



# ST. THOMAS AQUINAS HIGH SCHOOL

## STUDENT HANDBOOK 2023-2024

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## PURPOSE STATEMENT

With Christ as our model and guided by our Catholic tradition, St. Thomas Aquinas High School develops young men and women into courageous leaders in service to others through faith, academic excellence and the recognition of the value and dignity of each individual.

## THE PHILOSOPHY OF ST. THOMAS AQUINAS HIGH SCHOOL

The members of St. Thomas Aquinas High School strive to meet the needs of the individual, the country, and the Catholic church.

They believe each student is an individual who has the right to be challenged and the responsibility to develop as a person. As a Christian educational community, the school creates an atmosphere where development can occur; respect, dignity, compassion, and faith in God can be nurtured; knowledge, self-confidence, self-realization, and true freedom can be achieved; love, communication, understanding, and service to others can be realized. This development is guided by a professional and dedicated faculty and staff which serves, directs, and teaches the student through instruction and example.

St. Thomas Aquinas High School believes that a mature and educated student will become a better person, a more responsive citizen, and a more dedicated Christian. Thus, the ultimate service of the school is the formation of Christian values, attitudes, and ideals witnessed in a commitment to the kingdom of God and the community of men and women.

## THE BELIEFS OF ST. THOMAS AQUINAS HIGH SCHOOL

We believe that:

1. Religious understanding is achieved through proclaiming the message of the Gospel and beliefs of the Church.
2. Christian teachings foster an understanding of men and women's responsibilities for one another.
3. The contributions of all cultural groups are valuable.
4. Personal experiences in Christian living through liturgy, prayer, guidance, example, and service provide opportunities for Spiritual growth.
5. Essential academic skills are developed through a sound educational program.
6. Positive critical thought is achieved through qualitative and quantitative analysis.
7. Students benefit by exposure to diverse career opportunities.
8. Students and faculty benefit from the educational use of up-to-date technology.
9. Effective education includes an accumulation of culture and knowledge through the liberal arts and sciences.
10. Involved citizenship requires an appreciation of the forms and processes of the American democratic government and provides opportunities to put them into practice.

11. Physical fitness is achieved through the promotion of habits that build and maintain good health.
12. Instilling a love of learning in each student prepares them for further education and learning.
13. Developing the ability to successfully adapt and grow with the impact of change is an essential skill.
14. Effective education provides ample opportunities for special enrichment.
15. Constructive and creative use of leisure time broadens the students' interests.
16. Successful schools promote continual professionalism of the faculty and staff.
17. Goals are achieved when the responsibilities of the student, parents, faculty, and staff are clearly defined.
18. A faith-based community service program extends beyond charitable works to social justice efforts, which change the lives of both volunteers and recipients.

## GRADUATE PROFILE

### *St. Thomas Aquinas Graduates:*

- Demonstrate an internalized ethical code that frames their life choices and behaviors.
- Are mature responsible citizens.
- Incorporate Christian values in their daily lives.
- Are empowered with an educated, analytical mind capable of critical thinking.
- Possess current technological literacy.
- Exhibit an awareness of cultural diversity and a commitment to social justice.
- Recognize that the world is a global community.
- Recognize and embody a strong sense of community.
- Are prepared to have a full understanding of oneself in deciding on educational and career opportunities.

## POLICY STATEMENT

St. Thomas Aquinas High School admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded to or made available to students. This school does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, national and ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, its admission policies, or in any school administered program.

***Attending St. Thomas Aquinas High School is a privilege, not a right. Young men and women who attend St. Thomas Aquinas High School must adhere to the philosophy of the school. Any student who violates this philosophy whether by attitude, actions or being continuously troublesome throughout a school year may be denied the privilege of returning to St. Thomas Aquinas the following school year.***

Please Note: The Principal is the final recourse in school matters and reserves the right to amend this handbook. Parents will be given prompt notification.

## ADDRESSING DISPUTES WITH THE SCHOOL

St. Thomas Aquinas High School and parents should strive to communicate with one another in an open and collaborative manner. It is the goal of STA to address parent concerns regarding their child's experience in the school. In turn, there may be times St. Thomas Aquinas must raise issues pertaining to a student that are related to disciplinary, educational, or social issues.

Recognizing that students are best served when families and the school can find mutually agreeable solutions to resolve differences or problems, it may sometimes not be possible to find a solution or compromise to accommodate the needs of STA and the student for their family. It is agreed by St. Thomas Aquinas and the family that it is not an effective manner of communication to bring third parties into the conversation as it impedes collaboration and creates an adversarial relationship.

It is the policy of the school and the Diocese of Metuchen that in the event a family engages an attorney, the student cannot remain in St. Thomas Aquinas as it represents a complete and irrevocable breakdown of the relationship between the school, the student, and the family. Accordingly, the student must immediately withdraw from St. Thomas Aquinas. The student is not eligible to be reenrolled at a later time.

## ST. THOMAS AQUINAS HIGH SCHOOL CRISIS MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Crisis Management Team has developed a crisis management plan that will be activated in the event of any crisis that would pose an imminent threat to the health and/or safety of the entire school community or any segment of the school community. The crisis team, faculty, staff, and students are trained every school year.

## ACCREDITATION

St. Thomas Aquinas High School has met the requirements established by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission and Board of Trustees and is fully accredited by the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement.

## DISCIPLINE AT ST. THOMAS AQUINAS HIGH SCHOOL

No person can exist alone; an individual is always a member of a group, whether universal or local, permanent or temporary. Individuals in each group have an influence upon one another and upon the whole group. For the individual and the whole group to function properly, there must be order based on rules. This principle applies to all group associations from birth to death. At this moment in life, the school is a very important group association for a student. The rules of St. Thomas Aquinas High School are designed to maintain order in the school so that each student and the entire student body can function properly.



The discipline system will undergo constant evaluation. Our goal is to make the student aware that a breach of discipline affects the individual and the total group in some way. To counteract this negative effect, we hope to develop positive sanctions which will rectify the harm done to the individual or to the group. Listed below is an outline of the basic rules, regulations, and procedures of discipline at St. Thomas Aquinas High School.

Actions which violate the law, threaten or cause harm to any person, disrupt or impede the welfare and progress of the school community or bring discredit to the school will not be tolerated. Such actions or other severe violations of school rules may result in immediate expulsion. Any student charged with a felony is removed from the school community until the charge is dismissed or the student is acquitted of the charge.

The vice principal is responsible for maintaining the good order of the school, thereby protecting the student's right to learn, the teacher's right to instruct, and the safety and security of all. The vice principal's function is not only to enforce the rules of the school, but to refer students with problems to the campus minister, school counselors, or student assistance counselor.

## GENERAL REGULATIONS FOR STUDENTS' ATTENDANCE

The New Jersey Statutes on Education (18A-38-25, 38-26, 38-27) provide for compulsory attendance by all children and the responsibility for compliance belongs to the parents. The school is required to keep an accurate record of daily attendance, tardiness, and absence. All entries in the attendance record shall be made only by a teacher and/or person designated by the principal. In order to enforce the law, it is reasonable for the school to establish policies and regulations governing student attendance.

We believe that regular attendance and participation in classes along with interaction between student and teacher as well as the interaction among students in class are vital and integral parts of the learning process. Attendance is seen as a means of serving educational ends.

Frequent absence from school disrupts the continuity of the instructional process. Innovative curricular plans and the newest instructional techniques have little value if the student is not in school to take advantage of them. Chronic absences limit accomplishments and reinforce a habit which will handicap the individual in future education or employment. Research indicates that there is a close relationship between students' attendance and their academic and disciplinary performance.

**The school cannot give a student permission to be absent. Parents must call or email the attendance office the morning of the student's absence. Notes must be given to the main office the day the student returns. Students who fail to bring in notes upon their return to school will be considered truant.**

All course work missed during absences must be made-up. It is the responsibility of the student to gather this work from each subject teacher.

Having established the following policies concerning absences (cumulative and noncumulative) and tardiness, the administration reserves the right to make all final decisions at its discretion concerning attendance.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Students are not permitted to leave the building without permission on school days between 7:00 A.M. and dismissal.

### ABSENCES

Cumulative absences will include full-day absences, truancy from school, and absences from an individual course. Parents' notes which are required to readmit students to school after a full-day absence will not, however, make the absence eligible to be considered noncumulative. If the parent/guardian does not call and does not provide a note, administration assumes the student is truant and will take appropriate disciplinary action.

1. Students may not be granted credit in a scheduled course after cumulative absences exceed the following limits:
  - a. Marking period for each course - 5 absences.
  - b. Semester course - 10 absences.
  - c. Full year course - 20 absences.
2. When students have twenty (20) or more cumulative absences in any subject, they may not be granted credit for that subject. Report cards and permanent records will reflect a grade and no credit due to excessive absence.
3. When students have accrued excessive cumulative or non-cumulative absences in any subject, they and their parents/guardian will be required to meet with the administration.
4. The subjects in which students receive a no credit because of cumulative absences, whether required or elective, shall be made up according to school policy.
5. Written appeals for exceptions to loss of credit due to excessive absences should be made to the school administration.
6. Students must be in attendance for a minimum of four (4) hours in order to receive credit for a full day.
7. To participate in school sponsored activities in any given day students must be in attendance for a minimum of four (4) hours.

### NON-CUMULATIVE ABSENCES

It is recognized that certain extreme and unavoidable circumstances may prevent a student from attending school. In the event a student is absent for any of the reasons listed below, it will be considered a noncumulative absence and will not be counted in the total outlined above.

1. An absence for illness as verified by a physician's note. Such verification must be presented to the main office the day the student returns to school, otherwise the absence is considered a cumulative absence.
2. Bereavement or family emergency. (Directives for non-family member attendance at funerals may be obtained from the Vice Principal.)

3. Approved school functions such as field trips or special related programs.
4. Although family vacations during the school year are discouraged, to be considered noncumulative these procedures must be followed. Failure to comply with the above procedure constitutes a cumulative absence for the trip:
  - a. A written request must be submitted to the principal three weeks prior to the trip.
  - b. The student must assume the responsibility of notifying each of his/her teachers of the impending absence at least three days prior to his/her last day in school. A vacation form is available in the main office.
  - c. Assignments are to be obtained for each course by the student. These completed assignments are to be handed in no later than one (1) week after returning to school.
5. Seniors are permitted no more than two school days for college interviews. These interviews are to be arranged prior to the fourth quarter. A note informing the school of the interview must be presented one (1) day prior to the visit. Verification of attendance at the college must be presented to the main office.

