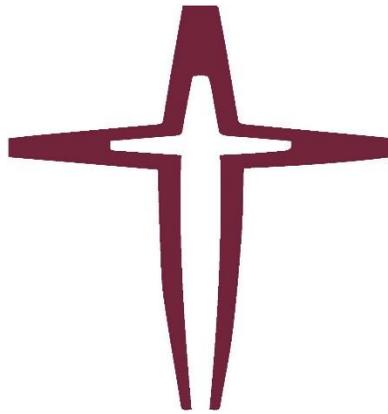


St. Thomas the Apostle School  
25 Dover Road, West Hartford, CT 06119  
Phone: 860-236-6257 Fax: 860-236-8865  
[www.stthomasapostlewh.org](http://www.stthomasapostlewh.org)



Family Handbook  
2017-2018

After viewing this handbook with your family, please return the parent signature page  
to the homeroom teacher of your oldest child...

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**ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE SCHOOL**

Rev. Edward Moran, Pastor

**OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL**

Colleen Whitty DiSanto

*Principal*

Michelle Curley

\*Director of Business and Finances

[development@stthomasapostlewh.org](mailto:development@stthomasapostlewh.org)

Melissa Buckley

\*Administrative Assistant

[mailbox@stthomasapostlewh.org](mailto:mailbox@stthomasapostlewh.org)

Diane Klingman

\*Director of Admissions and Advancement

[dklingman@stthomasapostlewh.org](mailto:dklingman@stthomasapostlewh.org)

Wayne Kowalczyk

\*Director of Technology

[wkowalczyk@stthomasapostlewh.org](mailto:wkowalczyk@stthomasapostlewh.org)

**FACULTY**

Albert, Kathleen	Pre-K 3, Teacher
Atkins, Lindsey	Instructional Aide, Lower School
Caffrey, Mikel-Ann	Grade 2, Teacher
Calitri, Cindy	Art, Teacher
Cashman, Janet	Coordinator of Administrative Support, Librarian
Ciacchero, Meghan	Counselor
Cinquegrani, Father David	General Music, Teacher
	Liturgical Choir, Honors Choir
DeGostin, Mary	Piano Instructor
Faenza, Michelle	Kindergarten, Teacher
Flanigan, Elaine	Pre-K 4, Teaching Assistant
	Before Care Coordinator
Garrido-Cid, David	World Language, Teacher
Greene, Robert	Science and P.E, Teacher
Hadyka, Kevin	Grade 4, Teacher
Hannon, Nicole	Pre-K 4, Teacher
Laprise, Lindsay	Grade 3, Teacher
Leardi, Lois	Pre-K 4, Teaching Assistant
LeMay, Laura	Instructional Aide, Upper School
Leffingwell, Caitlin	Strings Instructor
MacCloy, Haleigh	Pre-K 4, Teaching Assistant
Martin, Brittany	Grade 4, Teacher
Morse, Deborah	Band Instructor
Oates, Patrice	Grade 1, Teaching Assistant
	After Care Coordinator
O'Brien, Kevin	Grade 5, Teacher
Renson, Rebecca	Pre-K 3, Teaching Assistant
	After Care Assistant Coordinator
Roy, Danielle	Grade 3, Teacher
Schaffman, Laurel	Grade 1, Teacher
Schuster, Darcy	Grade 2, Teacher
St. Laurent, Jaclyn	Grade 5, Teacher
Tracey, Gloria	Kindergarten, Teacher

## **SUPPORT STAFF**

Clen, Karen, RN, BSN  
Matus, Jeffrey

Health Care Provider  
Custodian

*Food Service Provided by Lessing Food Group in cooperation with Northwest Catholic High School*

## **SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS**

**Rev. Edward Moran, Ex-officio, Pastor**  
**Colleen Whitty DiSanto, Principal, Exec. Officer**

*The St. Thomas the Apostle School Board is a consultative council offering their insight and advice to our Pastor and Principal. Meetings take place throughout the school year to answer the needs of our school family and fulfill our obligations to the Strategic Plan. The dates for the meetings are included in the school's yearly calendar.*

*The Board's advice and counsel are an important part of our mission. We are always interested in welcoming new members to our Board. Please contact any of our members directly or contact our Principal, to be included in this important process.*

### ***Present members of the Board***

Rosendo Garza, Chairperson  
Barbara Aiudi  
Michael Caruso, Vice Chairperson  
Sean Conaghan,  
Eileen Doyle  
Susan Healey  
Michael Hrach  
Ronald Lowry  
Patrick Macary

### ***Consultants***

Michelle Curley, Director of Business and Finances  
Diane Klingman, Director of Admissions and Advancement  
Wayne Kowalczyk, Director of Technology  
Jerome Katrichis, Ph.D.

**HOME AND SCHOOL ASSOCIATION  
BOARD MEMBERS**

*The main purpose of the HSA is to promote open communication between parents, faculty and the School Board, as well as to direct and coordinate parental support through activities, social functions and fund-raising. We encourage and look forward to your participation. Your talents are valuable and always appreciated.*

*Meetings take place at the school on a monthly basis. Please check the school calendar for the dates and times.*

***Present members of the Executive Board of the Home and School Association***

**Co-President**

Lauren Barnhart and Kate Mylod

**Treasurer**

Carolyn Hovorka

**Secretary**

Mary Beth Reiss

**Communication Coordinator**

Christine Bradley

## **MISSION AND PHILOSOPHY**

### **Mission Statement**

St. Thomas the Apostle is a Pre-K through Grade 5 Roman Catholic elementary school, which embraces many faiths, cultures and ethnic backgrounds. We foster academic growth, personal responsibility and respect for others as we guide children to become compassionate and active citizens in a global society.

### **School Philosophy**

St. Thomas the Apostle School puts faith in action to help the whole-child grow academically, spiritually, and socially. As a Catholic school, we guide students to understand Gospel values and demonstrate them in their relationships and service to others. We emphasize respect and fairness for all, caring for God's creation, and living and working together for a just society.

We instill an appreciation for learning. Each grade-level has rigorous, age-appropriate standards established by the Archdiocese of Hartford. Instruction is differentiated to address the range of learning styles in each classroom community. Traditional and innovative lessons integrate technology, literature, and manipulatives to promote student engagement and growth.

We are called to live as family and community. All members of St. Thomas the Apostle are encouraged to participate in service to school, Church, and one another. Parents, teachers, and staff work together to help all students discover their unique talents and gifts.

### **Lower School (Pre-Kindergarten-Grade Two)**

The program in the Lower School is child-centered and assists each child in becoming an independent member of an interdependent community. As we strive to develop a sense of responsibility and concern for others, basic skills are integrated with a variety of special programs. Important components of the Lower School Program include:

- Classroom-based prayer and Religion classes to deepen an understanding of Christ and the Church;
- Class-organized community service outreach programs are designed on an age-appropriate level focusing on the needs of others.
- Diocesan-wide curricula adapted to meet the needs of our children and faculty;
- Educationally based field trips to enhance the curriculum;
- World Language classes to increase cross-cultural understanding;
- Physical Education classes to encourage wellness and team efforts;
- Art and Vocal Music classes to increase awareness and proficiency; (K-2) and
- Technology and Library instruction to foster a sense of literacy.

### **Upper School (Grades Three-Five)**

The goal of the Upper School Program is to strengthen and expand the solid academic and spiritual foundation fostered in Lower School. Independence is encouraged, as is individual responsibility and a commitment to others. Problem-solving, creative thinking skills and

advanced skill development in Math, Reading and Science are hallmarks of the Upper School Program. The following initiatives are part of the total Upper School Program:

- Religious instruction and prayer continues to be strengthened through a variety of methods;
- Community service projects continue on an age-appropriate level;
- Liturgical presentations are offered for members of parishes and school;
- Science, Health, and Physical Education classes with a focus on wellness, sportsmanship, and skill development;
- Art, Vocal Music, and optional Instrumental lessons to encourage the expression of different talents and abilities;
- The expansion of a Technology Program through the use of desk top, laptop computers as well as iPads and Smart Boards;
- Liturgical Music (grades 4 & 5).
- Honors Choir (grades 4 & 5, audition required)

## **ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT**

In order to monitor student successes and needs, informal assessment and testing are conducted across both divisions throughout the year. In addition, diocesan guidelines require the following corporate testing programs to be administered:

ITBS: Grades 3-5; spring  
Cognitive Abilities Test: Grade 2; fall  
Cognitive Abilities Test: Grade 5; spring  
ACRE Test: Grade 5: spring (Religion only)

## **Report Cards/Progress Reports/Conferences**

Report cards and progress reports are distributed on a trimester basis. Reports cards and progress reports will be issued to parents three times a year. The dates are noted in the school calendar.

