓ Assignments completed and turned-in on time
- ✓ Parent signatures received on designated papers when requested, and
- ✓ Demerit free behavior periods.

The back of the card will be used to award **positive points** for positive behaviors in these areas. Positive points can accumulate and be redeemed for awards by the end of each quarter. Positive points can also erase negative points earned for a students' failure to make responsible choices one for one. Neither positive nor negative points can carry over to a new quarter.

As previously mentioned, jewelry for students has specific guidelines: only religious necklaces are allowed, girls can wear one studded earring in each ear, and no bracelets please. Fingernail polish must be of the very light or clear shades only.

Demerits will be assigned as follows:

1. One demerit will be assigned for: gum with an assigned clean-up detail, a missing parent signature from a previous demerit, and as determined by the teacher.
2. When a student accumulates 3 demerits in one quarter, the parent will be notified and the student will have a 30-minute detention.
3. When a student accumulates 4 demerits in one quarter, the parent will be notified and the student will have a one-hour detention served in one afternoon unless otherwise arranged.
4. When a student accumulates 5 demerits in one quarter, the student will visit with the principal. The parent will be notified by the principal of the detention and will work for one hour in school service as directed by the custodian.

5. When a student accumulates 6 or more demerits in one quarter, the student will visit with the Principal and will possibly be assigned an in-school suspension or Saturday school. The student may also be required to follow a Behavior Modification Contract, which will require signatures of the student and parents.

At any time when the seriousness of the infraction warrants, the teachers or Principal may directly assign a more severe consequence. The following section lists more severe Specific Behaviors That Are Not Allowed and Consequences.

Specific Behaviors That Are Not Allowed and Consequences

At any time when the seriousness of the infraction warrants, the teachers or Principal may directly assign a more severe consequence.

Violations Against Persons and Property

Assault – causing or intending to cause personal injury of an **adult associated with the school**. Student’s intent may be inferred from the words and acts of the student.

Personal injury includes the infliction of pain for which first aid or medical attention is sought.

- 1st Offense –1-2 day suspension and possible expulsion
- 2nd Offense – 3-5 day suspension and possible expulsion
- 3rd Offense - Expulsion

Assault – causing or intending to cause personal injury of **another student**. Student’s intent may be inferred from the words and acts of the student.

Personal injury includes the infliction of pain for which first aid or medical attention is sought.

- 1st Offense –1-2 demerits and possible detention
- 2nd Offense – 1-2 day suspension
- 3rd Offense – 3-5 day suspension or possible expulsion

Fighting – mutual physical contact with repetitive blows

More serious fights involve serious injury to a student or results in disruption of a large number of students.

- 1st Offense –1-2 day suspension
- 2nd Offense – 3-5 day suspension or possible expulsion
- 3rd Offense – expulsion

Minor scuffles that do not result in serious injury or any disruption of the school.

- 1st Offense –1-2 demerits and possible detention
- 2nd Offense – 1-2 day suspension
- 3rd Offense – 3-5 day suspension

Written, Verbal or Non-verbal Abuse of a Student or Adult Associated with the School

Threatening – indicates an intention to do harm

1st Offense – 1-2 day suspension

2nd Offense – 3-5 day suspension or possible expulsion

3rd Offense – expulsion

Non-threatening – abuse that is disrespectful

1st Offense – 1-2 demerits and possible detention

2nd Offense – 1-2 day suspension

3rd Offense – 3-5 day suspension

Harassment of a student or adult associated with the school on the basis of ethnicity, sex, age, religion, national origin, marital status, or disability. Examples include:

(a) unwelcomed, intentional touching or grabbing of another's intimate parts, or the pulling of, pulling off, or lifting of clothing covering the intimate parts;

(b) explicit offensive sexual references or gestures;

(c) name calling or taunting which includes names such as slut, bitch, fag, cat calls or offensive noises or whistling;

(d) language of any kind which is disparaging, demeaning, or threatening, including graffiti or profane jokes, the spreading of sexual gossip, and comments about a person's body or unwanted verbal or written sexual comments;

(e) staring or leering with sexual overtones;

(f) inappropriate photographing with a cell phone camera, etc;

(g) any other verbal or physical conduct which creates a hostile school environment.

1st Offense – 1-2 day suspension

2nd Offense – 3-5 day suspension or possible expulsion

3rd Offense – expulsion

Bullying includes any written or verbal expression, physical act or gesture, or a pattern thereof that is intended to cause distress upon a student or adult associated with the school.