#### TARDINESS

A student who enters the school after 7:58 a.m. must report to the main office for admittance. A phone call from a parent/guardian must be made to the main office the day the student is tardy. The student must also present a note from a parent/guardian stating the date and reason for the tardiness.

In addition, if a student is late to school, any full class(es) missed constitutes a cumulative absence. Lateness of fifteen minutes or more to class also constitutes a cumulative absence for that class. Parent notes and/or phone calls do not excuse a student absence or tardy.

If a note or phone call is not received or if the reason for tardiness is not deemed acceptable by the vice-principal, the tardiness will be considered unexcused. The penalty for unexcused tardiness is an administrative detention.

Teacher detentions will be assigned for class tardiness. Students who are habitually late for class will also be referred to the vice-principal and may be subject to additional penalties as proposed in the guidelines for lateness to school.

#### EARLY DISMISSAL

Certain appointments may have to be made during the school day. Since absence from classes missed for the day are considered cumulative, these appointments should be kept to a minimum. In requesting an early dismissal, a note must be presented by the student from the parent/guardian to the attendance office before classes the day of the early dismissal. The parent/guardian must sign the student out of school. In cases of extreme emergency, when advance notification is not possible, call the school immediately before arriving to sign the student out of school.

## DETENTION

Any member of the faculty or administration may assign one or more detentions to any student for the offenses listed below:

1. Disrespect toward any member of the school staff or another student.
2. Any action or language inappropriate to the atmosphere of the school or inconsistent with Christian values.
3. Littering.
4. Tardiness to school or class.
5. Minor defacing of school property.
6. Violation of dress code.
7. Possession of food or beverages outside of the cafeteria unless permission has been granted.
8. Leaving an assigned area without a pass.
9. Not wearing lanyard/I.D. card around the neck.
10. Unauthorized use of handheld electronic devices during school hours (see page 62)
11. Failure to abide by established classroom rules or school policy.

### GUIDELINES FOR DETENTION

1. Students must be given at least a one-day notice before serving the detention.
2. Administrative detentions do not extend beyond 3:00 p.m.
3. The type of detention to be served (assignments, work, or study, etc.) is left to the discretion of the teacher and/or administrator and is served either with the teacher or administrator.
4. Students receiving a detention are notified the day before. In addition, parents receive an Instant Alert message the day before the detention is to be served.
5. Failure to report to a teacher assigned detention will result in an administrative detention.
6. Failure to report to an administrative detention will result in a Saturday in-school suspension.
7. More than one teacher assigned detention per day automatically constitutes an administrative detention.

## SUSPENSION

At times it is necessary to separate a student from other students and school activities because of a serious offense. Normally, this will be accomplished by a suspension. The student will be placed on Saturday in-school suspension which will be held approximately twice a month. Students and parents will be notified by mail and by phone concerning the reason for and the date of the suspension. All Saturday suspensions will be from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. in a designated classroom to be determined by the administration. A failure to report to a Saturday in-school suspension will result in the student being suspended out of school for a period of time determined by the administrator. The principal reserves the right to assign either in-school suspension or out of school suspension depending upon the seriousness of the offense. Students are responsible for all academic work during the time of suspension. Absences resulting from out of school suspensions are considered cumulative absences and are not excused.

***It is the responsibility of the student to make up all assignments missed in each subject area when serving an out-of-school suspension.***

Offenses which may merit Saturday in-school or an out-of-school suspension will be evaluated to determine the action to be taken. Examples are:

1. Physical violence toward another member of the school community.
2. Vandalism.
3. Truancy.
4. Stealing/cheating.
5. Leaving school grounds without permission.
6. Insubordination.
7. Smoking on school premises or buses.
8. Absence from class or mandatory activity without permission.
9. Not reporting for administrative detention.
10. Forgery.
11. Misrepresentation.
12. Possession of unauthorized electronic devices during school hours.
13. Violation of academic integrity policy
14. Throwing of items in cafeteria
15. Violation of harassment, intimidation, or bullying policy

Please note:

1. More than three administrative detentions for the same offense for a given school year will result in a Saturday in-school suspension.
2. A student will be placed on disciplinary probation for more than three Saturday in-school suspensions or for a severe or serious violation of school policies in a given school year.
3. Violation of any of the above-mentioned offenses will result in the student immediately being placed on disciplinary probation for the remainder of the school year, and such probation may continue into the next school year. Counseling may be required.
4. A student on disciplinary probation will be evaluated quarterly and expelled from St. Thomas Aquinas High School for repeated violation of school policy.
5. When a student is asked to leave St. Thomas Aquinas High School, it is to be understood that they may not attend any activity or function sponsored by St. Thomas Aquinas High School. All functions are closed. Invitations are extended and approved by the school.

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Learning is a personal process. Students are encouraged to grow and develop as individuals. A student should be evaluated on his or her own ability. In accordance with the teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas, students are expected to uphold the principles of integrity and honor to God, oneself, and the institution. There are three types of unacceptable behavior or actions that violate academic integrity: cheating,

plagiarism, and academic misconduct. All violations are subject to appropriate consequences designed to eliminate any future temptation in this regard.

*Cheating* is defined as receiving information from a student, giving information to a student, or using an unauthorized source during an academic assignment. More specifically, it involves but is not limited to:

1. Allowing someone the use of your work, sharing of work, or attempting to share work without permission.
2. Using unauthorized test aids, including but not limited to written material and technical devices during a test or exam.
3. Copying another's ideas or work, including homework, workbook assignments, projects, labs and presenting it as your own.
4. Before, during or after a test or exam supplying or attempting to communicate unauthorized information to another student about a test or exam.
5. Submission of the same work for credit in two courses without obtaining prior permission of the teacher.

*Plagiarism* is a form of theft and is defined as using another person's words or ideas without proper acknowledgement. Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to, intentional or unintentional use of the following without citing the source (including the Internet):

1. A phrase, written or musical
2. A graphic element or design
3. Artistic material
4. Specific language
5. An idea
6. Facts and data
7. Paraphrasing of another's words or ideas

*Academic Misconduct* includes the alteration of grades and involvement in the acquisition or distribution of unadministered tests and the deliberate use of invented information. Examples of such misconduct include, but are not limited to:

1. Theft of answer keys, manuals, and other materials for academic advantage.
2. Changing or falsifying documents, including but not limited to progress reports, electronic grade books, report cards, graded assignments, and official transcripts.
3. Forging another person's signature or falsifying information for any purpose.
4. Fabricating information of any kind.

#### CHEATING/PLAGIARISM CONSEQUENCES

First Offense: Failing grade as defined by teacher's policies; teacher will notify parent/guardian and vice principal; student conference with counselor.

Second Offense: Failing Grade as defined by teacher's policies; meeting with administrator, teacher, student, and parent; student conference with counselor; Saturday suspension/in-school suspension.

Third Offense: Failing Grade as defined by teacher's policies; meeting with administrator, teacher, student and parent; student conference with counselor; three day out-of-school suspension.

#### ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT CONSEQUENCES

First Offense: Meeting with administrator, teacher, student, and parent; student conference with counselor; three day out-of-school suspension.

Any further offense will be dealt with by administration.

### VANDALISM

A student involved in school vandalism must pay for all damages. Furthermore, the student may be subject to suspension or expulsion. If the students responsible cannot be determined, repair expenses will be divided into 4 equal parts and deducted from each class treasury.

### WEAPONS/FIREARMS

Any student who knowingly has in his/her possession any firearm/weapon (as outlined in N.J.S.A. 2A: 4A: 60C-2C:39-9E) in or upon any part of the building or grounds or school sponsored activity of St. Thomas Aquinas High School is guilty of a crime irrespective of whether the student possesses a valid permit to carry the firearm/weapon or a valid firearms/weapon purchaser identification. Such a student will be expelled.

### SUPERVISION

St. Thomas Aquinas High School is responsible for supervision of students throughout the school day. Once a student enters the building on a school day, permission to leave must be obtained from an administrator. Only students participating in supervised activities are permitted to remain at school after dismissal. No student is to be in a classroom without the direct supervision of a faculty member. Likewise, no student is to be in the gym without a faculty member present. Students are not to congregate in areas adjacent to the school before or after school hours.

## STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

### PHILOSOPHY

Broad-brush philosophy posits that students who are displaying troubling behavior should be referred to the student assistance program, regardless of whether that trouble indicates any involvement or association with alcohol and other drug-related concerns.

Troubling behavior can be defined as any behavior that exceeds the boundaries of the teacher, parent, administration, or school counselor and affects, negatively, the student's academic performance, social interaction or personal life.

Referrals are made by a teacher, friend, self, administrator, parent, nurse, I&RS team, or school counselor out of concern or as part of school policy (all release of information and referral forms will be administered through the Student Assistance Counselor's office).

The Student Assistance Counselor will be a resource for high-risk students, students in crisis and all alcohol and drug related issues. In addition, Student Assistance Program services will incorporate involvement with families, school personnel and outside resources as needed.

All discipline and academic issues will be directed to the appropriate school professionals.

### INTERVENTION AND REFERRAL SERVICES (I&RS) TEAM

The Intervention and Referral Service Committee's mission is to identify and assist students who are engaging in behavior that hinders "school success." I&RS Committee members recognize that student success is influenced by many factors, and that some of these are beyond the I&RS Committee's domain.

The Intervention and Referral Service Committee is comprised of STA staff members, who have completed a New Jersey Department of Education I&RS Training Program, and includes, but is not limited to, teachers, administrators, and counselors. The committee meets regularly to address the needs of STA students who are at risk. Students may be referred to the I&RS Committee by any STA staff member. The I&RS Committee will begin by gathering information from all available sources to determine an appropriate course of action. The Committee will then meet with those best able to effect a positive change in/for the students. Actions might include setting some attainable goals, making recommendations for realizing these goals, and tracking the student's progress.

I&RS Committee members are committed to exploring all available resources, so that every St. Thomas Aquinas student has the opportunity to develop and mature into a caring, productive, and responsible citizen.

## SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

St. Thomas Aquinas High School recognizes that the misuse of drugs\* and alcohol has a deleterious effect on the health and education of those pupils and jeopardizes the welfare of the entire school community.



The School is committed to the prevention of drug and alcohol abuse through educational means and other appropriate programs and services and will take necessary and firm action to protect the school community from harm and from exposure to the negative aspects of drug and alcohol use/abuse.

