

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS SCHOOL
POLICY MANUAL



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ST. THOMAS AQUINAS SCHOOL COMMISSION

POLICY MANUAL

General Policy Statement & Role of School Commission

The School Commission is the policy-making body of the school and, as such, is responsible for drafting the Vision and Mission Statements, all Policies and the School Policy Manual, subject to the pastor's approval. In promulgating these policies, the School Commission will consider input from the pastor, principal, teachers and parents. The monitoring committee of the School Commission is responsible for maintaining and updating these policies which will be posted on the school website. Policies will be included in the Student Handbook. All School Commission policies are planned to be reviewed every 3 years on a rotating basis, but any such policy, including this policy manual, may be amended with immediate effect from time to time and at any time.

SECTION I - ACADEMICS

1.1 Accreditation

St. Thomas Aquinas School (hereinafter referred to as “St. Thomas”) is fully accredited by the Indiana Department of Education and by the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA).

The North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement extends its authority to more than 10,000 public and private schools scattered across 19 states. The North Central Association’s mission to ensure that schools from pre-kindergarten to post-secondary uphold educational standards also extends to the Navajo Nation and Department of Defense classrooms.

1.2 Curriculum

The curriculum should be designed to instill in the students a love of learning in a Christian environment, while fulfilling the required state and archdiocesan rules and regulations and allowing for differentiated learning. Curriculum standards are based on Indiana Department of Education requirements and are available at the IDOE website. A grading scale will be published and will include rules about eligibility for extra-curricular activities, including sports.

1.3 Catholic Identity

The school's curriculum shall include instruction in the Catholic Faith and will comply with curriculum guidelines established by the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. This identity of the school will be fostered through the observance of liturgical seasons, feast days and weekly attendance at Mass as well as incorporation of religious teachings throughout the school year. All students are expected to actively participate in our religious education.

1.4 Extracurricular & Eligibility

All students, including St. Thomas Students or St. Thomas parishioners not attending St. Thomas School, who wish to participate in any parish sponsored extracurricular activities are required to adhere to the school guidelines regarding student progress reports and report cards as well as overall classroom behavior and discipline.

SECTION II - ADMINISTRATION

2.1 Safety Policy

To ensure the safety of students, teachers, staff and visitors, the principal will ensure that the school complies with all federal, state and local laws, has completed all necessary inspections and has all required emergency plans in place.

St. Thomas will not tolerate any threats or acts of violence, weapons, gang activity, vandalism, other misconduct or disruptive behavior from students, staff, teachers, parents or visitors on school grounds. Any such behavior may result in reprimand (suspension, student expulsion or teacher termination) at the principal's and/or pastor's discretion.

In addition, the St. Thomas campus is a smoke free and drug free zone. Smoking is not allowed at any time on the school grounds and illegal drug use, sale or purchase is strictly prohibited.

After-hours use of the school grounds is limited to sanctioned parish activities. Any activity must be approved by the principal or pastor, and it is the responsibility of those who use the building to ensure they properly secure the premises upon leaving.

2.2 Code of Conduct

The School Commission of St. Thomas wants to ensure that the school is a safe and healthy Catholic environment for all students, teachers, administrators, staff and visitors. The School Commission further wants all students to behave in ways that promote health in mind, body, and spirit and to display behavior which is rooted in the mission, philosophy, and objectives of the school. Finally, all students, teachers, staff and volunteers at St. Thomas are expected to exhibit

consideration and respect for others during their educational experience when on school property OR at a school or church-sponsored event.

The school administration shall provide a written Code of Conduct in the Student Handbook, which will support consideration and respect for others, and outline a school-wide discipline plan.

2.3 Disciplinary Policy

All STA students should expect to be treated with Christian kindness and forgiveness. Discipline is a tool for learning, not punishment. Students are expected to exhibit increasing self-discipline as they mature and parents and teachers should assist students in developing self-control. The Code of Conduct in the Student Handbook should lay out a pattern of progressive discipline that will assist school staff and parents to work together to assist a child to moderate his or her behavior. While no comprehensive list of behavioral problems can be identified, the Code of Conduct should have sufficient examples to guide the principal in maintaining a productive learning environment.

2.4 Bullying Policy

Bullying is meant to ostracize a single person and push them to the fringe. It is wrong, dangerous, and it is the opposite from the teachings of Jesus. Children learn what they live so at St. Thomas we will do all we can to prevent it and address it if it does occur. A key element to bullying is a silent witness. All St. Thomas students are expected to stand up for victims of bullying and report bullying behavior immediately.

Specifics details of the St. Thomas policy regarding bullying can be found in the Student Handbook.

St. Thomas is committed to providing a safe and secure learning environment free from bullying and harassment. We are a place for all to learn, grow and lead.

2.5 School Jurisdiction Policy

The school administration reserves the right to search student clothing, book bags, desk, purse or wallet in the presence of a third party should there be reasonable suspicion of possession of drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, weapons or other dangerous, illegal or inappropriate material. Parents will be notified of behaviors that may endanger a student's physical or emotional health, safety or reputation, should the administration become aware of such dangers, even if they are not under the direct jurisdiction of the school.

The school administration reserves the right to take appropriate action if such behavior, even if not during school hours or events, should have a negative impact on the operation or reputation of the school.