1st Offense – 1-2 demerits and possible detention

2nd Offense – 1-2 day suspension

3rd Offense – 3-5 day suspension or possible expulsion

Sexual Assault includes sexual assault in the first degree or second degree as defined in Nebraska Statutes 28-319 and 28-320. Sexually assaulting or attempting to sexually assault any person is a violation of this Discipline Code (regardless of whether the alleged assault takes place on or off school grounds) if a complaint has been filed by a prosecutor in a court of competent jurisdiction alleging that the student has sexually assaulted or attempted to sexually assault any person.

1st Offense – expulsion

Possession of weapon includes a knife, firearm, lighters and matches, firework, ammunition, lead pipe, chuck-sticks, throwing star, dart, brass knuckles, unauthorized

tools or chemicals or other dangerous weapons. Final determination of whether an object falls under this definition of a weapon rests with the school principal. Law enforcement may also be contacted.

1st Offense – 1-5 day suspension or possible expulsion

2nd Offense – expulsion

Willfully Causing or Attempting to Cause Damage to Property includes any student who willfully causes damage or attempts to cause damage in any way to any property, real or personal, is subject to disciplinary action. The parent or guardian shall be liable to the school for all property belonging to the school or loaned to the student. Examples include: graffiti, defacing parish or school property, books, equipment, or facilities.

1st Offense – 1-2 demerits and possible detention

2nd Offense – 1-2 day suspension

3rd Offense – 3-5 day suspension or possible expulsion

Theft/stealing or attempting to steal property belonging to students, staff, parish, or school. The parent or guardian shall be liable for all related losses.

1st Offense – 1-2 demerits and possible detention

2nd Offense – 1-2 day suspension

3rd Offense – 3-5 day suspension or possible expulsion

Student Use of Social Networking Sites

The school administration believes that children under the age of 17 are safest when they are not on social networking sites or online gaming sites. Too often these sites contain inappropriate content, language, and may contain some pornography. Parents must decide whether the benefit outweighs the risk to use social networking sites.

If parents are going to allow their children to use My Space, Facebook, Twitter, and Wiki sites, *Donna Rice Hughes* at protectkids.com offers the following rules as a guide:

1. Instruct your children to never give personal information over the internet.
2. Secure the family computer by installing a firewall, anti-virus and anti-spyware software.
3. Be aware of photos your child is posting online.
4. Inquire about your child's on-line activities and friends.
5. Instruct your child never to plan a face-to-face meeting.
6. Restrict access to social networking sites by using privacy settings.

Students who choose to use social networking sites take a risk of violating the rights of other students and of damaging their own reputations. If the activity of students using social networking sites in any way negatively reflects on St. Thomas More Catholic School, its students or staff, students involved will receive the appropriate consequences for the specific misbehavior as determined by the school administration. Depending on the nature of the occurrence, consequences may include any level of consequence listed in this handbook.

Academic Integrity Violations

Essential to the mission of St. Thomas More Catholic School is the teaching of character traits throughout our curriculum and activities. Character is moral strength. Integrity is the firm adherence to a code of moral values. Honesty is the uprightness of character or action implying a refusal to lie, steal, or deceive in any way. It is impossible to build community when deceit is involved.

Academic Integrity Looks Like:

- students doing their own homework,
- students turning in tests that reflect their ability and effort,
- accepting responsibility for NOT studying or poor organization of time,
- respecting yourself and your God enough to represent you and your work honestly.

Academic Integrity Does Not Look Like:

- obtaining a grade dishonestly,
- obtaining the school work of another,
- misrepresentation of work,
- abuse of confidence,
- perversion of truth,
- providing information in the form of answers to other students.

Sufficient evidence by a teacher of a lack of academic integrity on the part of a student causes a loss of trust and a tainted reputation. In addition to the consequences below, the student may be allowed to repeat the work or retake a different version of a test or quiz.

1st Offense – 1-2 demerits and possible detention

2nd Offense – 1-2 day suspension

3rd Offense – 3-5 day suspension or possible expulsion

Technology Violations

At times teachers will instruct students to research on the Internet. Students' access to the Internet will be limited solely to those websites that will facilitate their search for identified information as directed by the teacher. The Student Technology and Internet Agreement will be included in the Final Registration Folder for parents and students to sign and forward with the other registration documents to the school by August 1st. The computer teacher will be discussing this agreement statement with all students using the computer to insure their compliance with this policy. See Section XI Miscellaneous for a reproduction of this form.