The School prohibits the use, possession and/or distribution of drugs or alcohol on school premises and at any event away from the school premises that is sponsored by this school, and on any transportation, vehicle provided by this School. Pupils suspected of being under the influence of drugs or alcohol will be identified, evaluated, and reported in accordance with the law. Pupils who use, consume, possess, or distribute drugs or alcohol on or off school premises will be subject to discipline, which may include suspension, expulsion, and notification of law enforcement.

All teaching staff members shall be alert to signs of drug and alcohol use by pupils and shall respond to those signs in accordance with established administrative procedures. The School will provide in-service training to assist teaching staff members in identifying the symptoms of pupils who use drugs or alcohol and educating pupils about the consequences of drug or alcohol use, and in cooperating with those independent rehabilitation programs for drug and alcohol related problems in which pupils attending the school are enrolled.

A comprehensive drug and alcohol curriculum (grades 9-12) is incorporated in the Health curriculum. Additionally, a program is in place to provide referral and support services for pupils who are experiencing problems with drugs or alcohol.

Thus, the School policies include the following procedures: (1) a comprehensive program of drug and alcohol education, grades (9-12); (2) the identification and referral of pupils involved with drugs or alcohol; (3) the examination of pupils suspected of being under the influence of drugs or alcohol; (4) the treatment and discipline of pupils who consume, use, possess or distribute drugs or alcohol in violation of law or this policy.

School policy and administrative procedures regarding drugs and alcohol shall be reviewed and evaluated annually and shall be available to all staff members, pupils, and parents.

\*For the purpose of this policy, "drugs" includes all dangerous controlled substances set forth at N.J.S.A. 24:21-1, and all chemicals that release toxic vapors set forth at N.J.S.A.2A: 170-25.9 et seq.

#### PROCEDURE FOR IMPLEMENTING DRUG AND ALCOHOL POLICY

Whenever it shall appear to any teaching staff member, school nurse, or other educational personnel of any public school in this State that a pupil may be under the influence of substances as defined pursuant to section 2 of this act, that teaching staff member, school nurse or other educational personnel shall report the matter as soon as possible to the school nurse or medical inspector, as the case may be, or to a student assistance counselor, and to the principal or in his absence, to his designee. The principal or his designee shall immediately notify the parent or guardian and the superintendent of schools if there be one or the administrative principal and shall arrange for an immediate examination of the pupil by the Medical Review Officer (physician) at the contracted lab (JFK Occupational Health Services). If the parent or guardian refuses to use the school contracted lab, the pupil shall be taken to the emergency room of

the nearest hospital for immediate examination accompanied by a member of the school staff designated by the principal and a parent or guardian of the pupil. The pupil shall be examined immediately for the purpose of diagnosing whether or not the pupil is under such influence. A written report of that examination shall be furnished within 24 hours by the examining physician to the parent or guardian of the pupil and to the superintendent of schools or administrative principal. If it is determined that the pupil was under the influence of a substance, the pupil shall be returned to his or her home as soon as possible and shall not resume attendance at school until the pupil submits to the principal a written report certifying that he or she is physically and mentally able to return thereto, which report shall be prepared by a personal physician or the physician who examined the pupil pursuant to the provisions of this act. **Payment is the responsibility of the student's parent/guardian (positive or negative results).**

In addition, the pupil shall be interviewed by a student assistance counselor or another appropriately trained teaching staff member for the purpose of determining the extent of the pupil's involvement with these substances and possible need for treatment. In order to make this determination the counselor or other teaching staff member may conduct a reasonable investigation which may include interviews with the pupil's teachers and parents. The counselor or other teaching staff member may also consult with such experts in the field of substance abuse as may be necessary and appropriate. If it is determined that the pupil's involvement with and use of these substances represents a danger to the pupil's health and well-being, the counselor or other teaching staff member shall refer the pupil to an appropriate treatment program which has been approved by the Commissioner of Health.

## POLICY FOR THE PREVENTION OF DRUG AND ALCOHOL USE

### INTRODUCTION

To guard against the use of drugs and alcohol among our high school students, the Administration, and the Advisory Board of St. Thomas Aquinas High School, after due and careful consideration, has implemented the following policy and procedures.

### POLICY STATEMENT

The Administration and the Advisory Board of St. Thomas Aquinas High School, being aware of the danger of drug and alcohol abuse among high school students, will:

1. Require every parent of incoming students to sign a copy of the school policy on Drug and Alcohol Abuse at the time of registration. The students will also be required to sign the statement at the time of registration.
2. In addition, to guard against the use of drugs and alcohol among high school students, all parents of incoming students and their children will read and sign an agreement to allow random testing of students for drug and alcohol abuse.

## AGREEMENT REGARDING RANDOM TESTING FOR DRUG AND ALCOHOL ABUSE AMONG STUDENTS

We, (Parents and Child), know that it is necessary to eliminate drug and alcohol abuse in high school. We grant the Administration of St. Thomas Aquinas High School the right to test students at random for drugs and alcohol use. Student specimens will be collected by the nursing staff at St. Thomas Aquinas High School and tested by a laboratory commissioned by St. Thomas Aquinas High School. Positive results will require that the student attend outside professional counseling and be drug or alcohol tested randomly by an outside lab and meet with the Student Assistance Counselor. Removal from school activities may be necessary. We understand that the results of the testing will be provided to the parents/guardians and Administration within a specified period of time to be stated at the time of testing. We are aware that non-compliance with this policy will result in the student's dismissal from the school.

### STUDENT RANDOM DRUG AND ALCOHOL TESTING PROCEDURES

1. Parents and students will be required to sign the AGREEMENT FOR RANDOM DRUG AND ALCOHOL TESTING at the time of registration or beginning of the school year. This form will be kept on file until the student graduates.
2. On a periodic basis during the course of the school year, the ID numbers of all students will be placed in a pool from which the Student Assistance Counselor (SAC) will randomly draw the numbers of a minimum of 10 percent of the student body.
3. The SAC will match the ID numbers with the names of those students who will be tested that day and will make a courtesy call to the parents/guardians informing them of the random selection. If the parents/guardians are not available, a courtesy message will be left, if possible.
4. Those students selected for testing will be notified and tested in the morning of the same day.
5. Non-compliance will be treated as a positive result. A parent will be contacted immediately and will be required to assume the responsibility of drug/alcohol testing of their child, at the parents' expense, before he/she can return to school.
6. The student selected for testing will be called to the main office. At that time, the SAC will discuss with the student privately the next step in the testing process. The student will then be asked to go to the nurse's office.
7. In the privacy of the examination room of the nurse's office, the student will be asked to complete a specimen control form, which bears an assigned identification number. This identification number shall be the means for identifying the specimens by all laboratory personnel. Only the SAC and school nurse shall know the assigned number for each student selected for testing. If the student selected appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, those behavioral symptoms will be documented by the nurse prior to the collection of the sample.

8. The student shall be given direction by the school nurse and submit to a urine sample in the privacy of the nurse's office bathroom. Chain of Custody procedures will be followed throughout this process according to the Federal Workplace Drug Testing Programs guidelines.
9. The nurse will ask the donor to remove any unnecessary outer garments that might conceal items or substances that could be used with or adulterate the donor's urine specimen and leave them outside the testing area. The student will go to the secure bathroom where there is no access to water, other than the toilet bowl which has a blue dye staining the water a blue color. The door to the bathroom will be closed.
10. Upon exiting the bathroom, the student will hand the specimen cup to the nurse. The nurse will inspect the specimen to determine if there is any sign indicating the specimen may not be a valid urine specimen. Any unusual finding shall be noted on the testing request form.
11. The nurse will cap the specimen bottle that was provided to the school by a federally certified laboratory, viewed by the student. The nurse will place a tamper-evident seal on top of the bottle. The student will place his/her ID number on the tamper - evident label/seal, certifying that the specimen was collected from him/her. The federally approved laboratory will consult with and guide the school nurse in the collection of specimens in accordance with the Federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services (SAMHSA) standards. Any information transmitted to a federally approved laboratory for testing or processing will not contain any personally identifiable information.
12. The specimen will be picked up and delivered to a federally approved lab and tested. The results of the test will be reported to the Medical Review Officer (MRO). The parents/guardians, student and SAC will be contacted by the MRO if there are any questions regarding the test results.
13. Positive results will necessitate a conference with the SAC, the student and his/her parents/guardians. The student will be required to follow all recommendations to assist him/her in becoming drug/alcohol free.
14. All efforts will be made to minimize the impact of testing on the instructional day and maintain the confidentiality and privacy rights of participants.
15. The consequences for being under the influence of drugs or alcohol and/or possession are:
  - a. First offense: Three-day suspension, including any athletic, extracurricular or after-school activities. Mandatory physical exam, drug test and counseling.
  - b. Second offense: Student may be asked to leave the school.

## USE OF TOBACCO OR TOBACCO PRODUCTS POLICY

In compliance with the **New Jersey Smoke – Free Act (P.L.2005, Chapter 383, C.26:3D-55 et seq.)**, St. Thomas Aquinas prohibits all persons (students, faculty, staff, administration, parents, coaches, visitors) from the use of tobacco, tobacco products and electronic<sup>1</sup> smoking devices on the school grounds (both

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<sup>1</sup> "Electronic smoking device" means an electronic device that can be used to deliver nicotine or other substances to the person inhaling from the device, including, but not limited to, an electronic cigarette, cigar, cigarillo, or pipe. Any

in the building and on the property). In addition, tobacco, and tobacco products paraphernalia such as matches, lighters, etc. or electronic smoking devices are not permitted in school. They will be confiscated and given to the student's parent/guardian.

The consequences for possession and/or use of tobacco are:

First offense: One-day out-of-school suspension, including any athletic, extracurricular or after school activities. Parents must attend a meeting with the vice-principal.

Second offense: Student may be asked to withdraw from St. Thomas Aquinas High School.

The consequences for possession and/or use of an electronic smoking device are:

First offense: One-day out-of-school suspension, including any athletic, extracurricular or after school activities. Mandatory physical exam and drug test. Parents/Guardians will be informed and must come to school to pick-up the student.

Second offense: Student may be asked to withdraw from St. Thomas Aquinas High School.

***It is expected that all adults comply with the New Jersey Smoke – Free Act and refrain from smoking on the St. Thomas Aquinas High School premises.***

## SUICIDE PREVENTION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Protecting the health and well-being of all students is of utmost importance to St. Thomas Aquinas High School. The school administration has adopted a suicide prevention policy which will help to protect all students.