2.6 Student Dress Code

The purpose of the dress code policy is to ensure students are focused on learning and not distracted during the school day. This fosters an atmosphere of school identity and pride, enhances neatness and decreases competition. The dress code will be written by a committee appointed by the principal and reviewed every three years. The principal and school commission will review and approve any changes to the dress code. Our uniform policy applies to all students in grades kindergarten through 8. Parents upon enrolling their child agree to support the rules and policies. Non-uniform days are scheduled throughout the year by the principal and are a privilege. Students are expected to dress appropriately. Specific expectations are captured in the Student Handbook.

2.7 Student Handbook

The school commission of St. Thomas wants to ensure the consistent and effective communication of important information regarding the school, its administration, teachers, and staff as well as the basic guidelines and rules related to the school.

The administration will provide a Student Handbook for all school families which parents/guardians will acknowledge receipt of, therefore indicating that they have read its contents and agree to abide by it.

2.8 Exit Interviews

The principal of St. Thomas will conduct exit interviews with departing teachers and parents/guardians of departing students, other than graduates, and report to the commission when the information obtained is pertinent to the work of the commission and not sensitive or confidential in nature.

2.9 Lice Policy

St. Thomas follows a no-lice policy and may prevent students from attending class if the student has active lice or nits. Details can be found in Student Handbook or with the school secretary.

SECTION III - ADMISSION & TUITION POLICY

3.1 Admission Statement

St. Thomas welcomes students of all races, religions or national origins. However, St. Thomas is a parish school and children of registered and active parishioners will be given priority in terms of admission. Non-parishioners will be admitted to available spaces providing the following conditions are met:

- A. They are seeking an education stressing Christian values within a Catholic concept.
- B. They are not simply seeking to avoid problems in a public school.

- C. Their child is functioning at the grade level of placement. Confirmation of this will be required including academic records and other forms submitted directly from the prior school to St. Thomas.
- D. Parent/Guardian agree to finance the cost of their child's (children's) education.

3.2 Admissions Policy

This admissions policy is established by the school commission to provide a logical, objective and systematic method for enrolling students in St. Thomas. The school principal is responsible for execution of the policy.

All students (grades Preschool - 7) enrolled in the current school year have first priority for enrollment in the following school year. For all new students entering Preschool, the priority for enrollment is as follows:

- A. Students who have siblings currently attending St. Thomas or siblings who have graduated from St. Thomas.
 - The sibling clause does not apply to a student who has been admitted to fill a vacancy in grades 1 through 8. The other siblings will not assume admissions priority over established families of the parish in good standing.
- B. Students from St. Thomas Parish.
 - In the event demand exceeds available slots, priority will be based on all of the following criteria:
 1. Length of time registered in the Parish - "Registered" is defined as the date that the family submitted a parish registration form to the parish office.
 2. Active Stewardship Member of the Parish -
 - a. Time/Talent: Parents are active and involved in parish life including regular participation in Sunday Liturgy and participation in committees, programs, volunteer activities, religious education, coaching, etc..
 - b. Treasure: Parents are supporters of the parish through Sunday collections on a regular basis (ACH withdraws, envelopes, checks).
 3. Residence - The family lives within the canonical boundaries of the parish.
- C. Students of St. Thomas faculty and staff who are not parishioners.
- D. Students whose families are registered and active in another Catholic Parish.
- E. Non-Catholic students who have been approved by the Principal.

3.3 Waiting List

A waiting list shall be established when demand exceeds available slots and will include the family and student name of the child (children) seeking admissions along with the priority. This waiting list will be maintained in the school office and managed by the school principal. Parents may contact the school office for updates on the status of the waiting list.

3.4 Class Size

For pedagogical and space reasons, preferred class sizes are, but not limited to (based upon the discretion of the principal):

- Preschool – 10-12
- Kindergarten – 24
- First, second and third grades – 24-26
- Fourth – eighth grades – 25 to 27

3.5 Tuition

St. Thomas tuition is determined in April, prior to the beginning of the following school year.

It is required that tuition be paid on a timely basis, depending on the method of payment selected (note: due dates are approximate and may be adjusted by school):

- The Registration/Book/Technology fee is due the 3rd Friday of February to secure a spot for the following academic year.
- In one payment due the last business day in July prior to the beginning of the school year.
- In two payments, 50% due the last business day in July prior to the beginning of the school year with the balance due the 3rd Friday of December.
- Installment plans are available via our tuition management company to collect, record, and deposit tuition payments. Tuition payments may be made annually, by semester or over ten (10) months (July – April).

If financial assistance is needed or if a parent/guardian requests an alternative payment schedule, such request must be approved and reflected in a written agreement among the parent or guardian, the Principal, and the Pastor.

Definition of Parishioner

On an annual basis, the school will review the status of each family. A parishioner family shall be defined for purposes of enrollment priority and parishioner tuition rate as follows:

- Registered parishioner: A Catholic family registered in the parish.
- Participation in Sunday liturgy: A family actively participating in Sunday liturgy at St. Thomas. "Actively participating" is measured by worshipping at St. Thomas and contributing to St. Thomas by using the parish giving envelopes at least once each month as evidence of your presence, for the six months prior to application for the parish tuition rate.
- Time, Talent, and Treasure: A family practicing stewardship by sharing time, talent, and treasure that is consistent and confirmed through the use of parish

envelopes, checks or direct debit for six months prior to application for the parish tuition rate.

A newly registered family transferring from another parish may be considered for the parish tuition rate by presenting a letter from their former pastor stating that they have been active in worship and sharing of time, talent, and treasure for at least six months prior to the transfer.

