



Student Family Handbook / Updated 2009

St. Thomas is the parish school of St. Therese of Lisieux Parish and in service to its cluster parishes. In partnership with the family, we are dedicated to nurturing the personal development of the whole child. Our mission is to instill Catholic values, foster self-discipline and promote academic excellence in the spirit of a caring and affirming community.

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Dear Parents,

Saint Thomas School is the parish school of St. Therese of Lisieux Parish and in service to its cluster parishes. Our mission and policies are part of the mission and policies of these parishes. Its identity and support rests with them.

This handbook is a brief overview of the MISSION of Saint Thomas School and its policies. The basic mission of the school is to foster, develop and continue the Catholic education which you have begun in your home and which you choose now for your child. We accomplish this mission together in partnership.

The policies included in this handbook are not meant to be all-inclusive. It is impossible to include every circumstance which might arise in the life of a Catholic school. These are provided in the spirit of the school's Mission Statement. The handbook is offered not to limit students but to set a tone and an atmosphere for their success.

At the beginning of each school year it is beneficial that each of us involved in your child's education review the expectations, attitudes and responsibilities of this partnership. We recommend that you read this handbook carefully and discuss it with your child, especially since there are significant changes with this update.

As always, we pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit for understanding and strength to accomplish this sacred trust.

Sincerely with you in Christ,

Saint Thomas Faculty
Saint Thomas School Board
Fr. Robert Lariviere

Goals Based on the Mission Statement

PARISH SCHOOL

St. Thomas is the parish school of St. Therese of Lisieux Parish and in service to its cluster parishes. It is a direct ministry of the parishes and is financially supported by them in accord with Diocesan guidelines.

PARTNERSHIP WITH THE FAMILY

Parents are first and foremost the teachers of their children. The staff in cooperation with parents strives to further enrich the education of the students.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE WHOLE CHILD

Nurturing the personal development of the whole child includes spiritual, intellectual, emotional, social, and physical growth. Each student is accepted as a unique individual with gifts and limitations. The staff will help each child to recognize and develop his/her own gifts to their highest potential.

CATHOLIC VALUES

St. Thomas is a Catholic school community that lives, exemplifies and fosters the teachings of the Church. The Theological Virtues of Faith, Hope and Love provide the firm foundation for these teachings.

SELF-DISCIPLINE

Self-discipline is an exercise in the formation of conscience. It is the ability to control our actions in living Christian values. It enables us to be responsible for our actions.

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Academic excellence is the ideal whereby students strive to reach their full, potential in all academic endeavors.

CARING COMMUNITY

A caring community encourages and promotes an atmosphere of respect and acceptance among all students and adults.

AFFIRMING COMMUNITY

An affirming community recognizes in word and actions the Christian, academic, social, creative, athletic and behavioral achievements of all students and faculty.

COMMUNICATION

Sharing the Catholic spirit of St. Thomas School is the responsibility of students, families, staff, parishioners and our Priest. The spirit should be reflected in the lives of all who are connected with school.

Academics

Excellence is the hallmark of Catholic education. High standards and commitment are everyone's responsibility. Excellence is accomplished and assessed in many ways.

CLASS WORK AND ATTENDANCE

Education is not something done to a student but rather a process of experience and discovery by the student. Every day is important to the success of the students. Classroom work involves the interaction of the students with the teacher and with each other.

The experience of a lesson cannot be replaced by the assignment of pages to be read. Processes demonstrated and shared, experiments presented and participated in, questions posed and reacted to are all "hard pressed" to be replaced. Many topics are addressed across the curriculum because the comprehensive experience of a subject usually requires many skills. This integrated view of education requires the understanding, cooperation and dedication of both the students and their parents/guardians. Therefore, the continuity provided by faithful attendance is certainly one of the keys to student success.

GRADING

Report cards are issued for (4) times a year as scheduled by the school calendar. The progress of students in kindergarten, first and second grades is reflected through the use of a developmental scale. A developmental scale reflects the child's progress without assigning a number or letter "grade." This approach avoids the pitfalls of children "failing" because they are not yet developmentally mature enough for a particular skill. It also avoids the opposite danger of working for grades instead of for proficiency. The code used is"

- 4 STRONG
- 3 SATISFACTORY
- 2 PROGRESSING
- 1 NEEDS IMPROVEMENT

Number grades are usually assigned to students grades 3-6, and have the equivalent letter grade value bases on the following criteria:

A	(93/100%)	Outstanding performance.
B	(85/92%)	Above average, sometimes exceeding the group and individual expectations.
C	(77/84%)	Working satisfactorily to the student's ability and expectation.
D	(70/76%)	Needing improvement, falling below group and individual expectations at that time.

