



Parent/Student Handbook 2016-2017

St. Thomas the Apostle School
42 Adams Place, Delmar, New York 12054
Phone: 518-439-5573 FAX: 518-478-9979
<http://www.stthomas-school.org>



Message from the Principal

Dear Parents/Guardians and Students,

Welcome to St. Thomas the Apostle School. In choosing our school, you have demonstrated a commitment to the values and philosophy of Catholic school education.

The Parent/Student Handbook reflects the policies of St. Thomas the Apostle School for the 2016-2017 school year. Please read this document carefully and sign the attached agreement. This agreement states that you intend to abide by the policies of the School during the 2016-2017 school year.

The faculty and staff of St. Thomas look forward to working with you to promote academic excellence and your child's spiritual development in the context of the teachings of the Catholic faith.

Together let us pray that God, who has begun this good work in us, may carry it through to completion.

May God bless and keep you always,
Thomas J. Kane

Principal



Mission Statements/Philosophy

Albany Catholic Schools Diocese Mission Statement

The mission of the Albany Catholic Schools Diocese is to assist our school communities in creating a quality Catholic centered education that fosters the current and future development of the whole child.

St. Thomas the Apostle Church Mission Statement

“I give you a new commandment: Love one another just as I have loved you. It is by your love for one another that everyone will recognize you as my disciples”~ John 13: 34-35

To proclaim and celebrate the presence of Jesus Christ our Lord.

St. Thomas the Apostle School Mission Statement

Through dedication and effort, we will prepare each student to realize his or her personal destiny as a moral and social leader of men and women and as a follower of Christ.

Catholic Culture

The culture of St. Thomas the Apostle School is a “way of life” rooted in Christ, a Gospel-based creed and code, and a Catholic vision that provides inspiration and identity.

We receive and experience this culture through the living sacraments, prayer, celebrations, symbols, and beliefs. We are a people of faith, service, love, hope, and learning. We act with justice and build community with one another.

Each day we strive to be an authentic Catholic school by living the Gospel message.

Philosophy

The philosophy of St. Thomas the Apostle School states that the education of a child is best supported with active cooperation between parents and school. As a Catholic faith community, we recognize parents as the child’s primary educators. We also recognize that each child is endowed with unique gifts and talents, and we strive to help each child fully realize God's plan.

We place our trust in the Catholic Church and the teachings of Jesus Christ. Our teachers and staff recognize the importance of integrating a Catholic education into the classroom and throughout the school, as well as beyond our front doors. The three-fold mission of our school is message, community, and service.



Message: St. Thomas the Apostle School presents an integrated approach to all curriculum areas. The students become aware of God's presence in their lives and work. At our school, children live and learn in the light of faith.

Community: St. Thomas the Apostle School prepares children to proclaim the Good News. Community is the heart of Catholic education. It is not only a concept taught, but also a reality lived.

Service: St. Thomas the Apostle School educates children who will serve God and others by sharing their gifts and talents. We uphold the belief that each must serve the other for the good of all. Active participation in social justice issues and human concerns is the cornerstone of our service experiences.

Academic Information & Policies

Curriculum

St. Thomas the Apostle School has a well-deserved reputation as an outstanding school. The curriculum is aligned with both the New York State Common Core Learning Standards and the Albany Diocesan standards. Our teaching prepares students for success in high school and beyond, and does so while instilling Catholic Christian values.

St. Thomas the Apostle School graduates attend both private and public high schools. By building a strong academic foundation in reading, mathematics, scientific inquiry, social sciences, and the humanities, our students enter high school ready for success.

Formal instruction in foreign language, music, and art begin in our kindergarten program and continue through Grade 8. Our state-of-the-art technology allows teachers to fully integrate the latest methodologies into their teachings and offers students an opportunity to advance their skills in a positive and productive learning environment. Beginning in Grade 6, all students are provided a Google Chromebook to use.

In addition, many students take advantage of the accelerated classes offered in the upper grades, earning high school course credit while at St. Thomas the Apostle School. Our students' classroom performance is validated by the results on both state and national exams.

Field Trips

Field trips are designed to support teaching units and to achieve curricular goals.

Field Trip Permission

- A parent will complete and sign an official permission slip to indicate if their child may or may not attend a field trip activity
- A telephone call may not be accepted in lieu of the proper field trip permission slip



- Student cell phones are not allowed on field trips unless otherwise directed by the teacher and/or administration

See: the *Medical Policy for Field Trips* section

Homework

Formal home study is assigned to help students become self-reliant and self-directed. Assignments are designed to reinforce daily lessons, to supplement and enrich class work, and to prepare for certain lessons through various experiences. Since each student has different capabilities and interests, it would be difficult to denote the specific amount of time to be spent on an assignment. If a problem arises, the teacher should be contacted.