**The first and second trimester report cards** will be distributed directly to parents at a prearranged conference. The dates are noted in the school calendar. A conference is required of all parents or guardians in order to receive student report cards. The final report card of the school year will be distributed to each student on their last day of school.

*Parents/Guardians will be asked to sign one copy of the first and second trimester report card during the conferences.*

**Conference times** are a perfect opportunity for you to have a private conversation to discuss the successes your child has enjoyed during the trimester. It will also give you and your child's teacher the opportunity to make any changes for improvement. Parents will be asked to use Sign-Up Genius through a school email about a month before conference time to reserve their time slot.

**Progress reports** may be distributed through your child(ren) to your attention halfway between each trimester, however the first progress report will be distributed to every child in Pre-K to Grade 5. Parent will be required to sign and return the reports to the classroom teachers. In subsequent trimesters, only students who have shown a drop in grade or cooperation will receive a progress report. The progress of students in grades 4 and 5 may be checked daily through the

on-line Educonnect parent portal. Access codes will be distributed to these families through the school office in an email before the new school year begins.

## **ADMISSIONS**

Communication between school and home is vitally important in providing the best environment for your child.

An education at St. Thomas the Apostle School is a privilege measured by the commitment each family makes in its choice of a private education. Having made a conscious choice to attend St. Thomas the Apostle School, students and their families agree to both our philosophy and operating procedures.

All students are accepted on an annual basis. The acceptance of the registration fee in the spring for the following year does not necessarily constitute final acceptance for continuation at St. Thomas the Apostle School. Re-acceptance for successive years will be based on the attitude, behavior and achievement of the student. Re-acceptance of the student is the decision of the school, made in the best interest of the student and the family.

## **ATHLETICS**

St. Thomas the Apostle School has developed a handbook for coaches, parents and student-athletes, which reflect the Archdiocese Athletic Program Guidelines. At the beginning of each season, all participants in the program will be expected to review the handbook and acknowledge that they have received, read, understand and agree to abide by the policies in the handbook through their signatures. This handbook primarily relates to the basketball program organized through the Office of Education, Evangelization and Catechesis, but the policies for student participation in all clubs and sports are consistent in academic and scholastic requirements.

## **ATTENDANCE**

### **Arrival**

The drop-off policy will be in effect beginning on the first full day of school. A detailed explanation will remain on the school website throughout the school year. A map of the parish campus is also available on pages 32 & 33, which outlines the parking spaces, entrance from Farmington Avenue and the two exit paths to be used throughout the school year. All parents and guardians are asked to enter the campus from Farmington Avenue. Kindergarten parents exit behind the church near the playground. Parents of grades 1-5 students proceed through the campus and exit on the north side of the school building.

A drop-off area for students in grades K-5 will be used each morning from 8:00AM to 8:15AM. Parents are required to pause at these areas allowing students to disembark and enter the building with the assistance of members of the school staff.

***Only parents of students in the Pre-K Program will have access to the building each morning to bring their children to their classrooms. All other students will be expected to enter the building with the assistance of the school staff.***

Limited parking spaces will be available to parents and guardians of students in the Pre-K Program each morning. Spaces will also be available to parents and guardians who have appointments in the school office during arrival time.

Parents, guardians and drop-off carpool drivers are required to display a visor label on the passenger side of the vehicle each morning to assist the school staff in directing vehicles to the proper drop-off point. The labels will be distributed to parents during Orientation Day and will also be available through the school office.

**The drop-off points are as follows:**

***Pre-K:*** Parents escort students to their classrooms and park in designated areas.

***Kindergarten:*** Parents proceed from Farmington Avenue entrance to the exit driveway on the north side of the church closest to the playground at the brick walkway. **Students should exit the vehicles behind the driver and proceed directly into the school building with the help of the staff member on duty.**

***Grades 1-5:*** Parents proceed from the Farmington Avenue entrance through the campus to the north side of the building to the designated drop-off area. Please follow the signs and proceed with caution. **Students should exit the vehicle from the passenger side and proceed directly into the building.**

**Absences**

Student absences will be excused for personal illness or injury, death of an immediate family member, or other serious reasons. The principal may also grant excused absences in the case of extenuating circumstances if given advance written notification. When a child is absent, parents should call the school office before 8:00AM to advise the school of the absence. In the event notification is not received, the school nurse may call home to verify your child's absence. The principal may request a physician's excuse for extended absences. If a student is absent on the day of a school extracurricular activity, he/she will not be allowed to attend the activity without written permission from the principal. Regular attendance is essential for scholastic progress and achievement. Prolonged and frequent absences, whether excused or unexcused, may result in grade level retention.

**Family Vacations**

St. Thomas the Apostle School has designated vacations on the yearly calendar. With that in mind, it is not the responsibility of the faculty to honor requests for class work for unscheduled vacations.

**Notations for Attendance**

Whether a student's absence is regarded as excused or unexcused, the notation on the report card and permanent record will indicate whether the student was actually present at school on a particular day. The notation of an excused or unexcused absence may be applied to the ability of the student to receive assignments and complete the assignments for credit during the period of the absence. In extreme circumstances, the nature of absences will be examined to determine whether grade retention at the end of the school year is warranted.

## Daily Schedule

The school day begins at 8:00AM each day. Students may arrive in the schoolyard or in the case of inclement weather to the school hall, at 8:00AM, but should not arrive earlier as supervision is not provided and the children's safety cannot be assured.

## Dismissal

Dismissal is at 2:40PM each day, with Wednesday dismissal at 1:40PM. Students will be dismissed to the After Care Program if registered, to their bus if they are registered and a resident of West Hartford, to the front walkway if they are walkers or walked from the building by the homeroom teachers to the dismissal yard where they will be released only to authorized adults as listed on the emergency form. The authorized adult must make personal contact with your child's teacher at dismissal. In order to ensure student safety, students will not be dismissed to parked cars. Once the West Hartford buses have departed, faculty on duty will remain with students until 2:50 PM (1:50 PM Wednesday). After that time, any remaining children will be taken to the office to await pick-up. After 3:00PM (2:00 PM on Wednesday) parents will be contacted and an assessment will be charged and included on the monthly statement.

During inclement weather, dismissal will be in the gym. Families are asked to enter the gym through the rear doors. Students will be arranged along the walls by homeroom for dismissal.

**Noon dismissals** occur occasionally during the school year and are noted on the school calendar. These generally occur before holidays. *Food will not be served on those days and there will be no After Care Program. All students will be dismissed at noon.*

In the event that a parent or guardian requests an early dismissal of a student, a written request should be sent to the principal's office. Parents or a designee are asked to report to the school office to sign the student "out." Faculty will not release a child to anyone without the approval of the principal and/or designee. If the pick-up person is unknown to our staff, proof of identification will be required. **Please make every effort to arrange pick-up of your child before 2:00PM to avoid the confusion of the dismissal time.**

## Pre-K Dismissal

In response to the need for additional security, our Pre-K students will be dismissed from the gym using the north doors. Students will be divided by program. The exit doors are clearly marked with the program name. Dismissal begins at 2:30PM (M,T,TH,F) and at 1:30PM (W). Each teacher and teaching assistant will accompany the students to the gym with all of their daily personal belongings. Students will be released to the care of their parent, guardian or car pool person who must approach the exit doors and assist their child with their personal belongings, as well assist as they navigate the stairs.

Students enrolled in the After Care Program will be escorted to the program site by a teaching assistant.

Parents will not be given access to the school building during dismissal. If parents wish to enter the building, they will be required to enter through the front door by using the door bell and announcing themselves to the door monitor.

## **Tardiness**

In the case of both arrival and dismissal, parents are asked to keep both timeliness and safety in mind. When children arrive after 8:20AM, they are tardy. This will be reflected on the report card. If a student arrives at school after 8:30 a late slip will be required for admission to the classroom, as the attendance process will have been completed by the homeroom teacher. Please keep in mind, tardiness interferes with student learning and the flow of instruction for the class. Continual or habitual tardiness may, at the principal's discretion, result in a conference with the principal, parents, and child or such other action as the principal deems appropriate.