Families may be eligible for a discount if they are not members of St. Thomas but are active members in good standing at another parish. This will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

3.6 Delinquent Tuition and Fees

Tuition and fees are due and payable per the annual tuition payment schedule included in each year's enrollment packet. Payment arrangements can be made annually, by semester, or monthly, payable via either direct debit ACH from a bank account or by credit card. Tuition that is due and outstanding 30 days from the due date of the arranged payment schedule is subject to a late payment fee of 10% of the outstanding balance due.

Students who have outstanding tuition balances 30 days from the due date will receive a late tuition notice reflecting the 10% late payment fee. A second late tuition notice will be sent when the tuition is 45 days delinquent. When the tuition becomes 60 days late the student will not be allowed to return to school without resolution of the outstanding balance to the satisfaction of the parish office.

Students with outstanding tuition balances due will not be eligible for re-enrollment/registration at St. Thomas for the following school year until the outstanding balance is paid in full. Any registration fees or other payments received will be applied to the outstanding tuition balance due until the balance is paid in full and the family will be notified that they have not secured a spot for the following school year, and will not until the outstanding tuition issue is settled to the satisfaction of the parish office.

Student academic records, report cards, test scores, diplomas, etc. will not be released if a student has an overdue outstanding tuition balance due. The records will not be released until the outstanding obligations are paid in full or there is a written agreement for a payment plan with the parish office, approved by the principal and the pastor.

Students with outstanding tuition balances due from the prior school year that have not been addressed or resolved with the parish office in advance will not be allowed to start a new school year at St. Thomas without a specific exception granted by the pastor until the outstanding balance is resolved to the satisfaction of the parish office.

3.7 Financial Aid

The school commission of St. Thomas recognizes that some St. Thomas students may need to receive further financial assistance in addition to the parish subsidy in order to send their children to St. Thomas.

The school commission further wants to ensure that there is an effective process for those families needing further financial assistance to request and, when deemed appropriate, receive financial assistance on behalf of their students.

- A. Financial Assistance beyond the parish subsidy for tuition at St. Thomas will be available to parish members first. Additional requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and as funds become available. In some cases, financial aid may be earmarked for non-parishioner students and that must first be cleared with the Pastor and Principal.
- B. Applications for financial aid are sent home in the spring and are submitted to Private School Aid Services for review and recommendations.
- C. The principal, with support from the pastor, is responsible for reviewing applications and establishing a tuition amount for families who apply. The pastor must approve all financial aid rates.
- D. All proceedings must be held in strict confidence.
- E. St. Thomas is participating in the Indiana State Scholarship program (HEA 1003) as well as the CHOICE SGO for families who qualify. This program is renewed annually and as long as we are able to fulfill our school mission, we will likely continue to participate.

3.8 Endowments

Funding for financial aid comes from the Alma Mocas Endowment the Shors Endowment, and from a special collection taken at the beginning of Catholic Schools Week each year.

3.9 Gifts

All gifts to the school will be referred to the principal for acceptance or denial as described below. A written record shall be maintained describing each gift offered and whether such gift was accepted or denied. This written record will be maintained by the principal and may be reviewed annually with the school commission, if the principal deems necessary.

- a. The principal has the authority to determine the disposition of gifts made without a specific purpose and with a dollar amount less than or equal to \$500.
- b. Gifts offered with a dollar amount greater than \$500, with or without a specified purpose, will be disclosed by the principal to the pastor to determine if the school will accept or decline the gift.

3.10 Withdrawal

The family who voluntarily withdraws their child (children) during the first semester of the school year will be responsible for 50% annual tuition.

The family who voluntarily withdraws their child (children) during the second semester of the school year will be responsible for 100% annual tuition.

All withdraws, emergency, crisis or transfer issues need to be in writing and addressed with the pastor on a case-by-case basis.

Student academic records, report cards, test scores or diplomas will not be released for any quarter in which a family is in arrears for financial obligations.

3.11 Budget

The school commission works with the principal to develop the annual school budget to be presented to the parish finance committee for approval. School budget preparation is usually conducted between January and March and, once approved, the principal is responsible for the management of the budget.

SECTION IV - COMMUNICATION

4.1 Specific School-Related Issues

Parents or guardians of children who attend St. Thomas, or any parishioner of St. Thomas Parish (hereinafter referred to as the "Party"), should use this procedure to express their concerns regarding specific school issues:

- A. The party confers with the appropriate member of the school staff.
- B. If, after a reasonable period of time, a mutually agreeable solution has not been reached, the party confers with the principal.
- C. The principal decides how best to deal with the issue and communicates to the party.
- D. If the party remains dissatisfied with the resolution of the situation, the party may contact the pastor in order to schedule a time to discuss the issue.

4.2 School Visitation

Classrooms may be visited by setting an appointment with the school administration and parents and other interested parties are strongly encouraged to utilize the annual school visitation days. Parents may request visitation with the teacher of their child at any time. Parents are expected to be cognizant of limited time during the school day when scheduling meetings.

4.3 Photography of School Activities

Pictures of school-based activities will often be taken for the purpose of promotion of the school both in print and on the web. Names will not be included of any students/teachers/staff without the expressed written permission by parents/teachers/staff.

We ask that parents are also mindful of this and respectful of other parent's wishes when posting any photos including other children while at school or church events. Please refrain from using names of children other than your own.