All school personnel, both faculty and staff, shall be alert to any sign that a pupil may be contemplating suicide. If someone notices the warning signs of suicide, it may be possible to avert a tragedy. Suicide prevention training by a mental health professional for all school faculty and staff will take place on a regular basis. The principal shall designate a member of the school personnel, trained in suicide prevention, to serve as a point of contact for the school community.

Any indication of a potential suicide, whether personally witnessed or received by a report from another, must be taken seriously and reported to the administration. After the report has been made, the following procedures will be followed:

- The student will be referred to the Student Assistance Coordinator (SAC) or designee (school counselor, school nurse, principal) to assess the degree of the crisis.
- In the case where it is determined that the student is at risk, the Student Assistance Coordinator or designee will inform the administration immediately.

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student found in possession of an electronic smoking device will be subject to a mandatory drug/alcohol test in addition to school discipline for tobacco products. Payment for drug testing is the responsibility of the student's parent/guardian.

- The SAC or designee will contact the parent/guardian of the student and request their immediate presence at school. If the parent/guardian is unable to be present, the student will be taken to the local hospital emergency room by police and a school designee.
- The student shall not be left alone during this time.
- Parent/guardian will meet with the SAC or designee upon arrival. Parent/guardian is required to have the student screened for suicide by a mental health professional immediately.
- A contract will be signed by the parent/guardian, student, administrator, and SAC stating the re-entry procedure. Failure to comply may result in immediate withdrawal from St. Thomas Aquinas High School. In addition, a Release of Information form must be signed by parent/guardian and student.

## HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION OR BULLYING POLICY

St. Thomas Aquinas High School prohibits acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying (HIB) of any member of the school community. A safe and civil environment in school is necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards; harassment, intimidation or bullying, like other disruptive or violent behaviors, is conduct that disrupts both student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate its students in a safe and disciplined environment.

No student or school employee shall be subjected to harassment, intimidation or bullying by staff members, students or outside vendors which shall be defined as one that sells or provides goods or services to St. Thomas Aquinas High School.

The Administration shall direct the development of procedures regarding the implementation of this policy. All staff members, students, and vendors shall be informed of this policy annually. The Administration shall also ensure that staff and students participate in educational programs on an ongoing basis relating to this policy and the maintenance of an educational environment that is characterized by mutual respect, safety, and personal security. Individuals and groups shall be treated with equity and fairness.

### DEFINITION

St. Thomas Aquinas High School establishes that "harassment, intimidation or bullying" means any gesture, any written, verbal, or physical act, or any electronic communication<sup>2</sup>, as defined below, whether it be a single incident or a series of incidents, that is:

1. reasonably perceived as being motivated either by any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or a mental, physical, or sensory disability, or
2. by any other distinguishing characteristic; and that

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<sup>2</sup> "Electronic communication" means a communication transmitted by means of an electronic device, including, but not limited to, a telephone, cellular phone, computer, or pager; as defined in N.J.S.A. 18A:37-14.

3. Takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, on a school bus, or off school grounds, that substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students; and that...
4. A reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, that the act(s) will have the effect of physically or emotionally harming a student or damaging the student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm to his person or damage to his property; or
5. Has the effect of insulting or demeaning any student or group of students; or
6. Creates a hostile educational environment for the student by interfering with a student's education or by severely or pervasively causing physical or emotional harm to the student.

### STUDENT BEHAVIOR

St. Thomas Aquinas High School expects students to conduct themselves in keeping with their levels of development, maturity and demonstrated capabilities, with a proper regard for the rights and welfare of other students and school staff, the educational purpose underlying all school activities and the care of school facilities and equipment, consistent with the code of conduct in the student handbook. Students are expected to behave in a way that creates a supportive learning environment. Violators of the HIB policy will be subject to consequences outlined in the policy.

### REPORTING

All acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying shall be reported verbally to the school principal or designee on the same day when the school employee, vendor, student, or volunteer witnessed or received reliable information regarding any such incident. Students may also use STOPit, a mobile application provided by St. Thomas Aquinas to anonymously report such acts. The school principal or designee shall immediately initiate the school's procedures concerning the school HIB policy.

A school employee who promptly reports an incident of harassment, intimidation or bullying, to the appropriate school official designated by the school's policy, is immune from a cause of action for damages arising from any failure to remedy the reported incident.

St. Thomas Aquinas High School prohibits a school employee, student, or volunteer from engaging in reprisal, retaliation or false accusation against a victim, witness, one with reliable information or any other person who has reliable information about an act of harassment, intimidation or bullying or who reports an act of harassment, intimidation or bullying. The consequences and appropriate remedial action for a person who engages in reprisal, retaliation or false accusation shall be determined by the principal after consideration of the nature, severity, and circumstances of the act.

### INVESTIGATION

All Administrators and school officials designated shall have the appropriate training regarding Anti-Bullying policy and procedures. The due process rights and rights to confidentiality of all parties shall be respected during the investigation. The parents, police and any other appropriate agency shall be informed by the Administration if the accusation meets the criteria for reporting and is deemed exclusive of pastoral discretion.

The investigation shall be initiated by the principal or the principal's designee within one school day of the report of the incident and shall be conducted by the school anti-bullying coordinator. The investigation shall be completed as soon as possible, but no later than 10 school days from the date of the reported incident of harassment, intimidation or bullying. Upon completion of the investigation, it will be determined by the principal and anti-bullying coordinator the consequences of the incident report.

#### REMEDICATION AND DISCIPLINE

Consequences and appropriate remedial actions for a student or school employee who commits one or more acts of HIB may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion of students or disciplinary action of a school employee. Consequences for a student who commits an act of HIB shall be varied and graded according to the nature of the behavior, the developmental age of the student and the student's history of problem behaviors and performance. Disciplinary action may range from a documented conference with parent or guardian, transfer to another classroom, required counseling, suspension, or expulsion consistent with student disciplinary practices and procedures as outlined in the student handbook. Remedial measures shall be designated to correct the problem behavior; prevent another occurrence of the problem; protect and provide support for the victim of the act; and take corrective action for documented systemic problems related to harassment, intimidation or bullying. All students found to be involved in an HIB incident will be referred to the anti-bullying specialist for education and counseling.

If an investigation by the Administration, Police or other State Agency substantiates a charge against a vendor, it shall be subject to disciplinary action including but not limited to suspension and/or cancellation of existing contract(s), debarment from future contracting, removal of personnel from the school/work site or notification of police and any other appropriate agency (e.g., The State Division of Youth and Family Services).

#### NOTIFICATION

Notice of this policy and procedures shall be circulated to all students, staff, and parents, and incorporated into the student and staff handbooks and school website.

#### PREVENTION OF HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION OR BULLYING

The Administration shall insure that appropriate educational programs shall be conducted for the staff and students regarding the nature of harassment, intimidation or bullying and its prevention. Appropriate curricula shall include learning outcomes which relate to appropriate interpersonal behavior and best practices intervention.

## STUDENT-ATHLETE CONTRACT

#### RULES AND REGULATIONS

1. All athletes should act as ladies and gentlemen at all times, both during the season and off-season.



## Requirements

2. All students are to strive to maintain and achieve the very best grades possible. In order to qualify for NCAA scholarships, students must earn a GPA of 2.0 or better in all major subjects. If students are in need of extra help, they are encouraged to contact their teachers.
3. All players who are going to miss a practice or game for any reason, must contact their coach or the Athletic Director prior to the game. If they miss school, they are not permitted to attend practices or games on that day.
4. Use of tobacco or tobacco products is strictly prohibited.
5. Use of alcoholic beverages is strictly prohibited.
6. Use of drugs is strictly prohibited.
7. All players are to follow rules given to them by their individual coaches, as well as rules outlined by the Athletic Department in this contract.
8. Violations of any part of this contract shall result in any or all of the following penalties as determined by the Athletic Director and Administration: suspension from games; dismissal from the team; forfeiture of letters or awards earned; referral for assessment and evaluations.

## NATIONAL COLLEGIATE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION (NCAA) REQUIREMENTS

In order for an athlete to be considered for review by the Eligibility Center to play college level athletics, he/she must register with the NCAA. This can be done at any time before or during junior year.

In order to be evaluated by the NCAA, a student must:

1. Complete the online registration, including the academic information form and the amateurism questionnaire.
2. Payment fee
3. Submit SAT or ACT scores directly from the testing centers (when registering for the test, be sure to include the code for the Eligibility Center "9999" so that scores are sent directly to NCAA)
4. Request from the School Counseling Office a 6th semester official transcript to be sent via our transcript release form to NCAA.
5. After April 1st of senior year, the student must update the academic information form and the amateurism form, as well as request the amateurism certificate.
6. Final official transcript will be sent by the School Counseling Office after graduation, provided the transcript release form is on file.

***Please refer to the NCAA website for specific information regarding Students with Special Services.***

## NCAA REQUIREMENTS

### *DIVISION I*

- Graduate high school
- Earn a core course GPA of 2.3 or higher
- Complete 16 core courses

## Requirements

- You must complete 10 of the core courses by the end of your junior year (before the start of your seventh semester). Seven of the 10 core courses need to be in English, math or natural/physical science. The grades in these seven courses will be “locked in,” meaning you will not be allowed to retake them to improve your grades.
- Earn an SAT combined score or ACT sum score matching your core-course GPA on the Division 1 sliding scale.
- Receive final certification on your amateurism status via the NCAA Eligibility Center

## *DIVISION II*

- Graduate high school
- Earn a core course GPA of 2.2 or higher
- Complete 16 core courses
- Earn an SAT combined score or ACT sum score matching your core-course GPA on the Division II sliding scale.
- Receive final certification on your amateurism status via the NCAA Eligibility Center

***Please refer to [www.eligibilitycenter.org](http://www.eligibilitycenter.org) for more details, including the sliding scale and a complete list of STAHS approved core courses.***

## PROCEDURES REGARDING STUDENT-ATHLETE CONTRACT

Because athletes sign a Student-Athlete Contract, the following procedures have been developed to provide education and assessment if the contract is broken.

1. If a student-athlete is suspected of using tobacco products, alcohol, or drugs, he/she shall be reported in writing to the Athletic Director who will report the suspected violation to the I&RS Team. The I&RS Team will follow the procedures already in place in the school drug and alcohol policy and, upon investigation, may require an initial assessment.
2. If a student-athlete is identified as using tobacco products, alcohol, or drugs, he/she shall be reported in writing to the Athletic Director who will report the identified violation to the I&RS Team. In addition to athletic penalties, the student-athlete shall be required to have an initial assessment via drug and alcohol testing as directed by the I&RS Team. Other objective data will be collected as set forth in the school drug and alcohol policy. His/her parents or guardian will be required to attend an educational session.
3. A reported second offense of the use of tobacco products, alcohol or drugs shall require referral to an outside agency for evaluation and treatment. All recommendations shall be written in a contract and shall be followed.
4. Noncompliance with the above procedures shall result in dismissal from the team and/or dismissal from the school.
5. All athletes are encouraged to avoid situations that would put them in jeopardy of violating the student-athlete contract.