## **BACKGROUND CHECKS AND VIRTUS TRAINING WORKSHOPS**

**In order to ensure the safety of our students, criminal background forms and participation in a Virtus Workshop are required for all employees and volunteers.** Forms are available on line and in the school office. The Virtus Training Workshops are available throughout the year and are coordinated by various parishes in the Archdiocese. A list of workshops can be found through the Virtus website under the Archdiocese of Hartford heading. Anyone wishing to participate in any student-centered activities in or out of school must complete the background form and submit it to the office. The material from the Virtus Training Workshop must be submitted to the school office as well. All new families will be charged a \$20 fee per-person processing fee. This screening only needs to be done once during your time at STA.

## **BULLYING**

Bullying is prohibited in all Catholic schools of the Archdiocese. It will not be tolerated during the school day or during any school-sponsored activities on or off school grounds. Bullying and intimidation are actions that are contrary to the teachings of Jesus Christ. This behavior is against the fundamental tenet of, "Love your neighbor as yourself," and destroys respect for the dignity of the student, undermines the Christian atmosphere of the school, and deprives the student of a safe and caring learning environment.

Bullying is an overt act by a student or a group of students directed against another student with the intent to ridicule, humiliate, or intimidate another student while on school grounds or at a school-sponsored activity, which is repeated against the same student over time. Bullying includes physical intimidation or assault, extortion, oral or written threats, teasing, putdowns, name-calling, threatening looks, gestures or actions, cruel rumors, false accusations and social isolation.

### **Reporting Bullying**

In a cooperative effort to prevent and eliminate the occurrence of bullying, all students, parents, faculty, and staff who observe or become aware of acts of bullying must take immediate and appropriate steps to report these acts to the school administration for further investigation. When a faculty or staff member observes or becomes aware of an act of bullying every effort will be taken to intervene. This intervention will be followed by a written referral to the school administration. Students and parents may report acts of bullying anonymously. ***Referral forms are available on our website.***

All reports should be submitted in writing to the school administration in a timely fashion. All reports will be thoroughly investigated. The investigation may include interviews with students, parents and school staff, review of records, and identification of parent and family issues.

## **Consequences for Bullying**

If it is concluded that an act of bullying has occurred, the parents or guardians of the student(s) who have committed such acts, and the parents or guardians of the student(s) against whom such acts were directed will be notified in writing. Consequences for students who bully others will depend on the results of the investigation and may include a parent conference, professional counseling, detention, suspension, or expulsion. If warranted, implementation of a safety plan, restricted supervision of students, or support from law enforcement agencies may be sought.

## **CELEBRATIONS/BIRTHDAYS**

There are times during the school year when celebrations are held in the classrooms. However, when food is considered as a part of that celebration, a full evaluation of the needs of the students must be considered before the activity can be approved. Teachers will work with Homeroom Parents, the school nurse and the principal to evaluate the use of food for any activity. Students are issued personal birthday notices from the office during the month of their birthday. Students are encouraged to enjoy a “Dress Down Day” on the day of their choice. Appropriate casual attire is allowed; however, parents will be notified and required to bring a change of clothing to school if poor choices have been made regarding “Dress Down Day” attire. Parents are invited to share a lunch with their child on their special day or be a guest reader as an alternative to a food centered celebration however, background check material and Virtus Training verification must be on file in the school office.

## **CHILD CARE**

Child-Care Programs are available to parents of current St. Thomas the Apostle School children before and after school. In our effort to provide quality programs, we welcome your input and look forward to providing your child with a safe and happy environment in which to relax, study, and interact with peers and staff.

The ***Before School Program*** hours are 7:20AM until 8:00AM. The entrance doors are at the back of the school, behind the gym. Parents will need to ring the doorbell for access to the building. Parents/guardians are responsible for signing children “in” each morning. Supervised activities in a quiet atmosphere are an essential part of this early morning program.

**Before School Care is available on snow days with delayed openings. Students must be registered for this program to take advantage of this service. On delayed opening days, students may arrive 45 minutes before the opening of school.**

Following dismissal, your child(ren) may be a part of the ***After School Program*** until 5:40 PM. Attendance will be taken and a snack is served. Activities with arts and crafts, free play, and homework are customary. Parents are responsible for signing the child(ren) “out” when departing. All children need to be picked up no later than 5:40PM. Any family who has not picked up the child(ren) by 5:40PM will be assessed \$35.00 for the first quarter hour and \$10 for each additional quarter hour or part thereof. Access to the program may be achieved by ringing the doorbell at the back door...behind the gym.

During After Care, we try to have the children spend some time outside. Children may have a change of clothes each day, so that their school uniform will not be soiled. **Please label all**

**clothing and uniforms carefully.** If your child is ill or injured while in the program, you will be contacted immediately. If we are unable to reach you, we will call the emergency number listed on the registration form. In the event we are unable to contact someone, we will follow emergency procedures as dictated by the Town of West Hartford and call 911.

**The program is closed during holidays and teacher in-service days according to the school calendar. Likewise, if the school is closed due to inclement weather, the program will not operate. Also, when school is cancelled due to an emergency, the program will be closed. THERE IS NO AFTER-CARE ON NOON DISMISSAL DAYS.**

## **COMMUNICATION**

### **Classroom Websites**

Each teacher has developed a classroom website to help keep our cherubs and parents organized and informed about all of the activities in each homeroom. The websites will be updated as the need arises. Please take some time each week to appreciate the sites by clicking on the classroom websites in the dropdown menu under *academics* on the school website. The contents of each site will vary depending upon the needs and age of the students.

### **School Website**

The most current information about St. Thomas the Apostle School is housed on our website, which can be accessed at [www.stthomasapostlewh.org](http://www.stthomasapostlewh.org). The information is meant to answer questions for all members of our school family and for families who are looking at STA for the first time. Updates are submitted to the webmaster on a weekly basis, but all urgent information will be issued directly to our families through their registered email addresses. All **required forms** can be accessed through our website to allow for a smooth start to each school year.

### **Educonnect**

The Educonnect Software System is used by our school's personnel to create lesson plans, report cards, progress reports, communicate with families during the school day and maintain current family and student records. Families will be asked, each summer, to update their personal information to ensure that communication during the school year is seamless. Families will be issued an access code to allow for easy access to the most current school and family information on the family portal.

### **E-mail, Parent Portal, and Voicemail**

The e-mail system is the preferred method of office communication. We also maintain our website for your convenience. You are encouraged to refer to our website for the most current school information at [www.stthomasapostlewh.org](http://www.stthomasapostlewh.org). Weather related delays and cancellations will appear on our website. If weather is a concern, please check the site frequently for up-to-dated information. In weather emergency situations, families will be emailed regarding delayed openings and cancellations.

We have a *Parent Portal*, which is accessible through the Educonnect system. Parents and guardians will be given their access codes before the beginning of each school year. **All parents will have access to the school directory through this portal.**

Parents of students in grades 4 & 5 have an additional access through this portal for up-to-date academic progress information. Grades and teachers' comments will be available.

We have a **voicemail system** for the school. This system will allow you to contact teachers directly. The mailbox extensions are listed in the school directory. Take some time to become familiar with the system. It is our desire that this form of communication will provide our families with more timely contact with our faculty and staff, but it is not intended to replace the personal touch. Our Administrative Assistant will be available during regular school hours to help answer your questions and/or direct you to someone who can. In addition to our voice mail system, you may e-mail us at any time at [mailbox@stthomasapostlewh.org](mailto:mailbox@stthomasapostlewh.org). The office staff will be available by phone from 8:00AM to 3:30PM.

### **Emergencies**

Current family information, including phone numbers and e-mail addresses, should be kept on file in the school office. If any information changes during the school year, please notify the office, as soon as possible. Parents will be asked to update their family information each summer for the following school year using the Educonnect system.

St. Thomas the Apostle School personnel reviews the approved Crisis Plan on a yearly basis. The plan is shared with the faculty, staff, and students on a monthly basis through fire drills and evacuation drills. Should it become necessary to close school due to a national emergency, please refer to our website, your registered emails and the network broadcasting systems for up-to-date information.

The Parish Center, on the lower floor of the Church, has been designated as an alternate site for our students, if the need arises.

### **Phone Calls**

In an effort to encourage student responsibility, the use of the school phone by students will be discouraged. Forgotten items that are brought from home during school hours should be left in the Office. Students will be called to retrieve their material in a timely manner. Interruption of classes should be avoided; therefore, calls to the school to leave messages for the students should be rare.