SECTION V - PERSONNEL

5.1 Teacher Vacancies

All teachers shall be licensed by the state of Indiana. The principal, when filling a teacher vacancy in the school, should actively seek to fill that vacancy with a licensed teacher who is a professed and practicing Catholic.

5.2 Notification of Non-Renewal

St. Thomas teachers who are not to be rehired for the following school year, except in the event of declining enrollment, will be notified no later than April 15.

5.3 Performance Appraisals

Performance appraisals are ongoing at the school and conducted per the Office of Catholic Education guidelines.

5.4 Professional Development Requirements for Teachers

The school commission wants to ensure that all St. Thomas teachers are properly licensed and qualified to teach their respective classes, and they also continually develop their knowledge, skills, and abilities on a regular annual basis. The Office of Catholic Education for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis has minimum requirements for the continuing professional development of its teachers:

- Teachers at St. Thomas are required to participate in ongoing professional development each school year.
- Of those required hours, each teacher will attend at least one workshop/seminar in the area of catechist formation. These minimum standards in no way take the place of any other continuing education or professional development necessary to meet licensing requirements and/or teacher qualifications.

5.5 Tuition Discount for Teachers & Staff

St. Thomas offers a tuition discount for children of Teachers & Staff. This discount is maintained by the school office.

5.6 Substance Abuse: Impermissible Sales and Purchases

Any staff member under the influence of, selling or buying an illegal drug, improperly used prescription drug, or alcohol during the school day may be suspended pending psychological assessment, counseling, and possible treatment. Such treatment is available through the Employee Assistance Program of the Archdiocese. Employees may be suspended or terminated for violations of this policy.

5.7 Dress Code for Teachers/Substitute Teachers/Staff

Respect in the classroom begins with professional appearance, and all teachers/substitute teachers should strive to be a positive role model for students. It is not the intention of the school commission to regulate teacher's apparel but to emphasize the importance of dressing professionally to maintain respect and credibility in the classroom and the school. The school commission does require that any tattoos and body piercings be covered while at the school.

5.8 Limits of Insurance Coverage

At least once annually at the start of each school year, the principal shall, in writing, advise teachers, staff, volunteers, and parents of students of the responsibility, risk of loss, and limits of insurance coverage for personal property and personal injury while on the premises of St. Thomas Parish.

The policy of St. Thomas regarding transporting students and teachers to school-related activities, including without limitation field trips, academic competitions and sporting events, is hereby stated as follows:

All drivers transporting to such activities shall be parent volunteers or professional drivers who must: (a) be 21 years of age or older, (b) hold a valid driver's license, and (c) have the legally required insurance coverage in effect on any vehicle involved in student transport.

Teachers shall not serve as drivers transporting students to such activities.

All such transport shall be considered a private arrangement strictly between the driver and his/her respective passengers, which arrangement shall be considered by all as being independent of St. Thomas. In no event will any or all liability, including without limitation loss, expense, injury and death, arising from such arrangement be the responsibility of St. Thomas, its employees, or its commission, and the driver and/or passengers shall indemnify and hold harmless St. Thomas, its employees, and its commission from such liability.

This policy, as may be amended by the principal from time to time, is effective immediately and shall remain in force until revoked by the principal.

SECTION VI - INSTRUCTION

6.1 Religious Education and Sacramental Preparation

All students attending St. Thomas will participate in all religious education programs, perform the assignments related to such programs, and attend those religious services held under school auspices during the school day. Participation in the sacraments will be limited strictly to baptized Catholic students.

Parents of non-Catholic students are required to sign, upon registration, a Non-Catholic Agreement form that indicates their acceptance of this policy.

6.2 General Instruction

St. Thomas strives to serve all students using best practices, differentiated learning, research based methods of instruction and other teaching tools in order to reach all types of learners.

SECTION VII - TECHNOLOGY

7.1 Technology Acceptable Use Policy

St. Thomas provides Information Technology (IT) tools and network access for the benefit of its staff and students. Students are responsible for good behavior on school computer networks just as they are in a classroom or a school hallway. Communications on the network are often public in nature. General school rules for behavior and communications apply. Simply, access to network services and support of those services will be provided to students who agree to act in a considerate manner.

These IT resources provided are to be used primarily to support teaching and learning, in accordance with the policies and guidelines contained in this document. This Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) addresses acceptable and unacceptable ways in which the students in our community may use our IT resources, and it addresses specific user responsibilities, rights and expectations.

However, given the rapidly changing nature of IT systems and services, the policies defined in this document cannot cover every possible situation. Therefore, in addition to the specific acceptable and unacceptable uses presented, this AUP provides general principles which shall direct the use of St. Thomas's tools. Put another way, students and adults are expected to use good judgment when working in gray areas not covered explicitly by the rules.

Adherence to this policy shall be the joint responsibility of the students, parents and employees of St. Thomas.

“Bring Your Own Technology” Guidelines

Beginning in the fall of 2012, St. Thomas will institute a “bring your own technology” (BYOT) program for 7th and 8th grade students that will provide students with the option to attach their own personal devices to the St. Thomas wireless network. It is our hope that students will be able to use this freedom of choice to identify and use the tools that will allow them to pursue their own personalized educational and technological experience within the St. Thomas environment. With the convenience and capability of this privilege comes an increased responsibility on the part of community members to use tools, both personal and school, appropriately and with consideration of others in mind. This is not a mandatory policy but rather an option provided to eighth graders and other students as the discretion of the St. Thomas staff. In the event that a student chooses not to participate in this program, St. Thomas provides a range of choices for in-classroom network-enabled devices (laptops, desktops, tablets, etc.).