## UNIFORM DRESS CODE

No excuses will be accepted for students out of uniform (All items must be purchased through Flynn and O'Hara or the Bookstore)

### **GIRLS:**

1. Uniform kilt skirt with school name and 2.5 inches of material below it or uniform pants in either black or gray.
2. Uniform white or black knit shirt.
3. Uniform crew neck/V-neck, cardigan sweater, school fleece, or school quarter zip.

PLEASE NOTE: Skirts must be worn 2.5 INCHES above the knee OR LONGER. Another option is wearing uniform pants. No belts may be worn with the skirt. Tee-shirts (short sleeve) worn under the uniform shirt must be solid white with no imprints. Knit shirts, long or short sleeve, are allowed all year. White, charcoal, black or cardinal socks must be worn to the calf. (Sneaker socks may not be worn). Only black or white tights may be worn.

### **BOYS:**

1. Uniform black or charcoal gray slacks with a Flynn & O'Hara tag on the back pocket. Pants may not be tapered. Belts are required.
2. Uniform short- or long-sleeve white, red, or black knit shirt.
3. Uniform crew neck/V-neck, cardigan sweater, fleece pullover, or school quarter zip.
4. No headbands, bandanas, or other head coverings (i.e., hoodies).

BOYS PLEASE NOTE: Tee-shirts worn under the uniform shirt must be solid white with no imprints. Knit shirts, long or short sleeve, are allowed all year. Black, white, charcoal, or cardinal socks must be worn.

### **BOYS AND GIRLS**

Hair styles are expected to be neat and clean, and in a natural color that is the same shade. Extreme hair colors, styles; excessively wide or inappropriate headbands are not permitted.

Appropriate shoes in either **solid brown, gray or black must be worn**. Both heel and toe area must be covered. This excludes gym shoes, sneakers, beach sandals, shower shoes, slippers, boots, clogs, high platforms, high heels, work boots/shoes, western boots, or athletic shoes. Outer clothing may not be worn during the school day, (i.e., hats, coats, jackets etc.). Sunglasses of any kind are not permitted to be worn with the school uniform during the school day.

Excessive jewelry is not permitted to be worn with the school uniform during the school day. No facial jewelry or body piercing is allowed.

Students are only permitted to carry and drink water from a clear container with a maximum volume of 20 oz. during the school day.

Satanic or gothic clothing and/or jewelry is not permitted to be worn.

Uniform knit shirt is worn under the uniform fleece pullover or sweater.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION UNIFORMS (ALL CLASSES) are worn by students and may be purchased through the school store. Sneakers and athletic socks must be worn as part of the uniform.

#### CRUTCHES AND/OR CASTS

A physician's note is required to allow students to use the stairs while on crutches. This note must be given to the school nurse upon return to school and prior to attending any classes. Students will then be given permission to use the stairs, to have an escort and to have extra time between classes. Students who have the proper permission from the school nurse are permitted to wear school gym sweats with school shirts and non-regulation shoes during the period of disability; all other uniform regulations are in effect.

#### DRESS DOWN DAY CODE

Students must wear ankle-length pants/slacks, skirts/dresses 2.5 inches above the knee or longer with no slits, and shirts/blouses with sleeves. Clothes must meet in the middle. The following items are not to be worn:

- hats and/or sunglasses of any kind
- any article which is soiled, torn or distressed
- any article which displays indecent writing, pictures, slogans
- transparent blouses, cut-off t-shirts, bare midriffs, halter tank tops or shirts that do not cover the shoulders, or any item which displays excessive nudity or is tight fitting
- bare feet, shower shoes, flip-flops, spiked heels, slippers, sandals
- hats, inappropriate headbands, do-rags, bandannas, sunglasses
- pajama-like clothing including flannels
- ripped or fishnet stockings

#### DRESS CODE VIOLATIONS

Administrative detentions will be issued for dress code violations. Parents will be notified and are expected to bring their child's school uniform to school. Suspension procedures may be initiated against any student who persistently disregards the dress code. The administration reserves the right to make the final decision regarding the appropriateness of a student's attire.

## SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAM

The services of the Counseling Department are all-inclusive and are aimed at assisting students and their parents in matters of personal and social adjustment, identification of goals, identification of talents, course selection and scheduling, future educational or vocational plans and college financial information. The Counseling Department is dedicated to the success of the students, and we consider the students

and their parents as our clients. Personal attention and communication are key to our commitment. The Counseling Department is the crossroads of the school, working together with students, parents, faculty, and administration.

## GRADING

**GRADE POINT AVERAGE:** All subjects except Physical Education, Health, Driver Education, Career Education, Financial Literacy, and single credit courses are used to compute the GPA. The average is computed using the following quality points:

A.P. COURSES			HONORS COURSES			COLLEGE PREP COURSES		
A+	=	5.25	A+	=	4.75	A+	=	4.25
A	=	5.00	A	=	4.50	A	=	4.00
B+	=	4.25	B+	=	3.75	B+	=	3.25
B	=	4.00	B	=	3.50	B	=	3.00
C+	=	3.25	C+	=	2.75	C+	=	2.25
C	=	3.00	C	=	2.50	C	=	2.00
D	=	2.00	D	=	1.50	D	=	1.00

### GRADING PROCEDURES

A+	=	97 - 100
A	=	92 - 96
B+	=	88 - 91
B	=	85 - 87
C+	=	80 - 84
C	=	75 - 79
D	=	70 - 74
F	=	below 70

Often colleges or scholarship organizations request non-weighted GPA on a 4.0 scale. To calculate the non-weighted GPA, A/A+ grades will be calculated as 4.0.

As of 1996, St. Thomas Aquinas High School no longer computes or reports class rank. Upon college acceptance and for the sole purpose of determining eligibility for financial aid and/or scholarships, a weighted rank will be made available directly to the college/university at the institution's request.

Candidates for Valedictorian and Salutatorian must have completed a minimum of three years of studies at St. Thomas Aquinas High School to be considered for these honors.

## HONOR ROLL

The honor roll is based on all subjects including physical education, health, and careers. No student with a grade below a “B” will be allowed honor roll status.

Principal’s Honor Roll: Students who have attained all A’s will be awarded distinguished honors.

First Honors: Students who have attained a minimum of B+ or better average in each subject will receive first honors.

Second Honors: Students who have attained a minimum of B or better average in each subject will receive second honors.

## GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

The minimum requirements for graduation are 140 credits including 80 credits or 16 academic units from English, Math, Science, Social Studies, and World Language. Subjects required for graduation are the following:

Theology	4 years
English	4 years
Mathematics	4 years
Science	3 years Biology/Chemistry/Physics
Social Studies	3 years: 1 year of World History; 2 years of U.S. History
World Language	2 years (3 years recommended)
Fine Arts	1 year
Computer Science	1 year
Career Education	2 quarters over 2 years
Phys. Ed./Health	6 semesters over 4 years
Personal Finance	1 semester

The Honors Program requirements include all the minimum requirements above with the exception or addition of the following:

Theology	4 years: ½ year World Religions Honors, ½ year Church History Honors + 3 years of Religion Honors
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Social Studies	3 years: 1 year of Western Civilization Honors + 2 years of U.S. History Honors
World Language	3 years of a concentration in Latin or one modern language (through intermediate level)

Students cannot retake a course at St. Thomas Aquinas that they have already taken. Students will not be awarded credit for a duplicate course taken outside of St. Thomas Aquinas.

## ADDITIONAL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

All students must complete the Iowa Tests of Educational Development (reading, writing and math) which is our equivalent of the New Jersey basic skills requirement for graduation.

## SENIOR EXAM EXEMPTIONS/FAILURES

Senior final exam exemption exists for those seniors achieving an “A” in a subject for every marking period. Seniors who fail a course in the fourth quarter and/or the final exam for that course may fail the course for the year. Also, seniors must make up all fourth quarter failures before being able to participate in graduation exercises. The make-up work must be completed after exams and before graduation. Any year-end failures must be remediated before a diploma will be issued.

## HONORS PROGRAM

In order to continue in an Honors course, a student in the Honors Program must maintain the course average as specified by each department in the Program of Studies.

## SCHEDULES

After the first semester students are registered for courses for the upcoming school year. School initiated recommendations for course assignments come from a department chairperson. Students are advised of these recommendations by the counselors and are assisted in choosing elective courses. Students are encouraged to discuss all recommendations with parents and teachers. A printout of courses is distributed to students shortly after registration and must be returned to the Counseling Department with a parent’s signature.

Since student scheduling involves a great amount of work hours and data processing expense, any schedule change made after June 1 will require a fee of \$15.00. Before changes are made, approval must be obtained from the director of School Counseling Department. In some cases, the approval of the principal must be obtained. Any schedule change not initiated or approved by the subject department will require a \$15.00 fee. Mid-year course changes cannot be accommodated.

Every effort will be made to honor schedule requests. However, in case of irresolvable conflict, the student will be consulted for alternate choices. Requests based on teacher preferences cannot be accommodated.

**Driver Theory** is scheduled without regard to the student's birth date during one marking period in the Sophomore year.

## TRANSCRIPTS

Official Transcripts are those transcripts sent directly from STA to another educational institution or scholarship program. Official transcripts are requested by using a Transcript Release Form available in the School Counseling Department. Official transcripts cannot be given to students or parents for personal mailing or for hand-carrying by the student. Every student is entitled to an Unofficial Copy of his/her transcript, providing there is no outstanding financial obligation.

Official standardized test scores, i.e., SAT I, SAT II, AP, ACT, etc., are to be requested directly from the testing company. St. Thomas Aquinas High School does not forward test scores.

## FAILURES

A student who fails a subject for the year must repeat and pass the subject in summer school or through private tutoring with an instructor certified in that subject area. Failure in summer school will necessitate automatic dismissal.

The administration reserves the right to ask a student to withdraw from the school under the following circumstances related to failures:

1. Any student on academic probation if any subject is failed during the probation period.
2. Any student who fails subject(s) in consecutive years.
3. Any student who fails two (2) or more subjects for the year.
4. Any student whose GPA is less than 2.0.
5. Any student with excessive absenteeism.
6. Any student with excessive tardiness.
7. Discipline violations.