***In addition, cell phones for students will not be permitted in school. All student cell phones will be confiscated and kept in the office until they are returned to a parent or guardian.***

### **Weekly Email Updates**

With the assistance of our web master, each Thursday you will receive a reminder e-mail that our website has been updated. At your earliest convenience, please log on to [www.stthomasapostlewh.org](http://www.stthomasapostlewh.org) to access all of the current school material. The material will remain on the website throughout the following week. To make this effort a success, we need your up-to-date e-mail addresses. Please check your home computer capabilities for compatible operating systems. You'll need to have an Adobe Reader function to access the PDF file containing the Thursday Email. You may also need to check access to our email at your place of work. We have found that on more than one occasion, office systems have blocked our communications.

## **DEPORTMENT**

Students at St. Thomas the Apostle School will be expected to conduct themselves in a manner conducive to a Christian learning environment. Such deportment is necessary to maintain a quality setting for all members of our community. General school rules are outlined below with appropriate consequences for each division discussed. Both inconsistent homework and inappropriate behaviors will be recorded for parents and dealt with appropriately. As recommended, the services of our school counselor may be used.

### **General School Rules expected of students are:**

- To be honest, respectful and courteous;
- To accept the leadership and authority of administrators, teachers, staff and volunteers;
- To use good judgment in situations involving oneself and others physically and/or verbally;
- To respect all school property, the property of their peers, as well as their own;
- To wear appropriate uniforms;
- To complete all homework assignments;
- To use some form of book bag;
- To replace damaged or lost books (or its monetary equivalent); and
- To refrain from gum chewing and eating candy in the building.

### **Lower School**

- Teachers will monitor student behaviors, recording infractions as needed throughout a specified time period. Children may be requested to telephone a parent or visit the principal should sufficient warnings be given to a student for minor misbehaviors.
- Specific rule infractions will be documented by the responsible adult or teacher and referred to the principal.
- At the principal's discretion, parents will be contacted at the first offense. At any time in the process, a conference with student, parent, teacher and principal may be held to discuss the issue at hand.
- At the discretion of the principal or Pastor, a child in Lower School may be suspended or required to withdraw from the school following the above conference with the parent should no satisfactory resolution be reached.

### **Upper School**

- Students are monitored by individual classroom teachers for adherence to the general school rules.
- At the initial offense, the teacher will remind the student of the rule broken and of the expected behavior.
- For subsequent offenses, the teacher will record the student's misbehavior and the student will be sent to the principal's office to offer an explanation.
- At the principal's discretion parents may be called at any point, at which time a conference with parents, the teacher and the principal may be required.

- At the discretion of the principal or Parish, a child in Upper School may be suspended or be required to withdraw from the school following the above parent conference.

### **Consequences for Behaviors**

- Notices are used to communicate inappropriate behaviors. These behaviors may include incomplete homework, disruptions in class, poor attention, etc. Parents' signatures are required on these notices. *In most cases the form must be returned within 24 hours. Please refer to the date noted on the referral form.*
- Loss of privileges or "special" classes may be used as consequences for these offenses.
- Repeated offenses or severe infractions may result in a day of **In-School Suspension**. Students will be required to complete all class work in an area outside of his/her homeroom under the supervision of a teacher, administrator, or office personnel.

### **EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

It is the policy of the school to encourage student participation in extracurricular activities. However, students who choose to participate in these programs are expected to maintain evidence of scholarship and regular classroom attendance. In addition, appropriate behavior throughout the school day and at any event or activity outside the classroom is expected. At the discretion of the principal, a student may be excluded from participation as necessary. If a student is absent on the day of a sponsored extracurricular activity, he/she will not be allowed to attend the activity without permission from the principal.

St. Thomas the Apostle School sponsors many student-centered activities throughout the year. The best frame of reference for these activities is the weekly email communication and our website. Activities change to reflect the interests of our students. Some activities are sponsored by our Home and School Association offering many volunteer opportunities for parents and guardians.

***Sign-up day for student activities and clubs for the 2017-2018 school year is Thursday, September 14 at 7:00PM in Driscoll Hall (gym).***

#### **Basketball**

Our basketball program invites our fourth and fifth grade girls and boys to learn the basics of playing basketball and to have fun. There is a ***no cut policy*** at STA, however space is limited by the Deanery. Weekends, travel and evening commitments are required for full enjoyment. Parent volunteers work as coaches. Look for sign-up opportunities this fall at our Activity Night in September.

A third grade program occurs after school and focuses on skill building and sportsmanship. This program begins in midwinter, but the sign-up will be held at Activity Night in September.

#### **Clubs**

Clubs are organized throughout the school year and are reflective of the interests and skills of our faculty and students. We try to offer a variety of activities that allow our students to try something different and to have fun with their STA friends. Among the clubs offered are soccer,

Book Club for confident and budding readers, Rhythm Moves for exercise, Garden Club, Lego Club for our engineers, Art Club, Ski Club and Math Club. Clubs can vary from year to year. The information and the opportunity to meet the coordinators of the STA Clubs occurs each September at the Activity Night.

### **Dress-Down Days**

Dress Down Days are periodically allowed during the school year. Students have permission to wear appropriate casual attire to celebrate birthdays, school accomplishments or fund-raising events. Unless otherwise noted, t-shirts with slogans and shorts with writing on them are not permitted.

### **Field Trips**

Field trips constitute an important part of the total classroom instruction. Due to issues related to insurance and safety, all field trips where students are not walking, must involve bus transportation. **The cost of the bus and of the event will be included in your monthly statement.** Part of the organization of the field trip will include a permission slip outlining the cost and requirements for participation. Please read this carefully and return it to your child's teacher in a timely fashion. Some emergency contact information may be required where accurate and up-to-date information will be necessary. If a child's behavior warrants disciplinary action resulting in the termination of field trip privileges, parents may be charged the full cost of the trip. Chaperones will be requested by the teachers to ensure the safety of the student group. Room parents will have the right of first refusal. Only adults who have completed the background check and attended the Virtus Training Workshop will be able to volunteer as chaperones. On some occasions more than the required number of parents may participate in the event, but they will not be considered chaperones for the group and will be required to use their own form of transportation and funds for admission..

### **Music Lessons**

Band instruments, piano, strings, and recorder lessons are available during school hours and on an as needed basis after school. Lesson registration occurs at the beginning of the school year. Demonstrations are shared with students and parents during the school day and at evening presentations. Please check the school website and yearly calendar for dates and times.

### **Scouting**

Both girls and boys are invited to participate in a scouting program. The scouting programs take place after school and/or in the evening. Information is shared in the fall of each school year. Parent volunteers are needed to make this a successful organization each year. Please contact Mrs. DiSanto @ [cdisanto@stthomasapostlewh.org](mailto:cdisanto@stthomasapostlewh.org) if you are interested in sponsoring a group. All scout leaders, co-leaders and parent assistants will be required to complete the background check and attend the VIRTUS Training Workshop.

### **FOOD SERVICES**

St. Thomas the Apostle School has lunch services available to students and faculty. On occasion, parents may visit their children for lunch. To allow our food service staff ample time to prepare, orders for lunches purchased at the school will need to be ordered by Friday of the

previous week. Lunch periods are scheduled for the middle of the school day with recess periods immediately following.

A mid-morning snack is provided for all students by the school, and an annual assessment is included in the monthly statement. **ONLY SCHOOL OFFERED SNACKS MAY BE CONSUMED DURING THE MORNING BREAK. EXCEPTIONS TO THIS POLICY WILL BE MADE FOR MEDICAL REASONS.** Please contact Mrs. Clen, RN, BSN, our Health Care Provider, for assistance in this matter. *Additionally, due to the high number of allergies in our school population, students will not be allowed to share food.* For those children enrolled in the After Care Program, snacks are provided and the costs are included in the Program fees.

Parents are free to send students to school with a lunch as an alternative to participation in the lunch program. Any lunches brought to school during the school day should be left in the office for delivery to the classroom. At no time should lunches be sent to school from area restaurants or be taken to classrooms.

For questions concerning the school lunch program, please contact the school office.

## **GRADE PLACEMENT POLICY**

Grade placement at St. Thomas the Apostle School is considered based on the following indicators:

- Child must be age eligible. Connecticut law mandates that a child is eligible to attend Kindergarten provided they are 5 years old by December 31<sup>st</sup> the year of entry. As such, each grade placement is determined based on that standard. (*i.e., students entering PreK4 must be four years old by December 31<sup>st</sup> the year of entry*)
- Current teacher's assessment of child's academic, social and emotional readiness for promotion.
- Parents' consideration of child's readiness.