It is essential that students take responsibility for grades he/she has earned and be accountable for homework, long-term assignments, major tests, service projects, and all other assignments. This responsibility also extends to times of absence.

Homework Policy Due to Illness

When a student is absent, a parent may call the school office before 9:30 AM to arrange for homework assignments. Homework assignments may be picked up at the school office between 3:00 PM – 3:30 PM, or arrangements may be made for homework to be sent home.

Students may also receive missed assignments from their teacher when they return to school. Students must arrange a schedule with the teacher for the submission of required work.

Library

The Media Center allows for children in Grades PK-3 to visit and borrow books. For students in Grades 4-8, the classrooms house resource materials, and both fiction and nonfiction titles for pleasure reading. Students may borrow books from the school by signing them out. Research skills using both print and digital media is taught by classroom teachers.

Promotion Policy and Retention Policy

Advancement to the next grade in St. Thomas the Apostle School is based on a student's performance, academic achievement, recommendation of his/her teachers, and the student's ability to complete work successfully on a more advanced level. Promotion to the next grade depends on successful completion of all subject areas. The Administration may recommend the repetition of a grade, tutoring, or summer school classes as requirement for promotion when it is believed that such action will better prepare the student academically or emotionally for the next grade.

Report Cards/Progress Reports

Report Cards are important tools for communication. Report Cards will be distributed four (4) times during the academic school year or every ten (10) weeks. Parents may access student grades and



attendance records via a web based system, PowerSchool utilizing a password that is unique to each student.

Sacramental Program

The sacramental life of students in the Catholic tradition is an important component of the religion program at St. Thomas the Apostle School. Preparations for two sacraments, Reconciliation and Eucharist, form the core of faith formation in Grade 2. In accordance with the diocesan guidelines, candidates for First Eucharist will receive the sacrament of Reconciliation prior to First Eucharist.

Parents seeking the Sacraments for their child will participate in all parish and school preparation programs.

Social Justice

Social justice teaching and learning is an integral part of the life of a student at St. Thomas the Apostle School. The purpose of the Social Justice program is to provide students with the opportunity to make a difference in our Church and surrounding communities through various service and support programs.

Administration Information & Policies

Accreditation

St. Thomas the Apostle School is accredited through the AdvancEd North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

Admission Information

Students entering the PreK4 program must be four (4) years of age by December 1. Students entering the PreK 3 program must be three (3) years of age by December 1. All preschool children must be toilet trained.

According to New York State education law, students entering Kindergarten must be five (5) years of age by December 1. Students will be conditionally accepted into Kindergarten with full acceptance contingent upon the results of the Kindergarten readiness test.



Application Requirements

Requirements submitted to the school office include:

- Application
- Baptismal Certificate (Catholic applicants only)
- Birth Certificate (original to be photocopied by administration)
- Health Records
- Immunization Records
- Record of IESP or 504 Plan including all histories
- Report Cards
- Standardized Test Results

Students applying for Admission to Grades 1 - 8 must present a copy of the academic transcript including current report card and any standardized test results. These will be reviewed to determine whether the program at St. Thomas the Apostle School will meet the educational needs of the student. An interview with the student and parents is part of the admission process. Evaluations and placement testing may be held for new incoming students in Grades 1 - 8.

Nondiscriminatory Policy

St. Thomas the Apostle School admits students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students of the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, or athletic and other school-administered programs.

St. Thomas the Apostle School adheres to the tenets of Title IX: "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participating in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance."

Office Records

Parents/Guardians are required to notify the School Office in writing of any change of address, home telephone numbers, cell phone numbers, business phone numbers, e-mail addresses and/or phone numbers of emergency contacts. This will ensure that office records are accurate, complete, up to date, and that the school is able to contact the parent/guardian in the event of an emergency.

Student Records

St. Thomas the Apostle School adheres to the Buckley Amendment (Family Education Rights and Privacy) regarding access to student records. Records of students transferring to other schools will be sent via fax from St. Thomas the Apostle School or through the US Mail.

Records for students wishing to enroll at St. Thomas the Apostle School must be submitted directly from the school from which the student will be transferring.



Transfer of Students

Parents wishing to transfer their student to another school should submit in writing a Letter of Withdrawal to the principal. The notice should be submitted in advance of the withdrawal date. This enables the school to prepare necessary information and settle accounts. No student records will be forwarded to another school until accounts have been settled.

Tuition Information & Policies

Tuition Rates

The St. Thomas tuition program is a stewardship program. Stewardship is a Gospel teaching where each individual must offer time, talent, and treasure as a part of life in God's family.