F (Below 70%) Failing. Consistently below group and individual expectations.

Parents/guardians of students in grades 4, 5 and 6 also receive progress reports at each mid-term. Parents/guardians of children of any grade who are at risk to receive a failing grade will be notified at least three weeks prior to the report cards to provide an opportunity for consultation and remediation.

PROMOTION

Promotion requires a demonstration of success in the four (4) of the major subjects: reading and the other language arts, mathematics, science and social studies. The inability to attain a passing grade in reading, language and or mathematics may be an indication for retention. A constant failure in one subject may also indicate the need for individual and/or summer tutoring.

HOMEWORK

Students need to develop a sense of responsibility for their work. Homework provides this as well as an opportunity to complete assignments begun in class or to independently practice skills modeled in class. Meaningful homework assignments are provided for each student regularly. The lengths of these assignments are proportionate to the developmental stage of the child. The rule of thumb is 10/15 minutes times the grade level. Students who regularly have an unusual amount of incomplete work as part of their homework need to discuss this with their parents and teacher. The nature of homework and the expectations of each teacher are explained at the beginning of each year during "Open House."

TESTING

The Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA's) are computerized, standardized, achievement tests administered to students in grades 2, 3, 4,5 and 6 during the last week of September and the first week of October and again in the spring. The results are available for parental review with the first report card and again after the spring session. The spring results reflect progress for the current year and also from year to year. Kindergarten and 1st grade are tested at other times, Kindergarten in their classroom and 1st grade in the lab.

ABSENCE DURING TESTING

Because standardized tests are such carefully managed experiences and must be completed within the "window" provided by the NWEA , replicating the circumstances to validly "make up" the test because of absence is questionable. Therefore, in an attempt to avoid this situation as much as possible, approximate testing dates are published in the annual school calendar. Students who miss more than one day during these annual tests due to vacations not in sync with the school calendar or prolonged illness run the risk of not participating in the tests. This may result in an interruption of tracking student progress for that year and from year to year.

RESULTS

The results of these tests are reviewed by the Special Education Department of the Sanford School System. These results provide a baseline for consideration for special education or Title 1 services. Screening for and services to the learning disabled are then coordinated through the school with the Sanford Special Education Department. The legal criteria for serving handicapping conditions are that any disability must have a

direct impact on the ability of a student to participate and/or succeed in school. Conditions that do not affect a student's ability to learn, even though they may be pronounced, are not eligible. If a student has evidenced a disability, a "service plan" will be prepared to address the disability.

GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS

St. Thomas School believes that, "Every student has gifts and talents," and our Mission statement declares that, "we are dedicated to the personal development of the whole child." Therefore, we are not focused on only academic achievement but also on their spiritual, social, emotional and physical growth.

A teacher's daily routine requires responding to the developmental levels, differentiated learning styles and the varied strengths and weaknesses of each student in a class. Such observations go well beyond a cursory "professional judgment." Hard data such as annual standardized testing results, previous records, portfolios of prescribed tasks, examples of work, all contribute to the unique profile of each student.

Such profiles also help to establish a "level of expectation" unique to each student. Consequently, although the same assignment may be given to a whole class, each task will vary depending on the perception (or in some cases the rubrics, that is, the defined components and proposed levels of proficiency provided with major assignments) and the ability and/or motivation of each student. (A simple example might be a writing prompt presented to the whole class which elicits three paragraphs from one student and three sentences from another.) These attempts are not compared to each other but rather to the judged ability of each student.

When students consistently demonstrate greater strength across the curriculum or in a particular subject area, more opportunities are afforded to challenge and enrich these experiences. Then, too, there are the many competitions offered across the grades and the curriculum which challenge any student who wishes to compete. For example, the annual Academic Fair gives free reign to creativity and imagination in a wide array of subject areas. In the upper grades, students not only self-select their projects but can choose whether they wish to compete. Civic orations, the National Geographic Bee, the annual spelling bee, ecological projects, various poster and essay contests by local fraternal organizations and Odyssey of the Mind, are always available, just to name a few. Offered too, are the after-school programs which invite students to pursue their interests, abilities and talents in such areas as art, music, both vocal and instrumental, drama and a variety of other opportunities which present themselves from year to year.

The challenge of recognizing that all students are gifted and talented is to bring that awareness to each child. Gifts and talents are best shared within the community and not isolated from it by participating in exercises with a "select group" for personal glory. It is in this challenge that the leadership and service of each student is celebrated and embraced by the community as gifts and talents.