*If one of the above indicators is in disagreement, the child will participate in a screening or observation conducted by an STA teacher to provide additional professional determination of readiness. Following the screening or observation, parents will be notified of the results and recommended placement for their child.*

*If the student being considered is an STA student, the choice of placement will rest with the parents in accordance with the Office of Education, Evangelization and Catechesis Policy. If the student being considered is applying for admission for the first time, the choice of placement rests with the school personnel and may result in non-acceptance of the student.*

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

### **Animals**

To prevent injury and confusion, other than therapy pets, animals of any kind are not allowed on school property. It is especially important that animals are kept away from our dismissal yard. Even the friendliest animals can offend or frighten children unexpectedly. ***Your cooperation is appreciated.***

## Emergency Form

**WE MUST HAVE A COMPLETED “EMERGENCY SHEET” WITH YOUR HOME AND WORK TELEPHONE NUMBERS, EMAIL ADDRESS AND A DESIGNATED EMERGENCY PERSON ON FILE.** E-mail addresses are being requested to help in the distribution of school material and unexpected schedule changes. Please note any allergies, medication, or special concerns on this form. With the world’s challenges before us, the need for updated emergency information is very important.

## Health Screenings

Screenings are required as part of the health assessment. Screening tests will be performed for vision, hearing, and scoliosis as mandated by the State of CT and pediculosis capitis as required by the school system. The standards and procedures employed for the visual, audiometric and postural screenings are consistent with those described in the regulations. A follow-up with your doctor or specialist must be made on any referral and the form returned to the school nurse.

*For more information, please contact: Karen Clen, RN, BSN, our health care provider.*

## Health Services

The Town of West Hartford provides our Nursing Service Program. A full-time Connecticut licensed registered nurse coordinates a total health program during school hours.

The State of Connecticut requires a complete immunization record for each child entering school by the first day of school. **If the school nurse does not receive this record by the opening day of school, your child may be refused admittance by State law. Check out our helpful health related material, which is contained on our website and is updated regularly.**

## Illnesses

Children who become ill during the school day must be picked up by a parent or designated adult within one hour of notification. Since the school is not equipped or licensed as an infirmary, we cannot keep your child in school if he/she is ill. Children who are ill at home (vomit during the night, diarrhea, fever) should not be sent to school the next morning. A 24-hour period should pass without illness before they return to school.

A physician’s note is required to excuse and re-admit a student from physical educational programs when an injury is involved.

Please inform the nurse of any changes regarding your child’s health status - new diagnoses such as: asthma, seizure disorder, diabetes, etc.; any new medication being given at home; surgery or hospitalizations; fractures or injuries; long-term absences; or communicable diseases.

## Medication

According to CT State Law Sec. 10-212, the administration of medication by the school nurse or in the absence of such registered nurse, the Principal or an assigned teacher may administer medicines as long as there is a written order from a physician or dentist on file. In the event that no school personnel are trained for the administration of medication, the medication needs to be

given by the parent/guardian. If your child needs medication at school, we need a permission form signed by your physician, dentist, APRN or PA, licensed to practice in Connecticut or any other state, and instructions for giving the medication. Medications must be sent in the original pharmacy-labeled container. (Ask your druggist for an extra labeled container when you pick up the medicine.) If your child self-medicates with an asthma inhaler at home, we must know what it is, in case of a reaction. The school nurse must review all medications coming to school. This protects all children, including yours.

### **Parking**

Our parking lot has been clearly marked giving our families ample parking spaces for drop-off and pick-up. Please enter on the south side of the property at Farmington Ave. between the rectory and the adjacent apartments. Exits are marked with arrows on the ground allowing vehicles to safely leave the property behind the church near the playground and on the north side of the building. Arrows are also fixed to signs at these exits indicating the desired traffic flow. Since we are trying to be good neighbors with our Parish and Dover Road families, your cooperation will be appreciated. A map has been enclosed in this handbook for your parking, drop-off and driving convenience.

### **Physical Examinations**

Physical examinations are required for all students entering Preschool, Kindergarten, and Grade Three. Also, all new students must have a physical. These are students who transfer into our school at any grade level. Forms are available on our web site for your convenience. Completed forms should be returned to school in August to allow for a smooth transition in the new school year.

### **Playground Use**

We are blessed with a wonderful play space. Students are taught through their physical education classes, the proper use of the equipment. These lessons are reinforced during recess. Some of the equipment is not appropriate for our youngest children. Additionally, some of the equipment is too small for our upper school children. Please review the following guidelines, so we can all continue to enjoy this area.

- Students from toddler to 5 years of age should use the small structure with the rooftop addition. The clubhouse with the table is also for our youngest children.
- Students in grades 1 through 5 have the use for the largest structure.
- Ball playing and running games should be enjoyed on the blacktop.

We request that you review the appropriate use of all of the equipment with your children to prevent injury after school and needless destruction of the structures. *All age-appropriate students will be tested during gym class to use the Cloud Dancer. They will receive a red wrist band for their accomplishment. It must be worn in order to use the structure.*

### **HOME & SCHOOL ASSOCIATION**

The Home & School Association is a parent-run group whose goal is to promote friendships between parents, and facilitate communication with the faculty, as well as to direct and coordinate parental support through activities, social functions and fund-raising.

We believe that the friend-making happens naturally, when people become involved in this community -- by helping in their children's classrooms, by getting to know other parents and families, or by volunteering for one of the myriad of HSA activities that occur throughout the school year.

The fund-raising, critical to the school's budget, also enables people to make friends, as they work shoulder to shoulder at an event or on a committee.

The HSA meets once each month (noted on the calendar), and the meetings are open to all parents. Please try to attend, if at all possible! We welcome new ideas and fresh perspectives. If you can't make it to a meeting in person, please share your thoughts with one of the officers (who names are listed in the front of this handbook). Remember, this is *your* organization.

### **Award for Extraordinary Service**

This is an award given to the parent of a fifth grader (whose family is completing its tenure at STA) who, in the opinion of the Home & School Board, has given an extraordinary amount of time to the students of St. Thomas the Apostle School through volunteer efforts. The candidates will be nominated by current HSA officers and approved by the principal. The winner will be chosen from that pool. An award citation and gift will be presented at Fifth Grade Class Night in June.

### **Winner of the Service Award for 2016-2017: Molly and William Stiles**

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

One of the chief ways in which the Home & School Association helps St. Thomas the Apostle is by raising money. In fact, the HSA contribution is a part of the school budget; for the 2017-2018 school year, the HSA must raise \$25,000 to fulfill its obligation to the school. This amount is separate and different from money raised from alumni and others through the school's Advancement efforts.

How will we do our part? In a variety of ways:

- **Fundraisers, which may include a pie sale in November and poinsettia sale in December, among others.** Details will be announced in the Thursday email or through our website, as they become available.
- **"Recycling" dollars**, through programs like General Mills box tops, Target credit card program (STA's ID is 4397), and schoolpop.com, an on-line shopping portal. The HSA has voted to earmark all money raised through the Recycled Dollars program to our Playground Committee, which is working hard to keep our beautiful playscape an exciting place to play.
- **Box Tops for Education** is an even easier way to raise funds for STA. You can earn cash by clipping Box Top coupons from hundreds of participating products and sending them

into school in an envelope marked **HSA**. Homeroom teachers will forward them to the office. Look at our website for a full list of participating products.

### **Pastor Award**

The Home & School Association created the Pastor Award in 2001 in honor of Fr. Murphy's tenth anniversary as pastor of St. Thomas the Apostle Church. It seemed a fitting tribute to a man who was also a member of the St. Thomas the Apostle Class of 1943 – the school's very first graduating class!

The Pastor Award is given each year to the one student in each homeroom who best exemplifies respect, responsibility, loving Christian behavior, and other important character traits embodied by our former Pastor. Each May, every homeroom teacher in grades Pre-K-5 will nominate a student via a short paragraph of explanation, and submit that name to the school office. The names of winners from Pre-K through Grade 4 are announced at our Opening of School Mass in September. The Fifth Grade winners are announced at Graduation in June.

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

Like any community, ours is unique because of the people who are part of it: the administrators and school staff; the children; and you -- the parents. The time and talents you share -- help to make St. Thomas the Apostle School special.

**This willingness to help is actually formalized in the school contract, which requires each family to contribute 40 hours of time to the school.** Discover the camaraderie and satisfaction that comes from volunteering at St. Thomas the Apostle School.