As our school continues to grow, we recognize the need to have all families practice stewardship through tuition and service. For our part, we continue to explore opportunities that help keep tuition costs affordable for all families.

The parish and school offers a generous financial aid program to families who apply for aid. Qualifying families are offered the opportunity to participate in Catholic education according to their means. We work with each family to ensure that no one is denied admission to St. Thomas based upon financial need. St. Thomas the Apostle School uses FACTS Tuition Management, a third-party tuition manager. Families make tuition payments through FACTS over a 12-month period, from July through June, through either direct withdrawal or credit card. Families may opt to pay in full in July.

Payment Options:

- Pay the school in full by July 1.
- Enroll in the FACTS® Tuition Management Service. Twelve (12) monthly payments begin in July.

FACTS® Tuition Management Service Overview

- A \$50 annual non-refundable FACTS® enrollment fee is due upon submission of the Tuition Stewardship Commitment.
- Pay tuition to FACTS over 12 months via personal check, money order, automatic deduction, or credit card.
- All families not selecting the FACTS® tuition plan in their registration packet will be expected to make a direct payment to St. Thomas School no later than July 1.
- Parents/guardians may apply for financial assistance online at factstuitionaid.com

Withdrawal Policy

Families must notify the school in writing if a student is withdrawn from the school. The School will not forward records for students who withdraw with an outstanding balance.



Prepaid tuition will be refunded accordingly. After July 1, a minimum of one-month's tuition is non-refundable regardless of withdrawal date. Please address all tuition questions to the School office at 518-439-5573.

General School Information & Policies

School Hours

Hours on School Days	
School Office	7:30 AM – 3:30 PM
Early Drop Off*	7:00 AM- 7:30 AM
Before School Care	7:30 AM – 7 :45 AM
PreK 4 (M,W,F)	Morning 8:30 AM – 11:30 AM Afternoon 12:15PM -3:15 PM
PreK4 Enrichment (T, TH)	Afternoon 12:15PM -3:15 PM
PreK 3 (T, Th)	9:15 AM – 11:45 AM
K – 8	8:10 AM – 2:40 PM
After School Care*	2:40 PM – 6:00 PM

* Additional Fees Required

Arrival, Dismissal and After Care Policies

Doors Open

The school doors are opened for students at 7:30 AM. Students arriving at that time will go to the Good Morning Room until they are dismissed to their classrooms at 7:50 AM.

Tardy Policy

Students not in their homeroom by 8:10 AM are considered tardy. Parents should make arrangements for their child(ren) to arrive at school on time and be picked up at dismissal time. Excessive tardiness is against state compulsory attendance laws.



Dismissal

Students are dismissed according to the dismissal plan submitted to the school office by each family.

Any time that the dismissal plan requires a change, a parent must contact the school office in writing via a note sent to school with the student, via fax, or by submitting a change on the Parent Portal of the school website, www.stthomas-school.org. Parents are asked to submit all changes no later than 2pm on the day of the change.

Students will be dismissed to authorized individuals as listed on the parent Emergency Contact list only. If an individual not listed is expected to pick up a student, we must receive permission in writing from the authorizing parents via a note sent to school with the student, via fax, or by logging into the Parent Portal on the school website, www.stthomas-school.org and submitting the name of the individual on the Change in Dismissal form. Individuals other than parents who pick students up at dismissal should present identification at the time of pick up.

After School Care

- The After Care Program Operates each day school is in session, including half-days, except the last day of school.
- Hours of Operation: Dismissal – 6:00 PM
- Fees: \$190 Per month per child or \$18 per day per child.
- Fees are due before the first of each month for those paying by month.
- An after school snack will be provided each day.
- Students are expected to complete all homework assignments as a part of the after school program.

Absence: Full Day

When a student is absent from school, a parent should call the office by 9:00 AM each day of the absence. If the office does not receive a call, a parent will be contacted. This policy is for the protection of the St. Thomas the Apostle students. Additional information related to illness and absence follows in the Medical section of this handbook.

A written statement giving reasons for the absence or tardiness must be brought to the student's teacher upon the student's return. These notes/letters will be retained in the office for one year. Should absence for any reason other than illness seem imperative, parents are requested to consult with the Principal and present a written reason for the absence.

The school calendar provides for extended weekends throughout the school year. Parents are encouraged to schedule trips or family outings during these times so as to eliminate the need to interrupt a student's learning process. Teachers are not required to give make-up tests or assignments for absences due to vacations.

Students who are absent due to illness have one day for each day of absence to make up the missed assignments, quizzes or tests. For example, a student who was absent three days would be given three school days to complete the missed work.