Students using privately owned electronic devices must follow the policies stated in this document while on school property, attending any school-sponsored activity, accessing St. Thomas provided resources, using the St. Thomas network or while interacting in real or delayed time with St. Thomas community members. Use of these devices gives tacit approval for school IT personnel and faculty/administrators to observe and utilize the devices to confirm compliance with school policies described.

In the classroom environment, the teacher or other designated adult is the determiner of appropriate and inappropriate use of technology. Teachers may declare technology-free times, call for the placing of technology at the front of the room or in a ready-to-use position. *It is inappropriate to attempt to covertly use technology or overtly use technology in ways that are inappropriate, not indicated by the instructor.* No intra- or inter-class communication is authorized between students except as designated and/or supervised by an adult for a specific time period (such as a class).

Electronic devices should be used in the building following guidelines that promote the utmost respect of decency, civilized behavior, and common courtesy. Devices should not be used to conduct audio/video conversations except in authorized areas or with the specific permission of an adult. *Notifications and other alerts should be silenced at all times unless requested by an adult.*

Use of personal or school communications tools, including but not limited to chat, telephone, e-mail, texting, social networking should follow guidelines of personal decency and decorum. Inappropriate language, harassing behavior, overtly sexual or violent behavior or innuendo is a violation of the letter and spirit of the rule and may be subject to disciplinary action.

Personal electronic devices should not be used in violation of any school policy or direction given by a classroom teacher or other St. Thomas employee. Use of personal electronic devices for entertainment or recreational use may be severely limited by the St. Thomas IT staff, teachers or administrators based on the level of distraction and/or network resources used.

Any devices used or operated in an unauthorized manner may be taken and held in the Principal’s Office until a parent or guardian picks them up and may result in the user being subject to other disciplinary consequences.

Security

Security on the St. Thomas network is a priority. Anyone identifying a security problem on the network should notify a teacher or the IT staff immediately and not demonstrate the problem to other users or try to bypass the problem by using another account. Users may not use accounts or passwords belonging to other users, or misrepresent other users on the network. Unauthorized attempts to login to the network as a system administrator will result in cancellation of user privileges.

Unacceptable Use

The list of inappropriate uses of St. Thomas technology resources currently includes, but is not limited to the following (this list may be updated at any time):

- Use of the Internet or school network for any illegal activity, including gambling, computer hacking (and all variations thereof) and copyright or intellectual property law violations;
- Use of Anonymous Proxies, Caching Servers, or any other means to avoid restrictions placed on the IT network and/or Internet access;
- Gaining intentional access to materials, maintaining access to materials or distributing materials which are obscene, pornographic or whose dominant appeal is sexual arousal;
- Gaining intentional access to material, maintaining access to materials or distributing materials which utilize or encourage excessive use of violence, blood, gore, or diminish the value of life;
- Associating a website with the school without proper authorization or representing the school by name, logo, or identity in a formal or informal publication, document, or program without prior approval;
- Downloading, installing or accessing unauthorized software or other executable files (e.g., .exe, .bat, .pif, .reg) without the permission of St. Thomas staff; this includes but is not limited to the use of unauthorized operating systems or other root level programs that could be installed on school computers or devices.
- Deliberately introducing a virus to, or otherwise improperly tampering with, the system;
- Intentionally installing or accepting spyware, malware, or other disruptive, intrusive, or destructive programs;
- Attempting to gain access to or gaining access to network hardware (including wall jacks, wires, switches, routers, servers, access points, etc.). This includes placing unauthorized devices onto the school's wired network.
- Obtaining or sending information which could be used to make destructive devices such as guns, weapons, bombs, explosives or fireworks;
- Posting messages on or through the network or Internet, including those that are anonymous, that use abusive or profane language, or use the system to harass, insult or verbally attack others or disrupt normal function;
- Gaining unauthorized access to resources or files;
- Identifying oneself with another person's name or using password, account, or credentials of another user (including guests);
- Providing access to the school's network to unauthorized individuals or granting limited authorizations to unauthorized people;

- Using IT Tools for financial or commercial gain
- Stealing or vandalizing data, equipment or intellectual property;
- Invading the privacy of other individuals;
- Attempting to gain access to or gaining access to student records, grades or files outside of the adult supervised and approved shared drives or individual authorized account;
- Degrading or disrupting equipment or system performance;
- Failing to obey school or classroom technology use rules;
- Taking part in any activity related to technology use, which creates a clear and present danger or a substantial disruption to the orderly operation of the school;
- Use of school or personal electronic devices to perform unethical actions including, but not limited to, cheating, unauthorized collaboration, or plagiarism (e.g., cell phone texting answers or taking pictures of exams).
- Posting any video, photograph, image or likeness of any student or employee without express permission of that individual and of the principal to any website.
- Installing, moving, deleting, downloading/uploading or reconfiguration of any software or files on school equipment without permission.