A few details:

- A ***Parent Volunteer Guide*** is published on the school website. This Guide outlines the many volunteer opportunities available to our STA Family. Part of the Guide includes sign-off sheets that will allow you to keep track of your volunteer hours. It is each parent's responsibility to make sure that the chairperson of each event signs and dates the appropriate page, verifying your time. Please, return the completed sheets to the school office to the attention of Michelle Curley in the Development Office by May 5, 2017.
- ***Any time given to St. Thomas the Apostle -- as a classroom helper, field trip chaperone, baker, or event coordinator -- counts toward your family's obligation....you even receive hours for completing and turning in your family contracts on time!***
- Many jobs -- such as School Board member, chairperson of any HSA-sponsored event, scout leader, sports coach, Room Parent, etc. -- automatically fulfill the 40-hour obligation. This will be made clear when you sign-up for one of these positions.
- Some people simply cannot help during the day. No problem. We have lots of "behind the scenes" jobs -- baking, record-keeping and other paperwork -- that can be done at night or on the weekends.

It is recognized that time away from family and the requirements of jobs and travel have increased over the past few years. For some of us, volunteering time at St. Thomas the Apostle

School has become a challenge. To reduce that burden, the Home & School Association and the St. Thomas the Apostle School Board has included a second volunteer option in the school contract. Parents may volunteer to contribute \$250.00 rather than commit to 40 hours of volunteering time. You will be billed for that amount and the \$250.00 donation will be applied toward the \$25,000 HSA goal set for this year. These options are a way for all of our families to contribute to the support of our school community!

***But, we don't want your money...We want you! Your presence at STA events contributes a positive energy and spirit to our school. It makes St. Thomas the Apostle School such a welcoming place in which to grow and learn.....***

While we can't hope to list every activity or volunteer opportunity that will occur during the school year, the guidelines listed in the ***Parent Volunteer Guide*** may assist you in managing your time and talents to help our school.

### **HOMEROOM PLACEMENTS**

St. Thomas the Apostle School has been fortunate to have two homerooms available for each grade. Due to fluctuations in enrollment, we understand that this situation may change from year to year. Given a two homeroom configuration per grade, the student population is divided with the intent of creating a balanced class within each homeroom. With the help of the teachers, Director of Admissions and Advancement, the school counselor, and the principal, the needs of each child is considered when the class lists are created. Parent requests for teachers are not accepted for this process.

The school administration in the creation of the homerooms will make every effort to maintain the total student enrollment in each class to 20 students or less. However, understanding that we want to offer a Catholic education to every family seeking enrollment at St. Thomas the Apostle School, it may be necessary to increase the enrollment in a given homeroom. If there are more than 20 students in a classroom, a teaching assistant will be assigned to that classroom.

### **HOMEWORK POLICY**

As you plan for homework support at home, keep the following guidelines in mind. Homework is designed to serve a positive purpose and is closely integrated with class work. Homework in grades 1, 2 and 3 should take about 30 minutes. Students in grades 4 and 5 should be spending an hour on their homework. Given individual learning styles and approaches to tasks, the time frame may vary for your child. If you have concerns about your child's study habits and homework success, please contact your child's teacher.

Formal homework other than enrichment reading will not be given before holidays and vacations. However, students may find it beneficial to use their free time during school break to catch up on material that may be due sometime after the holiday. This is particularly true with monthly book reports and long-term projects.

In both divisions of the school, our goal is the continued success of each and every child. Mentioned in the general school rules, homework is an integral part of school success. As with the above procedures, homework will also be monitored via "homework notices." These will be sent home for discussion and parent/guardian signature.

## LIBRARY

Students have the opportunity to benefit from a scheduled library period each week. The activities during that time are coordinated between the librarian and your child's classroom teacher. Since all library materials are shared by the entire school population, it is important to remember these guidelines.

When you "check out" reading material from the library, make a note of the DUE DATE. It is the responsibility of each student and his/her parent to return all material on the DATE DUE. This affords other students the opportunity to enjoy more time reading and less time searching for lost or overdue books. If you need more time to finish your book or magazine, the librarian, Mrs. Cashman, will be happy to renew it for an extended period of time.

## LUNCH SCHEDULES

Parents are welcome join their students for lunch. Please notify the school office in advance. **Background forms** and evidence of **Virtus Training** must be on file in the school office. If you wish to order lunch from the cafeteria, the order needs to be placed before the end of the day on the previous Friday.

Lunch times:	11:20-11:45	Pre-K and Grades 4 & 5
	11:50-12:15	Grades 2 & 3
	12:20-12:45	Grades K & 1

## PARISHIONER STATUS

It is the policy of St. Thomas the Apostle School to extend certain preferences to "contributing parishioners" of St. Thomas the Apostle Parish and St. Timothy Parish in the areas of admissions, tuition, and financial aid.

The determination of whether a family is to be considered a "contributing parishioner" for these purposes shall be made by the Pastor. In determining whether a family qualifies as a "contributing parishioner" the Pastor shall consider the following:

- (i) whether the family is included in the parish census;
- (ii) whether the family attends mass at St. Thomas the Apostle Church or St. Timothy Church, currently uses the parish envelope system and has used such envelope system on an ongoing basis for the six months prior to the date on which such family is to be considered for contributing parishioner status;
- (iii) such other factors, as he shall deem appropriate.

## STUDENT SERVICES

It is important to remember that from time to time, you and your child may require special intervention. In addition to nursing services provided by the Town of West Hartford and the screening prescribed by local and state guidelines, additional academic services are available at St. Thomas the Apostle School.

Our instructional aides are available in both the Upper and Lower School for additional academic support. With the recommendation of the homeroom teacher and in consultation with you, the parent/guardian, additional direct instruction may be provided to support the efforts of the classroom teacher. The additional support or *tutorial services* occur within the homeroom setting reducing transition time from room to room therefore increasing the time for instruction. This effort will be closely monitored and directed by the classroom teacher.

For additional academic support on a long term basis, St. Thomas the Apostle School can provide in-house *tutorial services* after school. Should you feel your child will benefit from this service, please contact the Office of the Principal. *This service will be provided at an additional cost.*

*Enrichment opportunities* within the classroom setting will be coordinated by the classroom teacher and supported by our instructional aides. Consideration for support services of any kind will require a formal review of student records and progress as well as the completion of an Action Plan to ensure appropriate vigilance on the part of the Support Team.

For students who may need some additional testing and/or other diagnostic services, a school-based *referral form* should be completed and forwarded to the Principal's office for consideration. Parents, with the assistance of the homeroom teacher, should review student records prior to the submission of the referral form and complete it thoroughly. Following the review by the Principal and the members of an in-house Student Support Team an Action Plan will be initiated. Parent involvement is imperative for the success of any additional services for students, so you may be requested to attend meetings at times during the school year.

In addition to academic intervention within the classroom setting, St. Thomas the Apostle School provides *counseling services* during the school day. The counselor is scheduled at the school five days a week. These services may include temporary support or long-standing counseling giving students the emotional support they need to sustain a successful approach to school and family life. Please contact the principal if you wish to pursue this option. A copy of the referral form is included in this Handbook and on our website.

## **STUDENT RECORDS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

In the event that a parent elects to transfer a child from St. Thomas the Apostle School during the school year, a request in writing must be made to the principal. However, it must be understood that the school's expenses do not diminish following the withdrawal of a child. Parents are responsible for the full tuition as provided in the tuition agreement. In the event that a child moves from St. Thomas the Apostle to another school, a written request for transcripts needs to be filed. Financial obligations to **St. Thomas the Apostle School remain the responsibility of the family, as noted in the contract.**

Other requests for student information and recommendations must be requested in writing from the receiving institution. This includes summer camps, tutoring companies, individual tutors on letterhead, and middle schools as part of the middle school application. All requests for information must be made through the office. All financial obligations must be resolved before records for recommendations will be processed.

### **Record Release**

When the decision has been made for a student to leave St. Thomas the Apostle School or when a student graduates, student records will need to be forwarded to the receiving school. Likewise, camps and other student-centered institutions may request recommendations from various members of the school staff. A formal written request from the receiving school, signed by the parent or guardian must be completed and submitted to the school office before records or recommendations will be completed, copied and released. The release form must indicate the name of the documents requested and must be signed by the custodial parent or legal guardian of the student. **All financial obligations to St. Thomas the Apostle School must be up-to-date before the records will be forwarded as requested in the release form.**

## **TUITION**

### **Tuition Contracts**

It is the policy of St. Thomas the Apostle School to remain in a healthy financial situation. To that end, according to our tuition contract, each family is responsible for complete and timely payment of tuition and fees as described in your contract. In the event that families fail to meet their financial obligations to the school, the principal and/or Pastor will make all reasonable means of collection to insure payment of said fees. Such means may include legal action or any other action as directed by the Pastor or the Office of Education, Evangelization and Catechesis through the Archdiocese of Hartford. It is the policy of St. Thomas the Apostle School to charge a \$50.00 fee for checks returned by a bank. In the event that a bank returns personal checks written by a family in payment of fees due to the School, all future fees due to the School from that family must be paid by bank check or money order.