When a student is absent due to illness, a parent may call the school office before 9:30 AM to arrange for homework assignments. Homework assignments may be picked up at the school office between 3:00 – 3:30 PM.

Students may also receive missed assignments from their teacher when they return to school. Teachers are not required to give make-up tests or assignments for absences due to vacations.

Arrangements for regular classroom tests missed because of an absence are to be made with the individual teachers. These tests must be taken within one week of the original test date.

Excessive absence of thirty (30) days or the equivalent of thirty (30) days including tardiness, can be cause for a student to be retained in the current grade for another year.

Absence: Partial Day

Students needing medical appointments during school hours require a written note by the parent. Parents are required to sign out their child. If the child returns to school during the same school day, a parent must sign him/her back into school.

Child Abuse Laws

St. Thomas the Apostle School abides by the Child Abuse laws of the State of New York. This law mandates that we report all cases of suspected abuse and/or neglect to Albany County Child Protective Services.

Gifts/Invitations/Parties

Students should not exchange individual gifts at school. This gesture often creates hurt feelings among other students. Invitations for all parties or should be sent to the homes of students via the U.S. Mail unless an invitation is being given to every student in the class. Valentine's Day cards distributed in the classroom should include a Valentine for each student in the class.

Lost and Found

Any items found in the school building or on the school grounds should be left at the school office to be placed in the Lost and Found. Items placed in the Lost and Found remain there for thirty (30) days. After thirty (30) days, items are donated to charity.

Visitors

All school visitors (volunteers, parents, etc.) must report to the main office. For safety and security reasons, each person is required to sign in at the office when he/she enters the building for any reason. All visitors and/or volunteers are required to wear a designated badge that may be picked up in the office. Visitors and/or volunteers are to sign out at the time of departure. Parents who volunteer to serve lunch or who volunteer in another capacity in the school may not drop into a classroom to see their student during the day. This is an interruption to the teacher and to the educational process.



Volunteers

All individuals who volunteer in the school must complete the Volunteer Sign-Up sheet and will be asked to complete the diocesan mandated background check and training. The main responsibility of a volunteer is to assist the administration or teachers.

Phone Policy

Cell Phone

Students may need a cell phone after school for several reasons included but not limited to walking home from school, entering a house where no one is home, or attending sport practices or games. Upon arrival to school in the morning, the student must bring the cell phone to the office or give it to their homeroom teacher. The cell phone will remain at the office in the off position for the day. At dismissal, the student may pick up their cell phone. At no time during the day should a cell phone be in a student's possession.

Telephone

Permission to use the telephone must be obtained from the office. Students must submit a note from their teacher. The office phone is a business phone and students are permitted to use it only in case of an emergency. Forgotten homework, athletic equipment, etc. do not constitute emergencies. Arrangements for after-school visits with friends should be made at home.

Medical Information & Policies

Medical

The school does all that it can to ensure the school environment is favorable to students with special medical needs. The school nurse is responsible for notifying classroom teachers about the nature of the special medical needs faced by students. This notification will include:

- an explanation of the severity of the health threat
- a description of the signs and symptoms to be aware
- an action plan

Health services are provided by both Bethlehem Central School District and St. Thomas the Apostle School. The school nurse provides direct care for acute and chronic health conditions, emergency care, monitors communicable disease, completes the necessary required screenings, and maintains the student's cumulative health record.



Emergency Contact

To provide the best care for your child, it is essential that you provide current information on your child's health. Emergency contact information should be current, as it is the primary contact source used in the event of an emergency. Emergency contact information provided to St. Thomas the Apostle School gives the school permission to contact an alternate person in the event that the school is unable to contact the parent/guardian.

Immunizations

All newly entering students must have a complete record of immunization provided to the school BEFORE he or she may enter. This is in the form of a cumulative health record from the previous school or a Health Care Provider's physician's signed certificate.

Any medical exemption provided by the Health Care Provider will be reviewed by the school nurse, kept in the student's record and must be updated each year. Religious exemptions **MUST BE APPROVED BY THE SUPERINTENDENT OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**. Parents are required to fill out a notarized request for medical exemption from immunizations. We cannot accept a student without required immunizations or an exemption approved by the Superintendent of Catholic Schools. An immunization form with the required immunizations is available on our web site.

Medication Policy

New York State Education Guidelines state that **ALL MEDICATIONS**, including over-the-counter medications, given at school, meet the following requirements:

- 1) A written order from your child's physician stating the name of the medication, dosage, frequency, and time of administration.
- 2) A written statement from the parent/guardian requesting administration of the medication in school.
- 3) The parent/guardian or other responsible adult must deliver medication to the school office, or Health Office in a properly pharmacy/original labeled container. You may request a separate container from the pharmacy for school use. Medication may not be brought on the school bus.
- 4) Medication forms may be found on our website.
- 5) All medications will be kept locked in the Health Office.
- 6) Medication orders end on the last day of school each year. New orders will be needed for each school year.