## SUMMER SCHOOL

A failure or failures in any course(s) must be remediated in summer school and cannot be carried into the next school year. The summer school grade will appear on the transcript. However, a grade of "D" will be used to compute G.P.A. Any student failing two major subjects for the year may be asked not to return to St. Thomas Aquinas High School. This decision will be made by the administration in consultation with the School Counseling Department.



The Director of Counseling must approve all college courses prior to registering. Students interested in college/summer courses should see the Director of Counseling during the second semester for approval. College courses or courses taken for new credit at an institution other than St. Thomas Aquinas are indicated on the student transcript but are not calculated into the G.P.A. In addition, any course that is not taken during the academic school year is not calculated into the G.P.A.

## STUDENT PROGRESS

Student progress may be monitored on a regular basis throughout the school year. Via PowerSchool, parents/guardians may view the details of their child's grades, attendance, and other areas.

Parent/guardians who have no Internet access must notify their child's counselor so reports may be generated mid-quarter.

## REPORT CARDS

Report cards are distributed at the end of the school year. Student progress may be viewed at any time throughout the school year through PowerSchool. Please contact the Counseling department for a hard copy record of progress if necessary.

## HOME INSTRUCTION

Home Instruction is available for any student who will be out of school for an extended period - three weeks or more. Since it takes a minimum of ten days to set-up tutors for home instruction, a student who will be out of school for two weeks or less will not be able to receive home instruction. Students may access assignments through the school's homework page or by emailing their teachers. For students on Home Instruction the procedure is as follows:

- Parent must sign 407-1 form.
- Doctor's note must be available stating condition and approximate length of time student will be out of school.
- The Counseling Department sends these forms to the Middlesex Regional County Educational Commission for processing. The Commission provides tutors in as timely a fashion as possible.

If a student is institutionalized, the 407-1 form must be signed by the parent and will be sent to the MCED by the Counseling Department. The institution will then make all necessary arrangements for instruction with the MCED.

In all cases of home instruction, the Counseling Department will request material from teachers. However, the family is responsible for picking up all materials from the Counseling Department and returning completed work.

The home instructor (tutor) is responsible for grading all work which he/she teaches and will provide such grades to the Counseling Department. Grades received from the tutor will be incorporated into the classroom teachers' grades for the student.

## STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

A student with a learning disability who is enrolled in a nonpublic school such as St. Thomas Aquinas, does not have an individual entitlement to receive some or all the special education and related services that he or she would receive if enrolled in a public school. By their child's enrollment at St. Thomas Aquinas High School, parents agree to accept the school's decision regarding its ability to address the recommendations made by the child study team in the IEP (Individual Educational Plan) or SP (Service Plan). The nonpublic school may make certain classroom adjustments for the child that can be managed within the educational framework of the school.

While St. Thomas Aquinas does not accept 504 Plans, we will attempt to meet certain modifications that are documented by the student's physician. However, by accepting a classified student to school membership, St. Thomas Aquinas does not imply that it can offer or implement the IEP, SP, or similar recommendation. The student is responsible for meeting all the requirements established by the nonpublic school. This responsibility also includes those rules regarding participation in extra-curricular activities and sports. Parents are asked to keep this in mind when selecting the school, they feel is best for their child. If a parent wishes to have his/her child to be considered for the continuation of special services from either a grammar school or another high school, the parent must present a copy of the most current IEP/ Service Plan and testing information to the counseling department. No prior accommodations will be activated until that time.

## STUDENT ACTIVITIES

### STUDENT CLUBS AND ACTIVITIES

Student clubs, activities, organizations, and athletics are an important part of a student's education. Together with the academic program they help to develop the person - mind and body. To this end the school offers participation in areas of interest such as culture, the arts, theatre, publications, careers as well as honor societies. Students are encouraged to participate in as many activities as time and talent permit. Clubs, activities, and organizations are a part of student life at St. Thomas Aquinas High School. A current listing of clubs is published on the STA website.

Please Note: Any student with any financial obligation to STA may be excluded from extracurricular activities, including junior/senior prom, senior cruise, senior class trip and graduation. Students who fail more than one course during any quarter or semester may be excluded from extracurricular activities, based on a review by the administration.

## INTERSCHOLASTIC SPORTS

St. Thomas Aquinas High School is a member of the NJSIAA and Greater Middlesex Conference and competes in the following sports:

Baseball	Cross Country	Lacrosse	Swimming
Basketball	Football	Soccer	Tennis
Bowling	Golf	Softball	Volleyball
Cheerleading	Gymnastics	Spring Track	Wrestling

## ELIGIBILITY RULES FOR PARTICIPATION IN ALL ATHLETIC ACTIVITIES

Per NJSIAA rule, Students must pass 27.5 credits per year for eligibility during the first semester of each year. Students must pass 13.75 credits for the first semester to be eligible for the second semester.

Eligibility at St. Thomas Aquinas is determined by quarter and semester rather than season. In order to be eligible during the first quarter of the academic year, the student must have passed all classes the previous year.

Second quarter eligibility: Students who fail more than one course during the first quarter will be ineligible.

Third quarter eligibility: Students who fail more than one course for the first semester will be ineligible.

Fourth quarter eligibility: Students who fail more than one course during the third quarter will be ineligible.

Mid-quarter evaluations determine participation in sports activities.

## RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES

Since religious activities are a vital part of the school's program, every student is encouraged to attend and participate in them. We hope that these activities will channel the student toward one goal: living Christianity in the truest sense and experiencing its deepest meaning. All students are expected to participate yearly in religious activities scheduled for their class.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### ACCIDENT REPORT

A student who has an accident while in school or while on a school related activity must notify the teacher or person in charge not only of the nature of the accident, but also the time and manner of its

occurrence. If an accident occurs on the way to or from school, the student is obligated to report all information to the school.

### AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

All students participating in after school activities should be picked up no later than 15 minutes after the activity ends. The school cannot be responsible for any student left for a great length of time. Please make the necessary arrangements to have your child picked up at the correct time. The school building closes at 6:00 p.m. and students are expected to get their books, coats, etc. from their lockers by 3:00 p.m., at which time security gates are lowered. Students are expected to go home at dismissal if they are not involved in extracurricular activities. The cafeteria will be open daily from 2:00 to 6:00 p.m.

### BACKPACKS

Backpacks and handbags no more than 12" x 12" in size are allowed to be carried during the school day.

### CAFETERIA POLICIES

Students are expected to report promptly to the cafeteria during their assigned lunch period. They are to occupy and be responsible for their assigned area. Proper cafeteria behavior is expected of all students. Ten minutes before the lunch period ends, students are to return to their assigned seats. At this time, they are expected to pick up all refuse from the floor and/or table. Students are dismissed by the proctor. No student is excused from the cafeteria unless he/she has a pass issued by a teacher, administrative personnel, nurse or counseling personnel. Students may go to lockers at the change of class before their lunch period or upon dismissal from the lunch period. They may not go to their lockers during the lunch period. Students should not take any food or drink out of the cafeteria, unless permission has been granted. Eating anywhere outside the cafeteria is permitted by administration or by the nurse. Students may purchase school supplies at the bookstore during their lunch period.

Throwing of food, refuse, etc. in the cafeteria will result in automatic suspension. Inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated and will result in disciplinary action. Custodial and Non-Custodial Parents

If there is a court order specifying the rights and responsibilities of individual parents/guardians, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent/guardian to provide the school with an official copy of the court order that outlines the non-custodial parent's rights of access to the child, restraining orders, etc. The custodial parent must provide an updated court order at the beginning of each school year. The school abides by the provisions of the Buckley Amendment. Thus, non-custodial parents will be given access to the academic records and to information regarding the academic progress of their children, unless there is a court order specifically stating that the non-custodial parent is denied access to such information.

### ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Students are allowed to be in possession of their cell phones during the school day (7:55 a.m. – 2:02 p.m.) if they are powered off and stored away. Cell phones may be used for instructional purposes during class only with the permission of the teacher. In addition, students may only use the forms of communication and applications on their phones that are permitted by the teacher. Students may use their cell phones during their lunch period.

When the use of cell phones is permitted by the classroom instructor, students will have access to a filtered internet connection that is consistent with the internet access available to other school technology equipment, including computers, laptops, and tablets. Students who use their phone to access the internet must abide by the terms and conditions of the STA Acceptable Use Policy: Technology Agreement. Students are not permitted to use outside networks, including those provided by data carriers through private plans, while in school.

Cell phones are never to be used in the locker rooms or restrooms. They are never to be used in the Commons without the consent of an instructor and under his or her direct supervision.

St. Thomas Aquinas High School reserves the right to prohibit access and/or the use of a cell phone if a student is found to have used the device in a manner that is not permitted by the classroom instructor, for a purpose deemed inappropriate. The use of a cell phone will be considered inappropriate if it:

- Causes a disruption to the educational environment.
- Invades the rights or privacy of others (including staff) at school.
- Involves illegal or prohibited conduct of any kind.
- Violates any provision of the school policies and regulations.

The consequences for violating the cell phone policy are:

First offense – After-school administrative detention.

Second offense – Saturday suspension.

Third offense – Saturday suspension; parent or guardian must pick up the device from the vice principal after school.

Fourth offense – Saturday suspension; student must drop off the device at the vice principal's office each day for the remainder of the year.

Usage of earbuds and all other handheld devices are prohibited during the school day. These devices include MP3/CD players, iPods, games, cameras, remote control devices, water pistols, laser pointers, spell checkers, etc. These devices are left in the student's locker during the day. Any of these devices found on a student's person during the school day will be confiscated and must be picked up by the parent/guardian. Failure to hand over the device will result in a Saturday suspension for insubordination.

The consequences for violating this policy are:

First offense – After-school administrative detention.

Second offense – After-school administrative detention and call to parent/guardian.

Third offense – Saturday suspension.

Fourth offense – Student faces possible expulsion from school.

Responsibility for the safety, security, loss, damage, operation and charging of personal devices rests with the student.

St. Thomas Aquinas High School educates students about appropriate online behavior, including awareness and response to cyber bullying and/or cyber cruelty, and interacting with others on social websites. In addition, the school takes steps to block access to inappropriate content, monitor safety and security when students use electronic communications, prevent unauthorized access including “hacking,” and prevent unauthorized disclosure, use and dissemination of students’ personal information.

To use any technology in our instructional environment and while on school property, students must have an “Acceptable Use Policy: Technology Agreement” on file. All students and their parents/guardians must sign this document.