Attendance

Regular attendance at school is key to success in school. The development of academic skills and problem solving strategies depend upon continuity. It is very difficult to compensate for prolonged absences from school. Therefore, adherence to the school calendar for vacations and holidays is critically important.

ABSENTEES

If a student is ill or an emergency interferes with attendance at school, please call the office between 8:00 and 9:00 a.m. to inform us of the absence (324-5832). Students not reported are considered “at risk” and a telephone call will be made to your home after 9:00 a.m. to insure the student’s safety. A student who is believed to have left home for school and not arrived here concerns all of us. Please call in your child’s absence.

MAKE-UP WORK

If you wish your child to have the opportunity to make up missed work or to do the homework assigned, please request this when you call to report the absence. The work may be received at the end of the day in the office. Please do not request make-up work in the middle of the day or arrive at the classroom door unannounced expecting the teacher to be able to prepare this work while class is in session.

If a prolonged absence is foreseen, a written statement from the parents/guardians is requested. Please make every effort to schedule vacations to coincide with the school calendar. Requests for advance make-up work during long absences due to vacations are very difficult to accommodate. An assignment may be devised by the teacher which will reflect many academic skills and for which a grade can be assigned, e.g., a detailed journal. Any tests or other graded work must be made up upon the return of the student to school. Since the student will not be present for the classroom experiences, much support will be necessary from the parent.

If a child has been absent one-third of the grading period, the teacher will assign no marks for that period. The words “No grades due to absence” will be inserted.

UNSCHEDULED DISMISSALS

No student will be permitted to leave school before the regular dismissal time except in cases of illness or emergency. A note, dated and signed, should be sent with your child on the occasion of any appointment that might necessitate an interruption in the day or an early dismissal. Any student being dismissed early must be met at the office and the student must be “signed out” stating the time and the name of the person receiving the student.

TARDINESS

The school day begins at 8:30 a.m. and ends at 2:50 p.m. Any student who comes to school after the bell has rung at 8:30 a.m. is considered tardy. The student must report to the office for a tardy slip, which will provide admission to the classroom. Tardiness due to a delay in the bus schedule does not require a slip.

Chronic tardiness is disruptive to the classroom schedule and may cause some students hardship. Tardy students sometimes feel self-conscious and begin the day in a difficult frame of mind. Repeated tardiness may result in an appropriate consequence and even a detention.

Cafeteria

Healthy lunches are an important component of every school day. The body and mind are energized and sustained by a well-balanced, nutritionally sound, mid-day meal. Appropriate portions containing proteins, carbohydrates, fats and sugars are critical to maintaining adequate energy levels to successfully participate in all the activities of the day.

Saint Thomas School provides a hot lunch program in compliance with state and federal regulations. The meals are nutritionally well balanced, wholesome and freshly prepared. The cost of meals is determined annually and regulated by the state. Confidential, subsidized lunch applications are available for any family who qualifies.

A monthly menu is provided and choices are due on Monday.. The menu contains information about proposed meals for the upcoming month. It is important to review this menu with your children to guarantee that the choices proposed are acceptable to your children. For unacceptable menu items, a bag lunch from home should be substituted. If your menu is lost, you may consult our web site, www.saintthomassanford.org.

After menu choices have been made, an envelope with the student's name, class, menu choices, days and payment attached should be submitted by Monday. The form should also indicate choice of milk for a bag lunch and choices for snack milk or juice for grades K-3. Missed meals can be credited the next week. Parents/guardians will be notified of any overdue charges and prompt payment is expected. After two (2) weeks without payment, a student arriving without a lunch will be provided with a peanut butter sandwich and milk. The Director of Food Services provides more complete information at the beginning of each school year.

Lunch bags/boxes are the responsibility of the student. Bag lunches should not contain glass containers. Glass containers carried by children are an accident waiting to happen. Soda is an unacceptable beverage for lunch in any container.

We do not provide a breakfast program but students can buy “a la carte” breakfast items if they arrive early enough to eat them. A healthy breakfast is the proper beginning to each day. Children who arrive without breakfast often appear listless and inattentive. Research gives testimony that it impacts learning and memory.

Calendar

Saint Thomas School follows the Sanford School Calendar. Holiday, half-days, delayed openings, early release and school vacations are coordinated with the Sanford schedule as much as possible because the Town of Sanford provides transportation for all Sanford students.