A physical appraisal exam is required for all new students and all students entering grades K, 2, 4, and 7. Proof of the physical exam must be a signed physician's certificate. A physical must be current (performed within the 12 months prior to the start of the current school year is acceptable). The physical report is to be provided by October of the current school year. If the physical is not provided, then the school district is required by law, to provide the exam by the district physician. We prefer that parents make appointments to have their child's doctor complete these exams as he/she will complete a more complete exam and will give the required immunizations.



Dental Certificates

New York State Law, chapter 281, permits schools to request a dental examination report for all new students and for students in grades K, 2, 4, and 7. The dental certificate is to be completed by the dentist and the parent.

School Health Screenings

New York State Education Law, (article 19, section 905) and the Commissioner's Regulations, section 136.3 require that schools provide the following health screenings:

- Vision screening for all newly enrolled students, including, color perception, distance acuity, near vision, and hyperopia; in addition, all students in grades K, 1, 2, 3, 5, and 7 will be screened for distance acuity.
- Hearing screening for all newly enrolled students as well as students in grades K, 1, 3, 5, and 7.
- Scoliosis screening for all students in grades 5 through 8 unless they provide documentation that they have been screened by their physician. Health Care Provider.

The results of these screenings will be documented in the student's cumulative health record. Parents will be notified of any screening result that does not meet the normal standards.

Illness Guidelines

Please keep your child home if sick.

- Your child may return to school if he/she has been fever free for at least 24 hours without fever reducing medication.
- If your child vomits, he/she may return to school 24 hours after the last incident of vomiting.
- If your child's physician performs a Strep test, your child must remain home until a negative report has been received or home for at least 24 hours of treatment as prescribed by the doctor for Strep throat.
- If your child has any redness or discharge from his or her eye(s), he or she must be kept at home as they he or she will be sent home to be seen by a Health Care Provider to assess for Conjunctivitis (pink-eye) which is very contagious. If positive for Conjunctivitis, your child may return to school after 24 hours of treatment as prescribed by the doctor.

If your child becomes ill or injured at school and we cannot contact you, we will call the persons you have designated on your child's emergency card. Please make certain that the persons listed are willing and available to pick up your child. We may not send your child home with anyone other than those listed. When called, please pick up your sick or injured child promptly.

Allergy Emergency Action Plan

Teachers must be familiar with the Emergency Action Plan of students in their classes and respond to emergencies as per the emergency protocol documented in the Emergency Action Plan. In the event of a suspected allergic reaction (where there is no known allergic history), the school nurse will be called and the school's Emergency Response Plan will be activated. Emergency medical services will be called immediately.



Allergy Protocol

- It is the parent's responsibility to inform the school about any allergies prior to enrollment. A school team, including a nurse will meet with the family to discuss any accommodations that may be required.
- Information about students' food allergies will be kept in the classroom and in the substitute emergency folder, accessible by teachers, substitutes or other responsible adults.
- A parent or guardian of a student with food allergies is responsible for providing all food for his/her own child. Snacks may be kept in a separate snack box or chest provided by the parent or guardian.
- Tables will be washed with disinfectant following any food related events held in the classroom.
- Proper hand cleaning techniques will be taught and encouraged before and after the handling/consumption of food.

Allergy Training

In order to minimize the incidence of life threatening allergic reactions, St. Thomas the Apostle School will provide training and education for all St. Thomas the Apostle School staff. In conjunction with the student's parent/guardian and primary care provider and/or allergist the school will maintain an Emergency Action Plan for any student identified with a potentially life-threatening allergy.

The training will be provided to all school employees and will include (but not be limited to):

- A description/definition of severe allergies and a discussion of the most common food, medication, latex and stinging insect allergies
- The signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis
- Specific steps to follow in the event of an emergency
- Activating Emergency Medical Response —Dial 911
- Location of student's emergency medications (EpiPen).

Food Allergy Policy

St. Thomas the Apostle School recognizes that life threatening food allergies are an important condition affecting many students and positively welcomes all pupils with food allergies. In order to minimize the incidence of life threatening allergic reactions, the School will maintain a system-wide procedure for addressing life threatening allergic reactions and maintain an Emergency Action Plan for any student(s) whose parent/guardian, and physicians have informed the school in writing that the student(s) has a potentially life threatening allergy. All teachers and substitutes will be educated about the risk of food allergies.