Risks

The educational community of St. Thomas makes no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, for the service it is providing and is not responsible for any damages the user may suffer. This includes loss of data, non-deliveries, mis-deliveries, or service interruptions. The student is responsible for evaluating any information obtained from the Internet. St. Thomas specifically denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through its network and will not be responsible for unauthorized financial obligations resulting from provided access to the Internet. The users of the St. Thomas network agree that they waive any right to privacy that they may have for such use (including personal devices). We may monitor the user of technology and may also examine all system activities in which the user participates. Users have no right to privacy as to any information or file created, maintained, transmitted or stored in or on St. Thomas' property, through our technical resources or on personal devices at school. Users should know that content that includes (but is not limited to) sexual comments or images, racial slurs or other offensive comments, defamatory, discriminatory or harassing materials distributed, accessed or downloaded through the St. Thomas network could expose them to legal liability as well as to disciplinary action.

Violations and Sanctions

St. Thomas endeavors to create an atmosphere that fosters academic achievement, personal responsibility and respectful relationships among students, faculty, staff, administrators, families and other members of the St. Thomas community. Any behavior or action contrary to St. Thomas' purposes is considered an infraction and may result in the immediate and/or permanent loss of access to the St. Thomas network and/or further disciplinary actions. At any time as required for administrative or technical reasons a network administrator may remove a student's network access.

Copyright

St. Thomas does not sanction copyright infringement. We ask all organizations bearing the St. Thomas name to honor all copyright and license restrictions.

7.2 Technology Equipment Use Policy

St. Thomas values all of our investments and resources and are committed to making those resources available to our students. With that, we expect that our students, teachers, staff and volunteers handle such equipment appropriately and with care to ensure it is available for other students.

In addition, students who decide to bring personal tech equipment to school are responsible for the safe keeping and appropriate use of that equipment while on school grounds.

SECTION VIII - FUNDRAISING AND SCHOOL SUPPORT

8.1 Home School Association

The purpose of HSA shall be to provide support to the principal and teachers, to provide communication between home and school, to provide enrichment opportunities for parents and children, to provide family support in times of crisis, and to provide financial assistance to St. Thomas as deemed necessary by the association and the principal.

8.2 Fundraising

The school supports various fundraising activities throughout the year. Any fundraiser that is school related and is expected to raise more than \$500 must first be approved by the Finance Committee.

8.3 Volunteer Use Policy

The school principal shall develop, communicate and implement rules for parents or other volunteers in the school and classroom which respects student privacy, the primacy of teacher directed instruction, assessment and supervision.

8.4 Expectation of Volunteer/Coach Behavior

All volunteers and visitors must sign in at the office upon arrival and receive a visitor's badge to show that they are to be in the building. This is for the safety and security of our students and staff.

All volunteers and visitors are expected to abide by the same St. Thomas Code of Conduct the students, teachers and staff follow.

8.5 Volunteer/Coach Background Check Policy

Volunteers are required to take part in the Virtus Program, which is part of the Protecting God's Children Program. The Virtus Program helps the parish and school to better control risk and improve the lives of all those involved. Volunteers will be informed of dates and locations of program events.

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis requires a background check on all volunteers who come in contact with the children of our parish and school. Background check forms are available at the school office. After the initial background check, one will be completed every five years.

APPENDIX A

St. Thomas School Policy and Student Handbook Acknowledgement

Parents,

The St. Thomas school policy and student handbook is now located online at www.staindy.org under "ADMISSIONS." It contains the policies and procedures to help St. Thomas run smoothly, effectively with love and justice for all.

Please review the handbook, as it is part our commitment to serve your family. It would be good to bookmark this link on your browser for quick reference.

Please sign return the acknowledgement of your review of the school policy and student handbook and your knowledge of how to access it OR check the electronic signature page online.

Please return this receipt with your other school forms by the first day of school.

Sincerely,
Mrs. Cara Swinefurth

Family Name _____
Please print

This is to acknowledge that I/we did review the St. Thomas school policy and student handbook online; and that I/we are aware of its policies and procedures.

I/we do know that my/our child's image may be used in school or parish publications or on the website as long as he or she is not identified by name unless I/we indicate below.

Signature Date

Signature Date

_____ My/Our child's image may not be used without my/our specific permission.
A limited number of printed handbooks are available if you are unable or do not wish to use the online handbook. Please check below if you wish to have a printed copy sent home.

_____ Send a printed copy of the handbook for my family.

APPENDIX B

<http://www.staindy.org/sta-policy-and-student-handbook/>

APPENDIX C

A “Contributing Member” of St. Thomas Parish is a parishioner who makes a:

1. Spiritual Contribution

Regular Mass attendance and involvement in the spiritual life of the parish.

2. Ministerial Contribution

Involvement in any parish ministry (*e.g. Liturgy, Sip & Serve, St. Vincent de Paul Society, sports programs, etc.*).

3. Stewardship Contribution

Annual pledge to the stewardship campaign of the parish and fulfillment of that pledge. We request a minimum pledge of \$20 per week or \$1040 per year for registered parishioners.

Whether “contributing” or not, all members of the parish have access to the sacramental services of the church.

A “Contributing Member” of St. Thomas Parish has these additional privileges:

- The opportunity to serve in parish offices and voting privileges in parish elections.
- Use of Parish facilities at the “parish member” rate*.
- Access to parish-affiliated elementary and high schools at the “parish member” rate*.

* Parishioners must establish a six-month record of regular tithing (at least \$20 per week) before the parish-member rate applies. The parish-member rate will apply beginning the fall semester immediately following the six-month period for new students enrolled at St. Thomas Aquinas School. Parishioners who are transferring from another parish can establish a six-month record of giving by submitting a letter of good standing from the administrator at their previous parish.