WEATHER EMERGENCIES

When Sanford schools are closed or delayed due to weather, Saint Thomas is also closed or delayed. These changes are announced on the local radio and TV stations and available on our web site and through our “call around” system. No separate announcement is made for Saint Thomas School on the TV and radio.

Communication

Effective communication is an avenue to understanding and sharing. A greater sense of belonging is associated with being aware of current school happenings. This is accomplished through regular notices home, usually on Wednesday and parents/teacher conferences anytime. Attendance at Parent/Teacher Organization (PTO) meetings, School Board meetings and at seasonal celebrations of our school community are all wonderful opportunities for communication. A daily search of book bags may enhance the communication efforts. A visit to our web site, www.saintthomassanford.org for a monthly calendar and menus, School Board and PTO agendas and minutes and other information may also be helpful

Communication also presupposes a real willingness to share concerns, feelings, and information among the partners. The school administration and teachers cannot act upon what is not known! Communication is a responsibility that we all bear for the sake of the children. If a circumstance arises which causes you confusion or consternation, it is in everyone’s best interest to share that concern immediately. Communications should begin with the student’s teacher. Each teacher has an e-mail link @ the above St. Thomas School Web site address.

Conferences may be scheduled at any time that is mutually convenient to the parent and the teacher. Conferences cannot take place while class is in session, especially during the last few minutes of the day when the teacher is attempting closure and preparing students for homework and dismissal. A conference cannot be held with a teacher who is outside for “bus duty.” Teachers on duty have an enormous responsibility and cannot give adequate attention to the safety of the children being dismissed and a parent’s concerns simultaneously. Please call or send a note or an e-note requesting a conference to be scheduled before 8:30 A.M. or after 3:00 P.M.

CYBER COMMUNICATIONS & SOCIAL NETWORKING

In this age of electronic communication, personal privacy has become almost a daily challenge. St. Thomas School attempts to ensure the privacy and appropriateness of our students' computer use here at school by being enrolled in the Maine School and Library Network which filters content on the University of Maine's server.

While we cannot protect our students at home, we do request that our students refrain from the posting of any personal information about their classmates on any of the social networking sites. Pictures, videos of classroom/school events and other students cannot be posted without the express permission of the participants and the school. Predators of children constantly surf these sites in search of desirable victims. Other real risks to children and young people come from the young people themselves who may upload such information unaware that it could be seen as cyber-bullying and harassment by their peers. Should you become aware of any violation of this standard, please notify the School.

TELEPHONE AND CELL PHONES

Telephone calls during school hours have an adverse impact upon the continuity of the lessons. No teacher or student will be called from class to answer the telephone. To contact a teacher or student, please call the school office and leave a message or request that your call be returned.

The school telephone is for school business. Students may not use it except for emergencies. Arrangement for alternative transportation, after school activities and social events should be anticipated.

Cell phones are the choice of some families for their children. The school is not responsible for lost or damaged phones. Cell phones in school must be turned off during school hours and may not be used for text messaging during class. Any disregard of this policy will result in an appropriate consequence. If an emergency should arise, such that a student must use his/her cell phone during the day, he/she must do so in the main office only.

Discipline

The essence of Christian discipline is self-discipline. Students need to realize that the observance of school rules brings freedom to themselves and to others. Students should understand that school regulations safeguard everyone's liberties rather than curb them. Discipline is begun at home and continued at school. Instilling the social values of courtesy, respect, concern for other, justice and honesty must be a collaborative effort.

Children learn from their mistakes. Therefore, we do not expect students to be faultless. What we do expect is openness to correction and a positive response. The self-esteem of the individual will be respected in every instance and the reinforcement provided by parental cooperation will always be relied upon. It is an important life lesson

that students learn that there are consequences for their every action and to understand that the nature of correction offered is to also learn what other choices they could have made...

Disciplinary measures have three (3) intentions:

1. To develop a Christian attitude based on the teachings and the model of Jesus.
2. To develop strategies for making good choices based on a sense of right and not a fear of punishment, and
3. To understand that any choice, good or bad, has consequences.

The criteria, which all students are taught in making choices, are based on the “Golden Rule” of “Doing unto others.....” They include the standards of being “safe, polite and caring.” When a child makes a bad choice, the teacher will review the action with the student in the light of these standards. This review is a critical component to the student’s learning from the experience because there are many nuances to behaviors that can be overlooked.