Asthma Policy

St. Thomas the Apostle School recognizes that asthma is an important condition affecting many students and positively welcomes all pupils with asthma. This school encourages students with asthma to achieve their potential in all aspects of school life by having a clear policy that is understood by school staff and pupils. All staff that comes into contact with students with asthma is provided with training on asthma from the school nurse who has had asthma training. Training is updated once a year.



Medical Policy for Field Trips

Protocols for field trips involving students with special needs will include timely notification of the nurse.

- Medications including an EpiPen® and a copy of the student's Emergency Health Care Plan must accompany the student
- A cell phone or other communication device must be available on the trip in the case of an emergency

Medical Record Keeping

At the beginning of each school year, or When a student joins St. Thomas the Apostle School, parents are asked to submit a medical record. history for new entrants. All parents of students with medical needs are given an action plan to give to their pediatrician to complete and return to the school. From this information the school keeps a register which is available for all school staff. Action Plans are then sent to parents on an annual basis to update. If medication changes in between times, parents are asked to inform the school.

Medication

If a student must take any medication in school which is prescribed by a doctor, Health Care Provider that medication must be sent brought by the parent/guardian or other responsible adult to the School Nurse in the original pharmacy container received from the pharmacy and must have on its label the following information:

- Student's name
- Name of doctor prescribing the medication
- Frequency of use
- Dose required
- Effective dates

All non-prescription medication (cough drops, lip balm, etc.) are also required to have a written order by the Health Care Provider and will be kept in the Health Office. should be taken to the School Nurse

Asthma Medication

Immediate access to reliever inhalers is vital. Inhalers are kept in the locked cabinet in the Health Office which is centrally located near the gym, lunchroom and recess area where the need for inhaler use is most likely. Our school nurse will assess the student who may be having difficulty due to asthma symptoms. Students are encouraged to carry their reliever inhaler as soon as the parent, doctor or nurse and class teacher agree they are mature enough. Parents are asked to ensure that the school is provided with a labeled spare reliever inhaler. Parents must label all inhalers with the student's name. Again, inhalers as well as all medications must be in the original pharmacy container labeled with the student's name..

In the event that the School Nurse is not available, our trained staff member can assist a self-directed student with his/her medication. Students who are not self- directed will have his/her medication administered by the Nurse. The School Nurse will assess, educate, and approve students to meet the



requirement for self-direction.

Safety Information & Policies

Crisis Plan

St. Thomas the Apostle School has implemented a “crisis plan” in case of a lockdown emergency. All teachers and staff are aware of the procedure to follow to keep students safe. In the event of such an emergency, circumstances permitting, the building will be evacuated and students will be moved to one of two secure designated locations:

1. St. Thomas Church
2. Off Campus – at the Bethlehem Middle School

Safety Procedures

Fire Drills

New York State Law requires that twelve fire drills be held annually. Eight fire drills must be held by December 1. During the fire drills, students should follow these regulations:

1. Rise in silence when the alarm sounds
2. Walk to the assigned place briskly, in single file, and in silence
3. Stand in a column of two's, facing away from the building
4. Return to building when signal is given

School Safety

St. Thomas the Apostle School strives to provide a safe environment for all. We expect respect for individuals at all times.

Students making verbal or written threats against the physical or emotional well-being of any individual (seriously, in jest, or online) face detention, suspension, and/or expulsion.

We do not tolerate harassment of any type. The Principal investigates all complaints of harassment. Students involved in such behavior face detention, suspension, and/or expulsion.

Engagement in online social networks such as, but not limited to, Facebook, etc. may result in disciplinary actions if the content of the student's postings includes defamatory comments regarding the school, the faculty, other students or the parish.



Parents are cautioned to be aware of the online sites visited by their children, knowing that often predators are not living in a neighborhood, but within the home via a computer.

Weather Emergencies

If it should be necessary to close the school because of weather conditions, an announcement will be made over local television and radio stations, and online. St. Thomas follows the Bethlehem Central School District for all closings and delays.

In the event that a unique event, such as loss of power, forces the closing of our school, parent will be notified through the above means.

Parent Responsibilities

Parent's Role in Education

Your choice of St. Thomas the Apostle School involves a commitment and exhibits a concern for helping your child to recognize God as the greatest good in his/her life. Good example is the strongest teacher. Your personal relationship with God, with each other, and with the Church community will affect the way your child relates to God and others. The ideals taught in school are not well rooted in the student unless these are nurtured by the example of good Catholic/Christian morality at home.

Once you have chosen to enter into a partnership with us at St. Thomas the Apostle School, we trust you will be loyal to this commitment. During these formative years, your child needs constant support from both parents and faculty in order to develop his/her moral, intellectual, social, cultural, and physical gifts. If there is a reported incident at school, a parent's first step must be an investigation of the complete story.