Electronic Devices (cell phones and pagers)

Students are not allowed to bring or carry any radios, CD players, IPODs, or electronic games to school. In addition to the disturbance that these items can cause the school will not be held responsible if they become lost or stolen.

Please note: Parents are strongly encouraged to have students leave cell phones and pagers at home. If the parent determines after visiting with their student, that it is absolutely necessary for the student to have access to a cell phone before or after school,

and as a result students bring a cell phone to school, the cell phone or pager must be turned into the school office first thing upon arriving at school each morning. When the cell phone is given to the office, it will be placed in a closeable bag and marked with the student's name, and placed in a secure area. The cell phone will be returned to the student after dismissal each day when they request it in person in the school office. Should a student choose to ignore this school policy, and keep the cell phone or pager in their possession during the school day, it will be immediately confiscated by any staff member, and will only be returned to a parent or legal guardian. The student will also be assigned a detention of 30 minutes with the first infraction and an hour detention for every additional violation of cell phone use. The student risks the possibility of suspension with violation of this policy.

Tobacco and Substance Abuse

The possession and/or use of tobacco in any form by a student during the school day on school property or at a school-sponsored extracurricular activity will be reported to the Principal who will administer disciplinary action. Parents will be notified.

When there is a question of chemical substance (drugs, alcohol, and inhalants) misuse or medication misuse or overdose, the Principal and involved teachers will work with the student and the family toward bringing about a complete recovery and elimination of the drug abuse of the student involved. It is the St. Thomas More Catholic School's moral and legal obligation to act in accordance with all laws, and in the best interest of the student(s) involved. Therefore, the following guidelines will apply:

- 1) Any case involving the selling or distribution of illegal drugs will be turned over to the police for investigation and they will determine if prosecution is warranted.
- 2) Any case involving the possession or misuse of drugs or alcohol on the school premises or at school-sponsored activities will be reported to the Principal.
- 3) The parents or guardians will be notified immediately and requested to come to the school.
- 4) After a conference with the parents or guardians and student, the disciplinary action, ranging from a five-day suspension to immediate expulsion will be decided.
- 5) During the time of the suspension, it will be required that the parent or guardian enroll in some type of family therapy with the student.
- 6) At the completion of the suspension, the student will return to school with a contract to continue therapy until the therapist releases the student (family).
- 7) If the existing contract is not honored, or there is a recurring offense, immediate expulsion will be warranted.
- 8) Harassment or interference with witnesses could also result in expulsion.
- 9) The student and/or family may appeal these disciplinary actions in writing to the Principal or the Pastor.
- 10) After meeting with the family and reaching a consensus, the Pastor's and Principal's decision is final.

Section XI—Miscellaneous

School/Principal's Right to Amend Handbook

The school, as agreed by the Principal, has the right to amend the handbook for just cause. Parents will be given prompt notification if changes are made.

Student Technology and Internet Agreement

Each student in St. Thomas More School and their parent/guardian must sign the Student Technology and Internet Agreement. The application is presented to the student and parent for signature at the time of Final Registration in the family folder. Completed agreements are housed in the computer lab. Students who are denied access to the Internet will be provided with alternative computer assignments while classmates are utilizing the Internet.

Student Technology and Internet Agreement

St. Thomas More School will provide computer access to networked information and internet resources for qualified students when such information is consistent with educational philosophy and goals of the school. The school supports research and education as well as collaboration with other individuals and groups. The Internet will provide a connection to this global community, promoting educational excellence.

The faculty will blend thoughtful use of network resources and the internet throughout curriculum, utilizing them to facilitate innovation and communication. By providing valuable electronic field trips, educators are building a community of life-long learners. With parental and student assistance the district will help students make good decisions regarding the use of this tremendous resource. To ensure quality use of school networks and the internet, the following guidelines have been established.

Training

Students will be required to participate in basic awareness training sessions prior to utilizing the network, internet, e-mail, and Sycamore Education systems (Gaggle.net is a safe site, with teacher controlled access on what they send and receive for grades 6-7).

Network Rules/Sycamore Education

The user will abide by the following rules.

- Users will log in and log out correctly
- Users will use safe search engines
- Users will not lend their network or e-mail passwords or privileges to others. Users will not borrow these resources from others.
- Users will respect copyright laws.