Ordinarily, student choices and behavior contrary to the spirit the school incur “logical consequences” appropriate to the grade level. “Think About It“ forms related to our Bullying Policy, behavior notices, reflective essays or even detention can result. Students are clearly informed beforehand of the sequence of the consequences. If ordinary corrective measures are not effective, the following procedure will be followed:

1. If the misconduct is of a serious and/or chronic nature, the student, teacher and the parents will have a conference with the principal. An analysis of the facts of the behavior will be discussed and a plan of action devised.
2. If the misconduct still persists, attempts at redirection and intervention having proved ineffective, the parents will be requested to meet again with the student, the teacher and the principal. The principal will then determine further action, which may include a recommendation for more extensive intervention, suspension, either at school or at home, or even expulsion. There will be no refund of tuition if expulsion is due to misbehavior.

Bus Transportation

The Town of Sanford provides transportation to all Sanford residents who attend Saint Thomas School. This is a wonderful convenience to our families. The opportunity to ride the bus carries with it certain responsibilities and compliance with state regulations is mandatory. Wherever Saint Thomas students are, they represent their school. Since “actions speak louder than words,” others form their opinion of our school from the behavior of our students. Behaviors which endanger the safety of the student or other students must be avoided:

- * Students must remain fully and properly seated at all times while the bus is in motion.
- * Extending any part of the body or any object out the bus window is forbidden.

- * Teasing other students, throwing objects, loud talking, bad language and disrespect are all unacceptable.
- Any behavior, which might distract the driver’s attention from the road, could be critical to the safety of everyone on the bus.
- * Bus Behavior Notices issued by the driver will be dealt with by the parents and the principal.

Uniform Code

St. Thomas School is charged not only with providing a Catholic education to its students but also with giving testimony to the community at large concerning the Christian character of the school. Consequently, students are required to show proper attention to personal hygiene, grooming and style of dress. Student dress reflects an interior attitude and should foster our goals. Compliance with our uniform code instills a sense of order or discipline, eliminates fashion competition, and saves time otherwise expended in selecting clothing for the day which can be used for other creative expressions and saves money. Neat and appropriate dress is one of our “trademarks” to the community of the kind of special school that we are.

To facilitate compliance in a manageable, inexpensive way, a single company has been selected from whom most of the components must be purchased. The company is “French Toast.” Catalogs are provided each year to every family. A list of acceptable items is distributed in the spring and again in the August packet. Purchases may be made either on-line, www.frenchtoast.com, through their toll free telephone number, 1-800-373-6248 or at some designated stores. Only the identified catalogue items fulfill the requirements of the UNIFORM CODE. These items with their catalog numbers and pages will be published each year with the new catalog.

“School” sweatshirts and sweaters may be worn over a uniform shirt. Other sweatshirts and sweaters and vests are not permitted. Dress shirts must be oxford style. Peter Pan and Henley collars are not oxford. Polo shirts can be purchased outside of the catalog but the colors and their shades (white, blue and yellow) should match those available in the catalog. Colorful scarves, headwear, belts and underclothing which are visible are not acceptable. Leotards and socks should be white or blue.

A “Uniform Exchange” consisting of gently used clothing is available to everyone at no charge. Outgrown clothing can be added to the inventory and parent volunteers look to the sizing and display. This is available in the hallway leading into the cafeteria.

FOOTWEAR

Dress shoes, sneakers or other safe footwear are required. Strapless, clogs, Crocs, high heels and platform shoes are unacceptable footwear.

NON-COMPLIANCE

The principal reserves the right to send any child home that is inappropriately attired or is not in compliance with the UNIFORM code. It will be the responsibility of the parents to arrange for transportation or change of clothes. “Non-compliance with the UNIFORM code may result in some loss of privilege for “dress down days.”

Extended Day Program (EDP)

The EDP offers to our own families the opportunity to “extend” the day of a student. It provides care and supervision to St. Thomas students before and after school in a safe environment. It begins at 7:00 a.m. and ends at 5:30 p.m. It is available on a day-to-day basis and can be arranged for an individual day and time needed. It is not available for Pre-kindergarten students. An EDP Handbook is available upon request, which describes the program and the charges in detail.

Family Participation Policy

Partnership is a foundation block for Catholic Education. Saint Thomas School needs the help of all its families to continue to provide education at the lowest possible cost. In order to reach this goal, the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) has developed and administers a Family Participation Program. The Family Participation Program is designed to have parents actively involved in the School and in its fund raising activities.

Service is the heart of the faith community and therefore parents are required to donate twenty-five (25) hours per family, regardless of the number of children attending St. Thomas School. Five (5) of these hours must be dedicated to support the Spring Fever Fair, the School’s largest fundraising event. Families who have Pre-kindergarten students in either the two (2) or three (3) day components of the program are responsible for ten (10) or fifteen (15) hours respectively.