APPENDIX D

Bylaws of the St. Thomas Aquinas School Commission (Adopted November 2011)

Article I The name of this body shall be the School Commission of the Parish of St. Thomas Aquinas, hereinafter referred to as the Commission.

Article II Purpose and Function

Section 1. The Pastor or PLC and the parish pastoral council shall establish the Commission as the policy-making body for the school. Commission policy and decisions shall be binding throughout the school upon written ratification by the pastor or PLC

Section 2. The Commission shall be responsible to the pastor or the PLC and the parish pastoral council for the following:

- a. Provide input to the performance appraisal of the school administrator on how he/she has administered Commission policy and met the goals set by the Commission using the prescribed Performance Appraisal Process of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, initiated by the pastor/PLC;
- b. Develop goals and objectives specific to the school, through *Partners on the Journey: An Integrative Planning Process for the Education and Institutional Advancement of Catholic Schools*, and in agreement with the parish and archdiocesan goals, policies and objectives;
- c. Assist in the development of the annual operating budget for the school in conjunction with the parish Finance Committee;
- d. Achieve, through the school administrator, archdiocesan and parish goals for Catholic school education;
- e. Solicit and appoint volunteers to implement identified programs and activities;
- f. Assist in the selection of the principal;
- g. Evaluate the effectiveness of established policies as needed;
- h. Report on the status of the school in the parish and deanery; and
- i. Direct the implementation of archdiocesan educational policy in the school program.

Section 3. The Commission shall establish the necessary means and instruments to communicate Commission policy and decisions to the parish community.

Article III Membership

Section 1. The pastor or PLC shall be an ex-officio member of the Commission.

- Section 2. Five (5) to fifteen (15) persons elected by the parish, or discerned or appointed by the pastor or PLC shall be decision-making (voting) members of the Commission. The school administrator of the school shall be an ex-officio member of the Commission and the Commission Administrative Officer. He or she has no voting rights and shall not be counted for purposes of determining quorum.
- Section 3. Members shall serve a three-year term. No members may serve more than two (2) consecutive terms. Terms begin on July 1 and end June 30.
- Section 4. Members shall conduct themselves in accordance with the statements on Conflict of Interests, Ethical Practices, Confidentiality and Decorum in the attached Appendix.
- Section 5. Removal from Membership
- a. If a School Commission member becomes unable or unwilling to perform his or her duties as defined by these Bylaws, said member shall tender his or her resignation to the Chairperson of the Commission.
 - b. Should a member be unable or unwilling to perform his or her duties as defined by these bylaws and refuses to tender his or her resignation, then the Chairperson of the Commission shall tender a resignation for him or her – provided that there is a consensus to do so by the remaining members of the Commission. For the avoidance of doubt, mere disagreement with other members of the Commission on one or more particular matters does not necessarily render said member “unable or unwilling to perform his or her duties” as that phrase is used in this section.
 - c. Any such resignation referred to herein shall be accepted, and the member will be replaced as soon as practicable. The Commission will be responsible for finding a suitable replacement to fulfill the remaining term of the outgoing member.

Article IV Officers

- Section 1. The officers of the Commission shall include a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and Secretary. The officers shall be chosen by the consensus of the Commission.
- Section 2. Officers of the Commission shall serve a one-year term. No officer may serve more than two (2) consecutive terms.
- Section 3. The responsibilities of the Commission officers shall be as follows:
- a. The Chairperson shall preside at all meetings and represent the Commission at all parish pastoral council meetings.
 - b. The Vice-Chairperson shall preside in the absence of the Chairperson or when the Chairperson desires to introduce, second, or speak to a motion.
 - c. The Secretary shall keep accurate minutes of meetings, forward the minutes to each Commission member, and, with the assistance of the Administrator and Executive Committee, provide each member with the agenda and preparation materials of the next meeting, and provide all necessary correspondence.

Section 4. The Executive Committee of the Commission shall consist of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary and School Administrator. The purpose of the Executive Committee is to formulate the Commission meeting agenda.

Section 5. The chief administrator of the school shall be the Administrative Officer of the Commission and shall be responsible to the Commission for the implementation of Commission policy.

Article V Meetings

Meetings of the commission shall be held monthly, August through May. Special meetings may be requested by the Chairperson, the school administrator, or the pastor/PLC and shall be called by the Chairperson upon written request of one-third of the Commission members.

Article VI Quorum

A simple majority of the voting members of the Commission constitutes a quorum for each meeting.

Article VII Amending the Bylaws

The Bylaws may be amended by a consensus of two-thirds of the members of the Commission and formal ratification by the pastor/PLC. Commission members must receive written notice of proposed Bylaw amendments two months prior to the call to consensus.

APPENDIX E

Standing Rules of the St. Thomas Aquinas School Commission (Adopted November 2011)

Article I. Members

- Section 1: Each member of the Commission shall be a practicing adult Catholic of integrity, registered in the St. Thomas parish, with a genuine interest in and a strong commitment to the vision and mission of the Commission.
- Section 2: In some situations, where appropriate, the following persons may also be qualified members of the Commission: Non-parishioner Catholic parents of children in the parish school; non-Catholic parents of children in the parish school; community leaders; St. Thomas school graduates, not yet 18 years of age.
- Section 3: Members are expected to attend all scheduled meetings and to participate in committee work. A member who has three unexcused absences from regularly scheduled Commission meetings may be asked to resign.
- Section 4: The Commission shall fill vacancies for the remainder of the term vacated.
- Section 5: Members shall conduct themselves in accordance with the Archdiocesan statements of Conflict of Interest, Ethical Practices, Confidentiality and Decorum.
- Section 6: The election, discernment or appointment of Commission members shall take place during the Month of May, except in the case of elections held concurrently with parish pastoral council election, which will be called by the council.