The following are strictly prohibited:

1. Transmission and/or storage of material that is subversive or has the potential of causing physical harm to the user or others,
 2. Transmission and/or storage of material that is obscene, vulgar, abusive or otherwise offensive,
 3. Fraudulent messages (messages sent under an assumed name or with an intent to obscure the origin),
 4. Harassment (the persistent annoyance of another user),
 5. Attempts to access or destroy the data of another user or degrade the performance of the district's computers, including but not limited to computer viruses, altering system software, altering or deleting user files, and to erase history on any computer.
- Users are prohibited from using the school network services for personal or private financial gain.

Security

Students accessing the school network services must assist in maintaining a secure system. Users of the school network services must adhere to the following security procedures.

- There is no guarantee of privacy or confidentiality of data files and e-mail messages. While reasonable effort will be made to keep information secure, users must remember that others may access electronic information.
- The school has the obligation to ensure that its computer resources are used properly and within the guidelines established by St. Thomas More School. In pursuit of that goal, the school reserves the right to monitor the system at any time without notice for signs of illegal or unauthorized activity and may access electronic files of users at any time without notice.
- Addresses, phone numbers, passwords or personal information that would violate user privacy or the privacy of others should never be revealed.
- Users will not access files belonging to others without permission from the owner.
- Users noticing a security or ethics problem must notify the teacher immediately without alerting others.
- Users are prohibited from engaging in any activity that is intended to circumvent school network services or computers.

Consequences

Network access is a privilege, not a right. It entails responsibility. Any user violating school rules or state and federal laws is subject to the loss of privileges and any other disciplinary options. Consequences for misuse or abuse of network services are noted below.

- Verbal or written warning
- Loss of credit for the network related assignment or unit
- Loss of computer privileges within the school
- Loss of privileges to use the network and/or the internet
- Referral to the administration for discipline and/or parent conference

Depending on the severity and intent of the situation, the disciplinary process may include combinations of the consequences. Data files or messages related to or in support of illegal activities may involve law enforcement agencies.

Liabilities

St. Thomas More School will not be responsible for financial obligations incurred by users of the school's network or Internet system. The school will not accept responsibility for how students use knowledge of Internet nor the quality of the information obtained. Any damages a user may suffer, including loss of data, will not be the responsibility of the school. All users shall assume full liability, legal, financial, or otherwise, for their actions.

St. Thomas More Elementary School

Student/Parent/Staff Compact

Student Agreement

It is important that I learn to the best of my ability. Therefore, I shall strive to do the following:

- To participate fully and actively in liturgies and put my faith into practice daily.
- Attend school regularly.
- Dress in accordance with the school uniform policy defined in the STM Parent/Student Handbook.
- Conform to the school discipline policy defined in the STM Parent/Student Handbook.
- Treat teachers, staff, and other students as I would like to be treated.
- Come to school each day with pens, pencils, papers and other necessary tools for learning.
- Complete and return homework assignments in a timely manner.
- Observe a regular study hour.

Signature _____ **Date** _____

Parent/Guardian Agreement

I want my child to succeed. Therefore, I will encourage him/her by doing the following:

- Ensure that my child attends religious services weekly.
- See that my child is punctual and attends school regularly.
- See that my child dresses in accordance with the school uniform policy.
- Support the school discipline policy as defined in the STM Parent/Student Handbook.
- Encourage my student to treat teachers, staff, and other students with respect.
- Establish a time and quiet place for my child to do homework and review homework regularly.
- Encourage my child's efforts and be available to answer questions.
- Stay aware of what my child is learning
- I agree to be governed by the policies as stated in the STM Parent./Student Handbook.

Signature _____ **Date** _____

Staff/Teacher Agreement

It is important that students achieve. Therefore, we shall strive to do the following:

- Provide an environment that allows for positive communication between the teacher, parent, and student.
- Strive to provide a safe environment, free from verbal and physical abuse, where children may learn to their ultimate ability.
- Provide necessary assistance to parents so that they can help with assignments.
- Encourage students and parents by providing information about student progress.
- Enforce the school discipline policy as outlined in the STM Parent/Student Handbook.
- Enforce the school uniform policy as outlined in the STM Parent/Student Handbook.

Signature _____ **Date** _____

A copy of this compact will be shared with students during the first week of school. Parents are asked to return this shared school copy.