Any family member who is of junior high age or older, but not the St. Thomas students themselves, may fulfill the hour required. A contract and information is provided to each family at the beginning of every school year. More information about the program is shared at the first PTO meeting. Inability to, or determination not to participate will result in a \$10.00 per hour charge to a family. Families who foresee that they will be unable to fulfill any part or all of the contract may prepay this charge at the time of tuition payments. Exceptions to the contract are allowed for hardship, after consultation with the principal. For more information, refer to the Parent Participation Policy and Handbook on our web site.

Field Trips

Field trips can be a valuable academic experience and a source of incomparable information. Whenever field trips or routine activities require students to travel away from school during school hours, permission requests signed by the parent/guardian must be secured. Absence of a signed document will render the student ineligible to participate. Variations in the dress code appropriate to the excursion will accompany the permission slip.

Usually, a bus is provided for field trips. However, some groups are not large enough to warrant such an expense. In those cases, when volunteers are requested to transport the students, drivers must provide a copy of their current auto insurance policy

showing liability limits of \$100,000 per person and \$300,000 per occurrence. Drivers must be at least 25 years of age with a valid driver's license and have a safe driving record. The number of students must not exceed the number of seat belts in the vehicle.

Illness or Accident

Whenever a student is injured or complains of illness, the student shall be sent to the office for treatment. Whenever treatment is provided, a "Notice of Treatment" will be given to the child for the information of the parent/guardian. If the illness or accident is of a more serious nature, the parents/guardians will be called.

MEDICATION

All students requiring medication, prescribed or over the counter, must have a parent or guardian deliver the medication to the office. All prescriptions and over-the-counter medications must be brought in the original container with the directions for dosage and times attached and labeled with the student's name. Authorization from parents must also be provided. All medications will be stored in the office with the exceptions of inhalators prescribed for the treatment of pulmonary conditions and "epi pens" unless the students are not of an age to be responsible for the safe care of such medications. Students requiring such interventions and are responsible for their own medication will inform their teacher of the location of such medical appliances in case the student is unable to act.

Students to be medicated should report to the office at the prescribed time(s). No medications are to be kept by the student or in the classroom except as indicated above. Frequently used medications such as pain relievers and skin creams must also be labeled and kept in the office.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES OR CONTAGIOUS CONDITIONS

Infectious diseases or contagious conditions will result in the isolation of a student for the school population. The student will be sent to the office and the parent/guardian will be called immediately. Communicable diseases may require a doctor's certificate for readmission to school. Children dismissed with a temperature should remain out of school for a full day to insure opportunity for recovery. Those returning from a contagious condition must report to the office before readmitted to the school community.

FOOD ALLERGIES

Some students have sensitivities to different food products. Whenever this is discovered, it is important that the school be notified so that adequate precautions can be taken.

Library

The library is the center of our educational resources. Not only does it contain thousands of volumes to be borrowed or used but it is also the site of our computer laboratory. The care and use of these resources are the responsibility of every student.

Overdue and lost books reduce the opportunity to share our resources. The fine for overdue books is \$.025 per day, however, we are more concerned with helping students develop a sense of responsibility than we are in collecting fines. Damaged or lost books have a fixed fee of \$6.00 for paperbacks and \$15.00 for hardbound. Unreturned books result in a loss of the privilege to borrow more books until those missing have been returned.

Leaving and Receiving Students/Parking

Safety and good order require that students are dismissed indoors. Parents walking in the halls before the time of dismissal can be very distracting to students who should be preparing to bring closure to the day by following the teachers' directions for homework and hearing announcements and expectations for the next day. Hallways are such busy places at the end of the day that extra people there can add to the general confusion with so many people trying to get ready to leave at the same time.

- * Students who ride the buses leave with the bell at 2:50.
- * Students walking or being received by parents, guardians or other approved persons can begin to do so with the bell at 2:55

These dismissals are separate to insure the safety of our students. Please abide by these times and our intention.

Since the safety of our students is a critical factor and requires that:

- * PARKING IN FRONT OF THE SCHOOL IS RESERVED FOR BUSES
- * Strict attention must be paid to "flashing bus lights." It's the law!
- * You assist your child to cross the street to your parked vehicle.

The Sanford Police have warned us that they monitor parking compliance and attention to the "flashing bus lights."

Physical Education

A program of physical education is provided twice a week for all K to Gr. 6 students. Participation in the program is required unless there are restrictions due to physical impairment or conditions of health which are documented by a physician. Sneakers and pants (slacks), or shorts in hot weather, are the appropriate dress for full participation. Sweat suits are not necessary.