Evidence of mutual respect between parents and teachers will model good mature behavior and relationships.

Together, let us begin this year with a commitment to partnership as we support one another in helping your child to become the best person he/she is capable of becoming.

Parents as Partners

As partners in the educational process at St. Thomas the Apostle School, we ask parents:

- To actively participate in school activities such as Parent-Teacher Conferences, Back to School Night, and State of the School Presentations.
- To see that the student pays for any damage to school books, property, or technology including Chromebooks, due to carelessness or neglect on the part of the student
- To notify the school with a written note when the student has been absent or tardy



- To notify the school office of any changes of address or important phone numbers
- To meet all financial obligations to the school in the manner and time agreed
- To inform the school of any special situation regarding the student's well-being, safety, and health
- To promptly complete and return to school any requested information
- To read school notes and newsletters and to show interest in the student's total education
- To support the faith formation and educational goals of the school
- To support and cooperate with the discipline policy of the school
- To treat teachers with respect and courtesy in discussing student problems
- To set rules, times, and limits so that your child:
 - Gets to bed early on school nights
 - Arrives at school on time and is picked up on time
 - Is dressed according to the school dress code
 - Completes assignments on time
 - Comes to school with a nutritional lunch and snack every day

Home-School Communication

In order to insure that all communication from school reaches home in a timely manner, St. Thomas the Apostle School uses both a folder system and online system.

Normally, we send clear folders containing all correspondence home on Wednesdays. If you choose to receive information this way, we expect that all materials requiring a response be returned the following day in the same clear folder. Your child is responsible for giving the contents of his/her envelope to the homeroom teacher the following day.

Parent Teacher Organization

St. Thomas the Apostle School Parent Teacher Association (PTO) works to support and enhance the educational and social ministry of the school. Parent education, service, and community building are the mission of this organization. By-Laws for the PTO are available on the school website.

Student Responsibilities

Cheating

We do not tolerate cheating of any type. Students who choose to cheat face a failing grade and detention.

Conduct

We expect all students to behave with dignity and with respect for others.



Any failure to do so may result in disciplinary action. We expect all students to cooperate with the spirit and policies of the school.

This requires a St. Thomas student to act appropriately at all times.

The following is a partial list of behaviors that will result in disciplinary measures:

- Fighting
- Threats against another (verbal or written)
- Pushing, kicking, slapping, or other physical gestures intended to harm another.
- Inappropriate physical behavior that results in the injury of another
- Verbal insults, including name calling, or put-downs. These may be verbal, written or be posted online. An attempt at humor is not an excuse for such behavior and will not be considered a valid excuse.
- The use of language that is vulgar, obscene, or of a sexual nature. An attempt at humor is not an excuse for such behavior and will not be considered a valid excuse.
- Gestures that are vulgar, obscene or of a sexual nature. An attempt at humor is not an excuse for such behavior and will not be considered a valid excuse.
- Insubordination (not doing what one is told by faculty, staff, or school volunteer)
- Talking back or arguing with faculty, staff, or school volunteer
- Disrupting the learning process of others
- Disrupting the presentation of the teacher
- Behavior that could cause injury to another (for example, throwing objects, running in the hall)
- Destruction of property (personal or school)
- Refusal to do work
- Inappropriate use of school property (for example, using a computer to play games when one should be doing work)
- Behaviors designed to exclude another from a group
- Instigating someone to do any of these things or to behave in an undignified or disrespectful way.
- The Principal reserves the right to determine the appropriateness of an action if any doubt arises.

Disciplinary Steps

The following is a description of disciplinary steps that may occur when a student fails to act with the expected dignity and respect. These are not progressive. For example, a behavior may result in detention or suspension without a warning.

1. **Warning**: A verbal warning may be issued by the supervising adult. We report all warnings to a child's homeroom teacher who in turn documents the warning.
2. **Time on the Bench**: Usually reserved for younger children, a teacher may give up to 10 minutes on the bench during recess. If a child loses more than 10 minutes, the teacher will notify the parent.
3. **Detention**: A student may be required to miss recess, a school activity, or stay after school. If possible, we will inform a parent first or before the end of the day if a student is to miss an activity. We will notify a parent before after school detention takes place. Recess detention may take place prior to us notifying a parent. We will inform parents of all detentions.



4. Suspension: More serious behaviors or lesser ones repeated, may result in suspension.
 - a. In School Suspension: A student is removed from class and is supervised by a faculty member or administrator for the remainder of the day. A parent conference with the Principal is required before the student is allowed to return to class. Parents will be notified immediately of an in school suspension.
 - b. At Home Suspension: In the case of us being unable to supervise the student, a parent will be required to come to school immediately and take the student home. The Diocesan Catholic School Office will be notified of all at home suspensions. A parent conference with the Principal is required prior to the students return to class.
 - c. Expulsion: Frequent or serious infractions may result in a student's expulsion from school. The Diocesan Catholic Schools Office will be notified and a parent conference with the Principal will take place prior to any decision regarding expulsion.