### **Tuition Collection**

St. Thomas the Apostle School has collaborated with Smart Tuition to facilitate its tuition collection. School personnel has provided basic demographic information to Smart Tuition regarding family accounts, however there are enrollment requirements from Smart Tuition for each family to begin the process. Once a family has completed and submitted a contract with the deposit to the School Business Office, the enrollment process for the school year can begin. Instructions will be shared through the email system with each family to ensure confidentiality and a successful completion of this process. In addition to assistance from the Smart Tuition coordinator on line, our Director of Business and Finance will be available to assist families.

### **Tuition Assistance**

Funded by our Sponsor-A-Student Program and other Archdiocesan sources, tuition assistance may be awarded to families of St. Thomas the Apostle School in grades Pre-K through five. Priority is extended to students based on the accompanying criteria for each award. Assistance may be provided in the form of reduced tuition, grants-in-aid or as a combination. Applications for financial assistance will be requested each spring. The principal and the Pastor in cooperation with SMART Tuition and SMART Aide will review all applications.

### **Tuition Assistance Application (Smart Aid)**

The application for tuition assistance is part of the Smart Tuition collection system now used at St. Thomas the Apostle. This process replaces the PSAS system used in past years. The new system has some similarities to the PSAS, as there are a number of supporting documents, an

application and filing fee required to complete the process. Families from Pre-K through grade 5 are eligible to apply. Timely completion and submission of the material will ensure a timely response from the school, once the funding becomes available. Incomplete applications will not be processed by Smart Aid.

All applicants for tuition assistance and scholarships must have processed Smart Aid application on file. Once your application is processed, a financial aid recommendation will be forwarded to St. Thomas the Apostle School. All final financial aid decisions, including notification of an award amount (if any) will be made by St. Thomas the Apostle School. If families are concerned about their Smart Aid application or disbursement of tuition assistance, please contact our Director of Business and Finance at the school.

***Additionally, only families with a completed contract for admission to STA may be considered for tuition assistance. A full listing of scholarship and tuition assistance opportunities are listed on the school website.***

## **TECHNOLOGY**

Each student who utilizes the school's computer system and other school electronic devices will be instructed in the proper use of the network, and the student and his/her parent or guardian must read and sign the use agreement before the student will be allowed to use the school's computer system and electronic information resources. The agreement will be issued through the school website and must be submitted to the classroom teacher for each child before the use of any computer systems is allowed.

The use of the school's computer system and electronic information resources must be in support of education and research, consistent with the educational objectives of the school. Parents and students using the school's network or computing resources must comply with the appropriate rules for that network or resource listed in the agreement.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

### **Bus**

The West Hartford Public Schools and their transportation department provide transportation for West Hartford residents. It is necessary for all families to contact the Town of West Hartford to arrange for this service. Each spring a renewal form is sent home through our school office to help with the transition from school year to school year. This form is a requirement. Any delay in the completion of this form or its return to the West Hartford Transportation Department may result in a delay in service. If you are a new family and reside in West Hartford, please check with our Administrative Assistant for more information.

Students who are transported by a town-arranged bus service or child-care program will be dismissed to their vehicles with the assistance of a school assigned monitor.

## **UNIFORMS**

Students in Pre-K through Grade Five at St. Thomas the Apostle School wear uniforms at all times during the school day. On days when students have Physical Education classes, the uniform worn to school is the STA gym uniform. Uniforms are available through the Dennis

Uniform Company. They may be contacted directly using the information our website:  
[www.stthomasapostlewh.org](http://www.stthomasapostlewh.org).

*The use of the Dennis Uniform is a requirement at STA. No other vendors' uniforms will be accepted.*

**YEAR-ROUND**

<b>GIRLS</b>	<b>BOYS</b>
Knee/ankle socks (white,wine,greY)	Ankle socks (white,wine,greY)
Plaid jumper	White polo shirt w/logo
White blouse w/ Peter Pan color	Grey pants w/ black belt
Plaid skort	Cardigan (grey or wine)
Cardigan (grey or wine)	V-neck sweater (grey or wine)

**PREKINDERGARTEN**

Knee socks (Girls) ankle socks (Boys) (white, wine, gray)  
 Tights (Girls)  
 Polo shirt (wine)  
 Shifts heather gray (Girls)  
 Turtleneck Shirt (wine)  
 Pants pull-On (gray)  
 Shorts pull-On (gray)  
 Cardigan sweater (wine or gray)

**SPRING AND FALL**  
**April 15-October 15**

<b>GIRLS</b>	<b>BOYS</b>
*Skorts	Shorts (grey) with belt
Knee socks (white, wine, grey) or	Polo shirt (white with logo)
Ankle socks (same)	Socks (same)
Peter Pan collared blouse	Sweaters (same)
Polo shirt (white with logo)	
Shorts (grey) with belt	
Sweaters (same)	

**WINTER**

Turtle neck (white with logo)	Turtle neck (white with logo)
Polo shirt (white with logo)	Polo shirt (white with logo)
Tights (3 colors)	
Plaid jumper	Pants (grey) with belt
*Skorts	Socks (same)
Pants (grey) with belt	Sweaters (same)
Sweaters (same)	

**\*SKIRTS are not part of the St. Thomas the Apostle uniform**

## ACCESSORIES

Belts - Black  
Shoes black - (Non-Scuff Soles)  
Shoe option for girls—black Mary Jane, Velcro closure  
Pre-K students wear sneakers daily.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION UNIFORMS UNISEX

Sweat shirt crew neck (burgundy w/logo)  
Sweat shirt hoodie (burgundy w/logo)  
T-shirt (college grey w/logo)  
Gym shorts (burgundy) (April 15-October 15)  
Sweat pants (burgundy w/logo)  
White socks and sneakers

*Jewelry* is not part of the school uniform for boys or girls. However, girls may wear small earrings. Likewise, no make-up or tattoos should be worn by students at any time. Only clear fingernail polish is acceptable. *Hair styles* should be clean and neat. Boys' hair must be styled to ensure that the length does not exceed the top of the collar of the uniform polo shirt. We have tried to be as specific as possible with uniform guidelines. Our uniform defines our common identity. Teachers will issue uniform notices to students out of uniform. Parents may be contacted with a request to supply the correct uniform.

## VIRTUS TRAINING WORKSHOPS

This training is required to comply with the policies of the Office of Education, Evangelization and Catechesis and the regulations set forth by the Council of Bishops, as we seek to protect all of God's children. Verification of attendance at the training workshops is required. All volunteers must attend, *once*. However, additional, periodic updates will be issued through readings, which will be stored on the school website. Workshops are offered periodically at STA and are noted in the school calendar. Registration is required. Additional workshops are organized through the Archdiocese and are noted on the Chancery website.

*Virtus Training is required for all members of our school family who wish to volunteer to participate in any activities where children will be present.* There are no exceptions to this policy. Verification of compliance is the responsibility of our family members before time at STA can be confirmed. Please see the Principal regarding volunteer compliance.

## VISITORS

To ensure the safety of our school population, visitors are required to sign in at the Main Office and wear a Visitor's Badge. Badges should be returned to the Main Office when a visitor "signs out." In some instances, proof of identification will be required. Visitors to classrooms must give 24 hours' notice. All visitors must have completed the **background check** approved through the Archdiocese, as well as the Virtus Training Workshop.