Registration

Before a child is admitted to first grade it is strongly recommended that he/she attend kindergarten. He/she must be six (6) years old by or on October 15 to be eligible for first grade. Those entering K must be five (5) and Pre-K four (4) by the same date. Anyone enrolling for the first time is screened before admission. A record of birth and inoculation are required. Those transferring from another school will sign a request for

records from the previous school. A non-refundable registration fee is fixed each year and is due at the time of registration.

PRIORITY OF ADMISSION POLICY

For the sake of maintaining family unity, any applicants who have siblings in the school always have the advantage over other applicants. This standard applies to all families regardless of parochial affiliation or lack thereof.

Since St. Thomas School is the parish school of St. Therese of Lisieux Parish and in service to its cluster parishes, preference for admission is always extended to registered, participating members of these parishes.

Registered, participating Catholic families of other neighboring parishes are admitted before those not practicing, unaffiliated or not-Catholic applicants. The determination of “practice” is a pastoral decision based upon the criteria outlined in our “Parish/Family Contract.” A “Notice of Subsidy” is provided by the home parish to the school to determine the tuition rate.

REGISTRATION TIME

“Open Registration” ordinarily, occurs during the last two (2) weeks of March. This registration period is publicly announced. “In-house Registrations” (i.e., the re-registration of current students and the registration of their siblings) precedes open registration by one (1) week. Once the “in-house” period has passed, all applicants are selected on a first-served basis as outlined above.

REGISTRATION INTERVIEWS

All new families applying to the school are invited for an individual interview to explore the school’s program and philosophy and to clarify expectations. Since these interviews are numerous, they need to be spread out over a greater period of time than the weeks of registration. Consequently, these interviews usually begin after the First of the New Year and continue as long as necessary. Applicants who choose to register fill out the appropriate forms, which are dated, and make a deposit. Their names are then placed in a “pool” to be selected according to the criteria established above at the time indicated. Those not chosen will have their deposit refunded unless they choose to be placed on the “waiting list.”

WAITING LIST

Those applicants who have not been initially selected, and who wish, will have their names enrolled and successively numbered according to the dated registration on a “waiting list” for each class. If and when an opening occurs, the candidates on the waiting list will be contacted and offered an available class opening. If a candidate is unable to be contacted in a timely manner, the next successive person will be contacted. All candidates who have not been selected by the first day of school will have their deposits refunded.

REGISTRATION AND EXPECTATIONS

St. Thomas is a Catholic School and the primary focus is to instill Christian/Catholic values across a quality curriculum. Consequently, no student is excluded from any religious instruction, practice or celebration. For those who are not Catholic, the intent is not to convert but to provide an opportunity to examine the role of

Christianity in the life of each student. St. Thomas always reserves the right to advise the choice of another school to the families of candidates for whom the program or its intent does not seem to meet the family's needs.

REGISTRATION AND UNPAID TUITION

Parents wishing to re-register students or to register new students must have fulfilled their tuition commitment to the school for the current year or be participating in the F.A.C.T.S. tuition program. Unpaid balances leave the family at risk of being displaced unless some extenuating hardship exists and is reported to the Pastor or the principal. Financial assistance for the new school year cannot be awarded until all accounts are paid in full for the current school year.

School Board

The Saint Thomas School Board is the advisory body for making policy for the school. The parish priest, the principal and representatives from the parish and school community constitute the membership of the Board. The president or co-presidents of the PTO attend all board meetings as consulting members representing non-parish families.

The Board meets monthly, usually on the 2nd Monday at 6:30 in the school. Policies, innovations, budget, tuition fees and salaries are the responsibilities of the Board. The Principal is responsible for administering the school and is accountable to the Pastor and the Diocesan Catholic Schools Office. School Board meetings are open to the public. The monthly agenda is posted in the school entry way and in the parish bulletin before each meeting. Additional items for the agenda or permission to address the Board must be presented in writing through a representative or the principal at least twenty (20) days before the meeting.

Security

Whenever there are students present in the building, all of the exterior doors are locked and inaccessible from outside. Everyone wishing to enter the school must go to the playground door and ring the bell. There is a video camera and intercom there which is controlled from inside. If the person at the door is unrecognized, he/she is asked to identify himself/herself and state his/her business.

Any family "custody" issues, particularly when there are restricted visitation rights or restraining orders, must be filed with the office and the details reviewed with the principal. Parents who are so restricted should comply with the conditions of such court orders so as to avoid any confrontation here at school. Those not in compliance and violating the court order may be faced with having to explain their actions to the police.