St. Thomas Aquinas High School reserves the right to examine any student’s electronic mobile device that is brought onto school grounds and search its contents if there is reasonable suspicion that the device contains information that may be pertinent to a school investigation. Students who use their device to violate school policies will be subject to disciplinary action and any suspected violation of state laws will be forwarded to law enforcement authorities.

#### EXCUSED/ABSENCE - PHYSICAL EDUCATION CLASS

1. Doctors’ notes will be accepted ONLY by the school nurse to excuse the student from physical education class. NO parent notes will be accepted as an excuse from physical education classes.
2. Students are to dress EVERYDAY in the proper physical education uniform for class. Students not dressed properly for physical education class will receive a grade of “unprepared” for the day. Five (5) grades of “unprepared” will result in a failure for the marking period.
3. If the student becomes ill during the school day, he/she should report to the nurse for an excuse.
4. If a special problem should arise, the parent should contact the nurse’s office.
5. Students may not participate in physical education class if they do not have sneakers.
6. Students participating in after school athletics must have participated in their scheduled Physical Education class during the day.

#### FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Parents and/or guardians are expected to meet financial obligations to the school when they are due. Failure to comply with tuition payment deadlines may result in cancellation of registration/enrollment. The school may withhold transcripts, diplomas as well as access to grade reports.

#### FIRE DRILL PROCEDURES

A buzzer and flashing light on the hallways are the normal fire signal. Exit instructions are posted in each classroom. Absolute silence must be maintained at all times inside the building and on the grounds. Windows and doors must be closed, lights turned off.

## FOOD ALLERGIES

Food allergies are a growing health concern in schools across the country. Even a miniscule amount of the allergenic food is sufficient to cause a life-threatening reaction known as *anaphylaxis* in the millions of school-aged children across the country with food allergies. While St. Thomas Aquinas High School cannot provide a completely allergen-free environment for students with food allergies, the school can--through education and compassion--create a safe and respectful place of learning for all students.

## HALLS & HALL PASSES

Hallways must be clear for passage at all times. Students are not permitted to sit or eat/drink in the hall.

The general pass or teacher paddle pass must be used by each student who is in the corridor during regular class time. The pass will be appropriately filled in by a staff member, teacher, or administrator.

## HEALTH SERVICES

The following services and policies are in effect during a pupil's enrollment at St. Thomas Aquinas High School.

***No child shall be admitted to a school without proper proof that the child has been immunized as required by the laws of the State of New Jersey, N.J.S.A.26:1A-9. Proper immunization is a condition of admission to the school. No requests for religious exemptions will be considered.***

1. Visual testing, heights, weights are performed yearly. Throat cultures are not permitted to be taken in school per the State of New Jersey.
2. Hearing tests are given in the 10th grade.
3. Scoliosis screenings are given in the 10th, 11th, and 12th grades.
4. Aspirin or any other medication will not be administered to any student unless, under exceptional circumstances, the child's health may be jeopardized.
5. Chapter 14, State Sanitary Code, mandates that all school children be immunized against Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus, regular and German Measles, and Polio. Children who have not received proper immunization will be excluded from school.
6. A student must report any injury to the teacher/supervisor the same day and period that it happened. Contact the nurse if necessary to complete a school insurance claim form which must be filed with the insurance company within three months or will be rejected.
7. Medical notes are required upon return to school after an injury. Under no circumstances should a student on crutches report to class without reporting to the nurse beforehand. If the physician has prescribed crutches, written permission to ambulate up and down stairs is mandatory.
8. Students may not carry or dispense to themselves or others, prescription or over the counter medications. Medication will be kept in the nurse's office and must be in the original container.
9. Students with food and/or nut allergies must notify the nurse. St. Thomas Aquinas follows all state mandated procedures to protect students.

## I.D. CARDS

Students are required to wear their I.D. lanyard in school. I.D. cards are also presented before admission to any school dance. I.D. cards may not be altered or defaced in any way; stickers provided by the school may be added for club or science lab participation.

I.D. cards must be prominently displayed around the student's neck.

If a student loses the original lanyard/I.D., a new one will be issued at the cost of \$20.00. If the I.D. card breaks, a new I.D. card can be obtained in the Commons for \$5.00, but the broken I.D. card must be returned. If the lanyard is lost or broken, it may be replaced for \$5.00.

A student who forgets the lanyard/I.D. reports to the Main Lobby between 7:30 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. or during Homeroom to receive a temporary I.D. worn near the collar of the uniform shirt. Students will receive administrative detentions after the second offense. A temporary ID may only be used for one day and must be thrown out at the end of that day.

## LOCKERS

Student lockers are the property of St. Thomas Aquinas High School and are on loan to students. They are to be kept locked and in order at all times. The school reserves the right to inspect lockers anytime. Hanging of indecent literature/pictures is prohibited.

**Only locks purchased at the school are permitted in the physical education locker room.**

## LOST AND/OR STOLEN PROPERTY

The school is not responsible or liable for any student's lost or stolen property. Students are discouraged from bringing to school any expensive personal items including electronic devices, clothing, purses, etc.

## PARKING LOT

Students driving to school are reminded that this is a privilege granted through the school which may be revoked at any time for failure to abide by the policies of the school in regard to the safe and efficient use of the parking area.

Parking on school property is at the student's own risk. The school is not responsible for any damage or theft while parked. The following regulations are in effect:

All drivers must adhere to a speed limit of 15 mph.

All students must register their vehicles with the vice principal and obtain a parking sticker at a fee of \$10.00. The sticker should be placed on one side of the rear window of the auto.

Failure to register a vehicle may result in the suspension of driving and parking privileges.

Students will be issued parking stickers and permitted to park their cars in areas designated for students. Future infractions will result in the student's car being towed away. This regulation will be in effect



between 7:00 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. on any school day. Students are not permitted to leave campus prior to normal dismissal without express permission from the principal or designee.

Parking regulations apply to cars, mopeds, motorcycles, and any other motorized vehicle.

All student drivers must be in school on time. Student drivers reporting late to school will be required to make up double the time late at the end of the same day. St. Thomas Aquinas High School accepts no responsibility for accidents, vandalism, or theft occurring on school property. Violation of any rules and regulations, chronic tardiness, and/or excessive absences may result in loss of driving privileges. Under no circumstances are students permitted to drive any vehicle with expired insurance, licenses or registration.

### PHOTOS

Photos may be taken on school grounds by authorized students only. Students must have parent/guardian permission to be photographed for school media. Students who may not be photographed must remove themselves from photo opportunities.

### RETENTION POLICY

As a Roman Catholic High School of the Diocese of Metuchen, St. Thomas Aquinas High School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin or sex in the administration of employment, educational admissions, or financial policies, activities, athletics or school administered programs. However, St. Thomas Aquinas High School does not accept for admission married students and will have to terminate the enrollment of any student currently attending St. Thomas Aquinas High School if that student should marry during the time of their enrollment.

### SCHOOL CLOSING

Students will be bused according to the city/township decisions. If school districts are closed, no transportation will be provided. "Delayed Opening" means students follow the decision of their township. If St. Thomas Aquinas is open and your district is closed, parents should use discretion about bringing their child to school. Students who drive to school should follow the decision of their township.

### SCHOOL TRIPS

It is necessary to submit a notarized parental permission slip to the faculty member sponsoring a trip. Parents are required to provide transportation home when trips return after the normal school dismissal time. Students who drive and have their own cars may drive home.

ALL SCHOOL RULES APPLY ON ANY TRIP OR ACTIVITY SPONSORED BY THE SCHOOL OR ANY ORGANIZATION, TEAM, CLUB, ETC. CONNECTED WITH THE SCHOOL. Students who unofficially arrive at the site of the trip will be subject to disciplinary action and will be required to leave that site.

### SEARCH AND SEIZURE POLICY

In order to protect the safety, health, property, values and welfare of the members of the school community, the school reserves the right to call for a search of the student's locker, book bag, desk, automobile, any other object on the school property or the person. Such searches will be with reasonable

cause, in the sole opinion of the school administrator, that contraband, illegal substances or inappropriate objects are concealed. Any unauthorized items found may be seized. Additionally, students' desks and lockers, which are at all times under the joint control of the school and student to whom the desk or locker is assigned, may be searched by school administrators at any time, for any reason or for no reason at all.

#### STUDENT PREGNANCY

St. Thomas Aquinas High School is completely opposed to abortion and premarital sexual relations. If, however, a student should become pregnant during her time at St. Thomas Aquinas High School, she may continue here as a student, on home instruction, as long as she has written permission from her parents and physician. The student must leave school 6 weeks prior to her due date and is not permitted to participate in school activities after that time.

#### USE OF SCHOOL LOGO

The design of the school logo must remain intact. No alterations, additions, or deletions to any part of the logo are permitted. Any individual, organization or company wishing to use the logo for any purpose must obtain permission to do so from the Director of Communications.

#### VISITORS

Visitors to St. Thomas Aquinas High School will be restricted due to the large enrollment. No student visitors will be allowed when other public or non-public schools are not in session. Only students who are in the 7th and 8th grades of area schools may visit the school and attend classes. Obtain a visitor's pass from the Freshman-for-a-Day coordinator. All visitors will be issued a visitor I.D. When leaving the building, this I.D. must be returned.

## ETHICAL USE OF TECHNOLOGY POLICY

#### GENERAL STATEMENT

St. Thomas Aquinas High School will provide computer equipment, services and internet access for its students and staff. The sole purpose of providing these resources is to enhance teaching and learning at St. Thomas Aquinas High School. Access to the internet will allow students and staff to explore databases, libraries, internet sites and academic career and learning management services. Thus, St. Thomas Aquinas High School as an educational institution will have the resources to exchange information with other individuals and institutions throughout the world.

St. Thomas Aquinas High School supports and encourages pupil and staff access to the worldwide web and its boundless reservoir of information and resources. Since some sectors of the Web are considered inappropriate for student consumption, the administration reserves the right to limit the use of technology for educational purposes only. To ensure legitimate application, the system supervisors will monitor computer and internet activity.

Access to technology resources will not be available as a carte blanche right. Students and staff must accept the use of these resources as a privilege. The user is expected to possess both the requisite skills necessary to utilize these resources properly as well as the judgement to use them appropriately.

The administration has the right to monitor and audit all communication on the network.

Any user of our technology resources agrees to abide by the St. Thomas Aquinas Technology Policy and in addition agrees to indemnify St. Thomas Aquinas High School for any losses, costs, or damages, including attorney's fees, incurred by St. Thomas Aquinas High School relating to or arising out of any breach of this section.