## **WEATHER RELATED ISSUES**

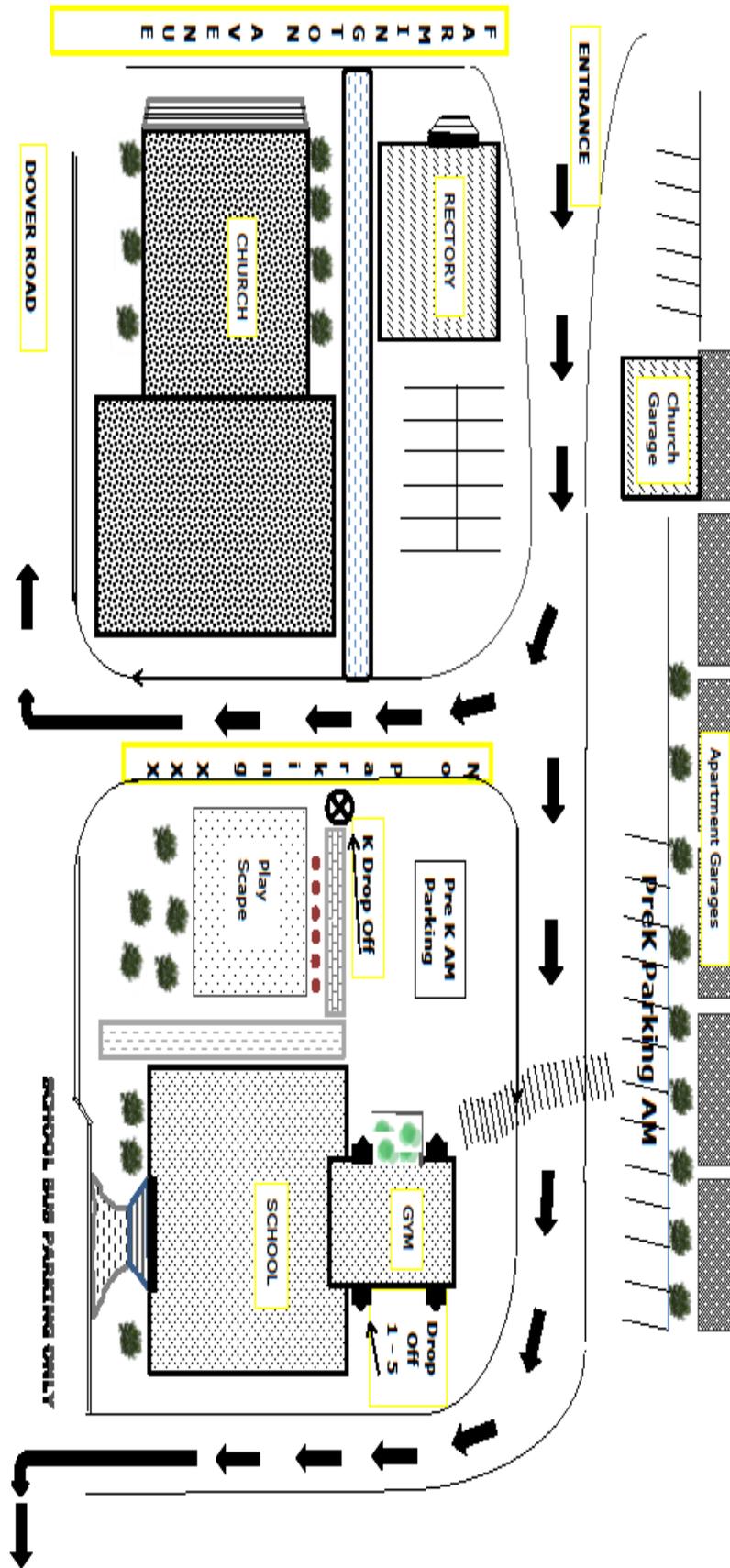
Inclement weather is always a challenge, but at St. Thomas the Apostle School we have a system in place to help control the confusion that sometimes can occur. The first step in controlling the confusion is the accurate completion of the **EMERGENCY FORM**. Please take the necessary time to fully answer each request for phone numbers and e-mail addresses. You can also update your family information through the Educonnect system by using your access codes.

Notification of snow days and delayed openings will be communicated through TV, radio broadcasts and/or the e-mail system. Please direct your attention to the following networks:

- Channel 30 NBC Storm Center
- WFSB Channel 3
- WTIC AM and FM

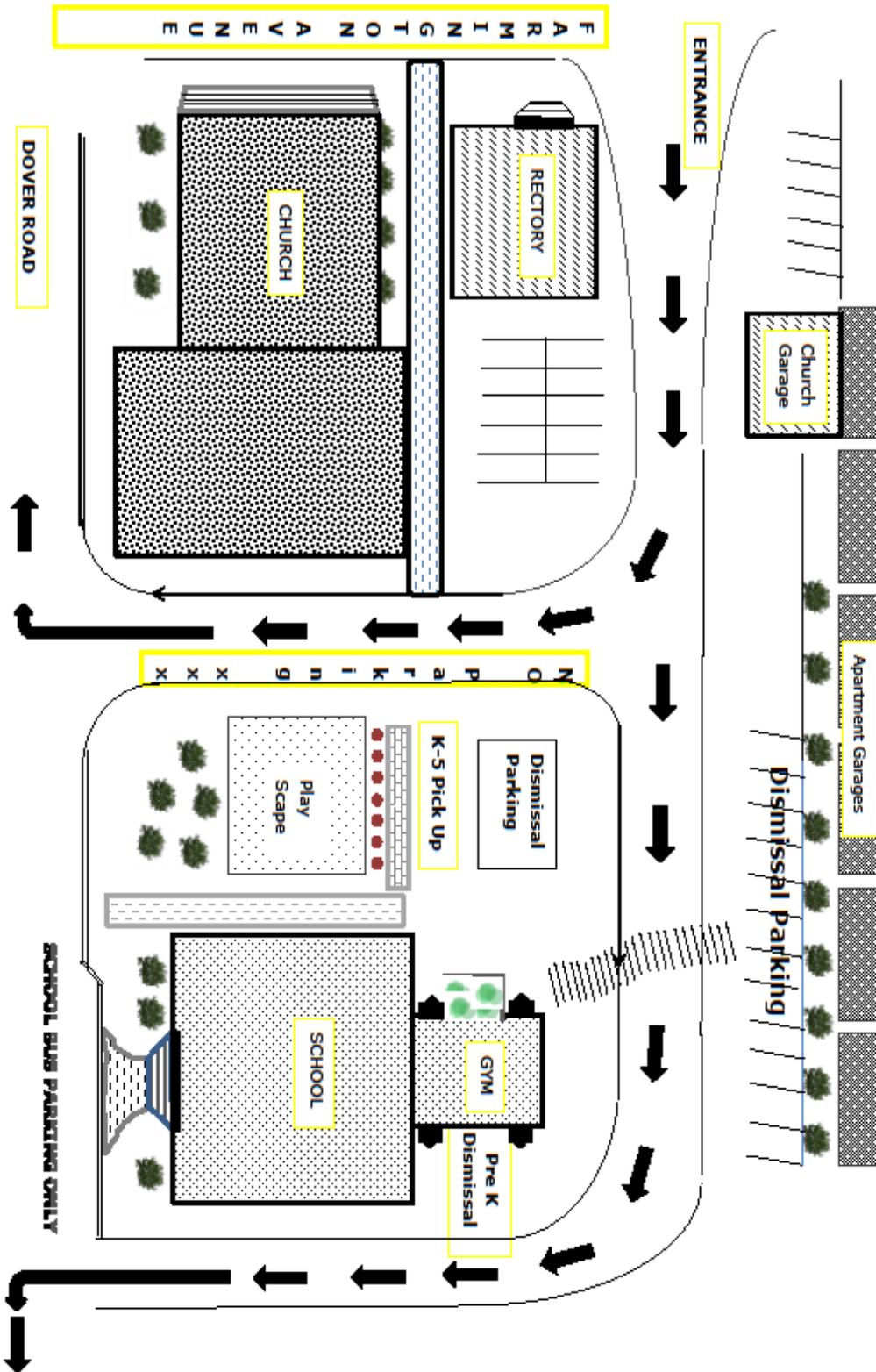
**Late openings and early dismissal notices** will be issued through a combination of broadcasts on these networks, through the Emergency E-mail System and our website. If you have any concerns about the status of school openings or closings, please refer to the notification of the West Hartford Public Schools and on our website. Times may vary slightly to accommodate for the needs of the buses and emergencies specifically related to St. Thomas the Apostle School.

Parents must make alternate arrangements for after-school care in the event of school closings. The After Care Program will be closed in the event of an early dismissal. Additionally, the Before Care Program will open 45 minutes before the announced time of school on all late opening days.



DROP OFF

PICK UP



August, 2017

Dear Parents and Guardians,

After reviewing this handbook thoroughly with your child/children, please copy, sign and return this form to your child's homeroom teacher. If you have more than one child enrolled at St. Thomas the Apostle School, the form should be returned to the *oldest child's teacher*.

***Due Date: September 21...Curriculum Night***

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I have read this handbook and I have discussed the contents with my child/children. I understand my obligation to assist in enforcing the regulations stated.

Parent Name (print) \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name	Grade	Homeroom
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____