Social Events of a Private Nature

Invitations to birthday parties and other private celebrations are best managed apart from school. This avoids disappointment to those not invited and distraction to those who are.

Spiritual and Sacramental Life

Because we are a Catholic School, the celebration of our faith is an integral part of our curriculum. Classroom prayers and devotions, seasonal prayer services and the celebration of the Liturgy are all included for the spiritual development and enrichment of our students. Notice of these occasions is provided to families as an invitation to join the school community whenever possible.

The Sacraments of Initiation, Baptism, Confirmation and First Holy Communion and the Sacrament of Reconciliation are celebrated in the local parish. Although our students receive instruction about these sacraments as well as many other tenets of the Catholic faith, it is always the responsibility of the family to coordinate the reception of sacraments with the parish. St. Thomas School, itself, does not arrange for the celebration of Confirmation and First Communion. Attendance at St. Thomas School could never replace the family's preparation in the parish which is essential to a meaningful reception of these sacraments.

Weekly attendance at Mass and the reception of the sacraments is the norm for Catholic students attending a Catholic school. Students are prepared every week at school for the celebration of the Sunday Liturgy.

Tuition

Saint Thomas School is the parish school of St. Therese of Lisieux Parish and in service to its cluster parishes. The reason for the school and its major support are a mission of these parishes. The tuition charged for each student does not reflect the real value of the services provided. Rather, tuition is an opportunity for families to participate in the choice of education they have made for themselves and their children.

The tuition rate is reviewed annually by the School Board. The rate of tuition is based upon current school programs, expenses and registrations. Families registered and participating in a parish will have their tuition subsidized by their parish. Family/Parish Contracts clearly detail parish expectations and are signed by each family as they apply for their subsidy. Compliance is tracked by a computerized record of attendance by the budget envelopes submitted at the Mass which is attended.

Families not participating, or for whom evidence of participation is lacking, in a parish of the Diocese of Portland are responsible for a greater amount of tuition, i.e., an amount equivalent to the parish subsidy. If the record of participation does not meet the agreed upon expectations of the contract for a given quarter, and additional sum of $\frac{1}{4}$ of the parish subsidy per child will be added to the next quarter. Attendance at parishes outside the Diocese of Portland may be recorded on the budget envelope for the week and deposited in the collection the following week. Extenuating circumstances can be reported to the Pastor or the principal.

Everyone benefits from that portion of the operating budget raised by the PTO and other outside supporters. The tuition rate for the upcoming year is announced at the end of the budgetary process, usually in March.

Registration for the fall term occurs in early spring. A non-refundable registration fee is credited to the tuition balance. Full tuition payment is due by August 1. Monthly payment plans are available.

For those families for whom one full payment is impractical, there is a payment program through a company called F.A.C.T.S. This plan is a direct electronic payment from your checking account. There are no monthly bills. You select a date most agreeable to your monthly budgeting, the 5th or the 20th, and F.A.C.T.S does the rest. There is a one-time annual charge per family, not per student.

During the last week of August, an Open House is held on the Sunday following the last Mass. Opportunity to meet the teachers and receive packets of forms and information pertinent to the current school year are available then or can be retrieved during that week between 8:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. at the school office

Let us Remember

“CHILDREN ARE NOT VESSELS TO BE FILLED BUT LAMPS TO BE LIGHTED.”

Children learn what they live

If a child lives with criticism,
He learns to condemn.

If a child lives with hostility,
He learns to fight.

If a child lives with ridicule,
He learns to be shy.

If a child lives with shame,
He learns to feel guilty.

If a child lives with tolerance,
He learns to be patient.

If a child lives with encouragement,
He learns confidence.

If a child lives with praise,
He learns to appreciate.

If a child lives with fairness,
He learns justice.

If a child lives with security,
He learns to have faith.

If a child lives with approval,
He learns to like himself.

If a child lives with acceptance and friendship,
He learns to find love in the world.

SAINT THOMAS
PRAY FOR US

FAMILY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE STUDENT/FAMILY HANDBOOK

We have read this “Student/Family Handbook” and have familiarized ourselves with the information and expectations expressed therein. It is our intention to abide by the policies and standards of St. Thomas School.

PLEASE SIGN BELOW AND RETURN TO ST.THOMAS SCHOOL

Print student’s name

Print 2nd student’s name

Student’s signature

2nd Student’s signature

Parent’s signature

Home e-mail address

Today’s date