Use of the technology resources will be permitted for all students, teachers, and staff members with enabled user accounts. By logging onto the St. Thomas Aquinas network, all users agree to the St. Thomas Aquinas Technology Policy. Any user who does not consent to STA's Technology Policy is prohibited from using STA's technology resources.

### *EQUIPMENT*

The user will recognize the value of the hardware, software, and all computer-related materials and will not misuse or abuse any of these items.

No user will alter, install, modify, upgrade, repair or remove any school hardware, including but not limited to computers, interface cards, monitors, printers, scanners, modems, switches, routers, wiring or cabling, mouse, or other accessories.

Users who damage any hardware or software will be responsible for replacing the damaged articles at their own expense.

### Software

Commercial software is copyrighted; each user must abide by the licensing agreement published with the software.

The user will not violate any copyright laws regarding print, electronic or visual information.

The user will not read, change, create, delete, copy, or modify any parts of the resident software or the operating system.

### INTERNET ACCESS

The user may use the network resources for educational or administrative purposes only. Information collected from the Internet must be properly referenced by the student. Commercial uses are strictly prohibited.

The user will not upload, download, or bring into the school material deemed inappropriate. This would include but not be limited to any material that contains profanity, vulgarity, obscene, or violent content.

Materials that are racist, abusive, degrading, demonic or promote intolerance, prejudice, harassment, or insult any individual, ethnic, or religious group are unacceptable.

Transmission of material, information, or software in violation of any church, school, local, state or federal law is prohibited.

The user will not meet in person any individual whom he/she made contact with through the school technological resources. Meetings with resource people contacted through the Internet will be arranged only with the approval of the school administration.

In addition to filtering sites based on specific criteria, a Website Evaluation committee determines if a site is appropriate for access from school. Any member of the STA community may request, through the librarian who is the committee chair, evaluation of a website. The committee reviews the site based on the "Ethical Use of Technology Policy" and in keeping with the Mission Statement and Philosophy of the school. The site may be made available or blocked.

### E-MAIL

E-mail is intended for educational and administrative uses. The user will not reveal addresses, phone numbers, photographs or other personal information of him/herself or others.

Any form of harassment via e-mail, telephone or paging, whether through language, frequency or size of messages is prohibited.

The user will report any message received through technology resources, which makes him/her insecure, anxious, or uncomfortable.

### MISCELLANEOUS

The user will work in a quiet, respectful manner, which is not disturbing or distracting to others.

The user will not disclose or attempt to access personal passwords or access codes assigned to him/her or any other user.

The user will not attempt to defeat security measures instituted by the school.

Unauthorized access to computers after designated hours or from locations other than those approved for specific computer assignments is prohibited.

The user will not use school technological resources to support candidates for public or elected office.

The user will exercise due diligence and is bound not to disclose or use any confidential or personal information acquired as a result of using the schools' technological resources.

The school makes no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, for the use of this technology. It will not be responsible for any damages suffered, such as loss of data resulting from delays, non-deliveries or service interruptions caused by its own negligence or the user's errors or omissions.

The school specifically denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through its technological resources.

#### PASSWORD POLICY

No passwords are to be spoken, written, e-mailed, hinted at, shared, or in any way known to anyone other than the user involved.

No accounts or passwords are to be shared or offered to another user. This includes a situation where a user has forgotten his/her password and wants to access the network through another user's account.

Users who have forgotten their domain passwords should report to the Commons.

Passwords are not to include one's name, address, date of birth, username, nickname, or term that could easily be guessed by someone who is familiar with the user.

Passwords are not to be displayed or concealed on personal items, lockers, or in workspaces.

#### PASSWORD STANDARD

Password may not contain all or part of the user's account name.

Password is at least eight (8) characters long.

Password contains characters from three of the following four categories:

- Uppercase characters (A...Z)
- Lowercase characters (a...z)
- Base 10 digits (0...9)
- Non-alphanumeric (!, \$, #, %, etc.)

## STUDENT RECORDS

In maintaining and in giving access to student records, St. Thomas Aquinas High School follows the directives of The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and N.J.A.C. 6:3-6.1 et seq. (State Equivalent).

For all legal documents (transcript, diploma, etc.) the student's name must appear as listed on the birth certificate.

Academic records are kept in the School Counseling Office in a folder designated as the student's permanent file and are available to the student and his/her parents or legal guardian. Academic records are not released to anyone for any reason without a release form signed by a parent or legal guardian (if the student is under 18 years of age) or by the student (if the student is 18 years of age or older).

Academic records include transcript of grades, testing records, letters of recommendation, school registration forms, elementary school record, record from previous high school and any other information pertinent to academic progress.

Medical records are kept in the Health Office until graduation at which time they become part of the permanent file.

Disciplinary records are not a part of the permanent file (academic folder).

Educational and/or psychological evaluations which are done by outside agencies including the Middlesex County Educational Commission Child Study Team are not part of the student's permanent file and are never disclosed to other agencies or to colleges. It is the responsibility of a parent or legal guardian to disclose this information to any agency or college if they so desire.

## ASBESTOS MANAGEMENT PLAN

The school's Asbestos Management Plan is on file in the school office. The St. Thomas Aquinas High School building was reinspected on January 17, 2001, as required by the Federal Asbestos Hazard Emergency Act (AHERA). This document is available for examination upon request.

## SCHOOL POLICY CHANGES

Any change in the school policy will become effective upon announcement in school and will be printed in the Principal's Newsletter.

## INFORMATION UPDATE

Any change of address, telephone number, employment of parents/guardian, or emergency contacts during the school year is to be reported to the main office in writing or by calling (732) 549-1108 ext. 614.

## EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

A crisis is a stressful event that upsets the balance in the STA community. St. Thomas Aquinas High School recognizes that crisis situations have been increasing in our society. A systematic team approach has been developed as a strategy to intervene and act as a preventative measure on behalf of the STA community. These procedures were developed by the Crisis Management Team (CMT) to deal with crisis. Complete and detailed information is given to all students, faculty, and staff by the CMT during training sessions. The purpose of this plan is to provide immediate and orderly response to any emergency. The steps for the four procedures used to protect the STA community are Fire, Evacuation, Lockdown and Shelter in Place.

During any emergency, the use of cell phones or other electronic devices are limited by the authorities. Everyone needs to be alert and open to decisions made at a moment's notice. Silence must be maintained.

## FIRE PROCEDURES

- Alarm is sounded; fire and police respond
- In an orderly manner, teachers and students leave the building and assemble 300 feet from the school
- Teachers bring class lists
- Students assemble with their teachers
- Teachers take attendance
- Any missing student is reported to the Associate Principal via CMT member
- Once back in the classrooms, teachers again take attendance
- Any missing student is reported to the Associate Principal
- If it is not possible to return to the building per the police and/or fire authorities, all will be directed to follow the procedures for assembling at an evacuation area where bus transportation will be provided.

## EVACUATION TO A SAFE LOCATION

(example: bomb threat)

- As announcement/alarm is sounded, fire and police respond
- Teachers bring class lists
- In an orderly manner, teachers and students leave the building and assemble at one of two safe locations that will be announced at the time of the evacuation.
- Primary-John Adams Middle School
- Secondary-Oak Tree Bus Terminal
- Students assemble with their teachers at the evacuation area
- Teachers take attendance
- Any missing students are reported to the Associate Principal via CMT member
- For classes being held outside the school building, teachers of those classes will be directed to a safe location by a CMT member.
- If a parent or designated emergency contact person arrives at an evacuation site to pick up his/her children, a CMT must be notified before the child is allowed to leave the area.
- If teachers and students return to the classroom, teachers again take attendance.
- Any missing students are reported to the Associate Principal.

## LOCKDOWN

(example: intruder with weapon)

- Announcement of LOCKDOWN is made by the Principal.
- After announcement of LOCKDOWN, classroom doors are immediately locked.
- Everyone remains in his/her classroom.
- Teachers close windows, assemble in an area of the room away from windows and doors.

- Students who are in the stairs, bathrooms, hallways, or corridors remain where they are until directed to a safe location by police.
- Students in other places such as the cafeteria, library, nurse's office, main office, school counseling office, locker rooms, take shelter under tables/desks and remain where they are until directed to a safe location by police.
- For classes that are being held outside the building, teachers are directed to a safe location by a CMT member using a walkie-talkie.
- All doors remain locked until the police determine the next step. The next step may be evacuation to a safe location or an "all clear."

## SHELTER IN PLACE

(crisis as determined by Homeland Security)

- In a SHELTER IN PLACE situation, no one will be allowed to leave the building. Students and staff will report to assigned areas secured and not opened until an all-clear signal is given.
- The building will remain closed until the ALERT is over.
- An emergency box will be available at each location.
- Provisions have been made to have food and water available.
- Teachers are to close windows, shut off computers, fans, lights and all other electrical equipment in the classroom. Close doors when leaving a room. If there is an office door open and no one is in the office, close the door.
- Students cannot go to their lockers.
- Once everyone is settled in their designated area, each teacher is responsible to take attendance for his/her class.
- Everyone needs to be ALERT and open to decisions made at a moment's notice.
- When the alert is over, students will be retained or dismissed as directed by authorities.
- Areas of containment are Gym, Theatre, Cafeteria and basement locker rooms.

St. Thomas Aquinas High School complies with state mandated scheduling of Emergency Preparedness Drills. Each month St. Thomas Aquinas will conduct one fire drill and one other Emergency Preparedness Drill including but not limited to: Shelter In Place, Evacuation, Lockdown, Tornado, or Hurricane.

Additional policies, procedures in effect include controlled entry into the school and wearing of ID badges by everyone including visitors.

## PROMISE TO PROTECT, PLEDGE TO HEAL

The following notice has been mandated to be published in our school policy book by the Diocese of Metuchen and is intended for anyone who has been abused or victimized by someone representing the Catholic Church.

Please believe in the possibility for hope, help and healing. We encourage you to come forward and speak out. Every diocese in the United States now has a **victim assistance coordinator** who is available to



obtain support for your needs, to help you make a formal complaint of abuse to the diocese and to arrange a personal meeting with the bishop or his representative, if you desire. For more information contact the Diocese of Metuchen at 732-562-1990.

## PARENT ORGANIZATIONS

The Parent organizations serving St. Thomas Aquinas High School fulfill valuable roles in the education of youth attending this school. By contributing time, talent, and money they enable this school to offer a varied academic and activities program. With the full support of all parents these organizations will be able to continue and to improve their service to the students of St. Thomas Aquinas High School.