It is our belief that all students are responsible for their own behavior.

Online and Social Media

Engagement in online social media such as, but not limited to Facebook, may result in disciplinary actions if the content of the student's blog includes defamatory comments regarding the school, the faculty, other students, or the parish.

Bullying and Cyberbullying

St. Thomas the Apostle School attempts to provide a safe environment for all individuals. We do not tolerate verbal or written threats made against the physical or emotional well-being of any individual.

Students making such threats (seriously, in jest, or online) face detention, suspension, or expulsion. If occurring outside of school, it is the responsibility of parents to gather as much information as possible and present the information to the Principal.

Harassment

We do not tolerate harassment of any kind. The Principal investigates all complaints of harassment. Students involved in harassing behavior face detention, suspension, or expulsion. If occurring outside of school, it is the responsibility of parents to gather as much information as possible and present the information to the Principal.

Off-Campus Conduct

The administration of St. Thomas the Apostle School reserves the right to discipline its students for off-campus behavior that is not in line with behavior expectations of its students during the course of the school day. This off-campus behavior includes, but is not limited to cyber-bullying.

Dress Code

Uniforms

The academic uniform for St. Thomas the Apostle School should be purchased through Lands' End.

Uniform components include: pants, shorts, skirts, jumpers, blouses, shirts, vests, and sweaters. Skirts should be no shorter than three inches above the knee. School socks should not include logos or writing.



Socks should be navy, green, or white and do not need to be purchased from Lands' End. Use our preferred school number when placing orders.

Lands' End
Phone: 1-800-548-3883
Preferred School #: 900084161
www.landsend.com

Physical education uniforms are purchased through St. Thomas the Apostle School. Orders are accepted at designated times throughout the school year.

Most days of the year students must be in uniform. There will be "dress down" days which will be announced during the course of the school year (a dress code for such days is included in this section). If there is a time when the prescribed uniform cannot for some legitimate reason be worn, a note from the parent/guardian must be written to the Principal. Students who are out of uniform without this excuse will be sent to the office and the parent will be called to bring the proper clothing.

Physical Education Uniform

Physical education uniforms are purchased through the school office. Order forms are distributed at least three times per year. Students must wear socks with their sneakers.

Uniform Policy

Students, who repeatedly violate the uniform policy, will not be allowed to participate in the next "dress down day" or will serve a detention.

Uniform

The uniform should be clean and without holes, with all buttons attached and hem intact. Shirrtails should be tucked. Belts must be worn as soon as a boy is able to fasten and unfasten it himself.

Shoes

Dress shoes should be one solid color, black, or dark brown. Oxford style, saddle shoes, loafers, and topsiders are acceptable. Shoes with laces must be tied at all times.

Hair

Extreme hair coloring and bleaching is not permitted.

Cosmetics and Decorations

No cosmetics, lip gloss, nail polish, or artificial nails may be worn. No visible tattoos of any kind. No body piercing except pierced ears. Girls may wear one pair of earrings not larger than a dime and without hoops. Boys may not wear earrings of any type. Jewelry should be limited. Hair accessories must be limited and subdued. No large bows or ribbons.



Out of Uniform Guidelines on Dress Down Days

Students may wear:

- Jeans
- Sneakers
- Short socks
- Shorts no more than 3” above the knee (When allowed)
- Skirts no more than 3” above the knee
- Skorts
- Sweatshirts
- Jogging suits
- Dresses
- Slacks

Students may not wear:

- Flip-flop sandals
- No open back shoes
- Tank tops
- T-shirts with inappropriate writing
- Tennis shoes that convert to roller skates
- Biker shorts
- Pajama pants
- Make-up
- Low cut blouses/tops
- Clothing that is extremely tight
- Hats

Good Rule: If you think you shouldn't wear it, you shouldn't.

All uniform regulations and guidelines are subject to the discretion of the principal.



Parent and Student Signature Page

I have received a copy of the *St. Thomas the Apostle School Parent/Student Handbook 2016-2017*. I have read the handbook and agree to follow the school policies and procedures as stated. I will seek clarification of any item that I do not understand. St. Thomas the Apostle School reserves the right to amend this Handbook. Notice of amendments will be sent to parents via the Wednesday folder or through email communication.

Family Name (Please Print) _____

Parent signature

Date

Parent signature

Date

Student signature (1)

Date