Article II. Decision-Making and Policy Formation

- Section 1: Ideally, decisions should arise from the consensus method.
- Section 2: In the absence of consensus, 2/3 of a quorum (2/3 of voting members) will be the necessary margin to make policy.
- Section 3: Each elected, discerned or appointed member of the Commission shall have the right to vote. Ex-officio members of the Commission shall have a right to passive participation only.

Article III: Executive Committee

Section 1: Members of the Executive Committee shall be the officers of the Commission and the Administrative Officer (school administrator).

Section 2: The Executive Committee may meet prior to the regular commission meeting to prepare the agenda. The agenda and written committee reports will be available to members prior to the regularly scheduled Commission meeting. The Administrative Officer shall be responsible for sending written notice of Commission meetings to members.

Article IV: Standing Committees

Section 1: In the event the Commission wishes to form a standing Committee it may do so with a 2/3 vote.

Section 2: Special or ad hoc Committees shall be established as deemed necessary by the Commission Executive Committee. Each Special or ad hoc Committee shall be dissolved when its mission is completed.

Article V: Meetings

Section 1: Meetings shall be held as determined appropriate by the Commission. Meetings shall be held as prescribed in the Bylaws.

Section 2: Meetings shall be open meetings, but not public. Meetings designated as Executive Sessions will be closed. The Chair or 2/3 of the voting Commission may designate a meeting as an Executive Session.

Section 3: Non-members wishing to address the Commission shall address requests to do so through the Chair and Executive Committee. These requests must be in advance of the meeting to allow members to properly prepare for the meeting.

Section 4: Non-members wishing to observe a Commission meeting may do so at the discretion of the Chair, whose interest is the facilitation of the Commission's work. Non-member participation in Commission discussion during a meeting is understood to be limited, but not prohibited. Mutual respect of the Commission for observers and observers for the Commission and the work it must accomplish are essential in this relationship.

Article VI. Changing the Size of the Commission

The number of members and composition of the Commission may be changed by 2/3 vote of all voting members and ratification by the Pastor.

Article VII: Amending Standing Rules

Amendment of Standing Rules will use the same procedure as amendment of the Bylaws.

APPENDIX F

Ethics of the St. Thomas Aquinas School Commission (Adopted November 2011)

**(based on “Catholic School and Faith Formation Commission Guide” Journey of Hope
2001, Archdiocese of Indianapolis)**

Conflict of Interest

Although efforts should be made by commission members to limit conflicts of interests, it is recognized that conflicts of interest may arise due to the size of the parish/school community and the active involvement of that community in the operations of the school and church. Such conflicts of interest may relate to family or business connections of the commission members, or of persons assisting in committees and the like of the commission.

If a member finds himself or herself with a conflict of interest on an issue, he or she should make the conflict known to the commission before participating in discussions related to that issue. Furthermore, and to the extent reasonably possible, a member with a conflict of interest on an issue should refrain from voting on that issue.

Ethical Practices

Many new members find commission membership offers new and different kinds of responsibilities and relationships. Therefore, it is crucial that all members understand the professional ethics required, and that each member makes a personal commitment to appropriate ethics:

- Commission members contribute their time, talents, and abilities as necessary to enable the commission to achieve its stated goals and objectives in relation to the mission.
- Commission members base their official decisions upon all available facts in each situation; voting or consenting with honest conviction. They do not base decisions on personal issues or feelings.
- Commission members publicly support and abide by the final consensus reached by the commission.
- Commission members work together in a spirit of Christian harmony and cooperation.
- Commission members have no authority except when meeting as a group in an official setting.
- Commission members keep confidential any commission business discussed during closed sessions.

While this is not an all-inclusive list of commission ethics, it relates to most of those considerations that are primary.

Confidentiality

Commissions should issue regular reports to the parish/school community on business under discussion. Most business is not “secret,” yet premature disclosure of possible decisions can be harmful to the decision-making process.

Commission members are often party to sensitive or controversial information. In these cases, the pastor and principal depend on commission members’ support and trust that they will not disclose or render opinions outside of the meeting on certain issues shared with them in their official capacity as members of the commission.

Decorum

Decorum and order are important to conducting the business of the commission.

- The leadership and the agenda provide order.
- Members respond with courtesy and respect.
- Members refrain from engaging in conversations among themselves when reports are being given or someone has the floor.
- Speakers shall be concise, clear and to the point.
- Discussions focus on issues and not personalities.
- Items not on the agenda are out of order.
- An atmosphere of cooperation is created when individual opinions are offered and affirmed.

APPENDIX G

School Commission Approval of School Policy Manual



Fr. Steve Schwab _____ Date 6/7/12

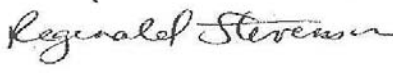

Sheila Brown, Chair _____ Date 6/7/12


Crystal Haslett _____ Date 6/12/12



Eddie Prein _____ Date 6/7/12


Jeff Stickel _____ Date 7-JUN-2012


Matt Hayes _____ Date 6/12/12


Reggie Stevenson _____ Date 6/12/12


Terri Talbert-Hatch _____ Date 6-7-12


Art Timpe _____ Date 6-7-12