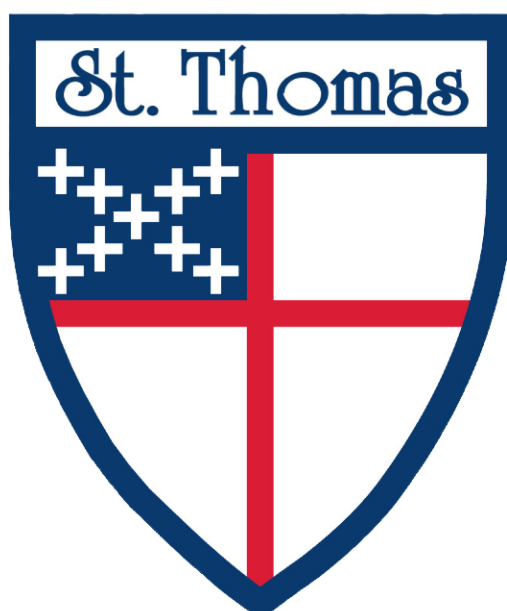


St. Thomas Episcopal School Parent & Student Handbook 2015-2016



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Mission

As an expression of the Church's mission, St. Thomas Episcopal School exists to be a Christian Community providing a life-changing experience for students and families.

We seek to be focused on Christ to prepare the students to live for God and for others.

St. Thomas Episcopal School seeks to foster personal excellence of educating students in a developmentally based program where they may grow spiritually, physically, socially, emotionally, aesthetically, and cognitively.

Parents Are a Vital Part of the St. Thomas Ministry

At St. Thomas, we are committed to working closely with parents to create an excellent educational experience. For this reason, we encourage all parents to get involved in the Parent Teacher Fellowship. Because we are a small school, we encourage parents to share their time and talent to improve and maintain our school. We suggest that parents volunteer at least five hours each school year, and there are many opportunities from yard work to shelving library books, to working at the pumpkin patch. We appreciate the hard work of our school parents.

Philosophy Statement

The community of St. Thomas Episcopal School believes in teaching its children how to live lives of excellence. Parents and faculty work closely to provide the experiences and the guidance students need in order to understand their world. We believe all of our students possess individual strengths that make the collective group complete. Above all, we seek to share with them God's love and to develop life-long habits of praise to Him.

St. Thomas teachers understand the need to develop the whole child. We offer a challenging academic curriculum that prepares our students for success in later grades. The faculty stresses developmental readiness at every level. We also teach organizational and study skills that set our students apart. St. Thomas offers enrichment classes in Spanish, computer, art, music, Bible, and physical education that broaden the students' experiences. Our students also enjoy the benefits of learning outside the confines of the classroom by going on several field trips a year as well as by utilizing the school's outdoor resources. Students and parents alike have the opportunity to enroll in a variety of classes as part of the after school enrichment program. In addition to the academic program, students also learn how to keep a daily planner, manage time, and study in ways that are effective for them.

Besides academic training, the students of St. Thomas also gain spiritual awareness through daily chapel, Bible lessons, and service opportunities as part of our Matthew 25 program. We adhere to the Episcopal Church's tradition of seeking to understand others in order to live in harmony with them and demonstrate God's love for them in a nonjudgmental manner.

Part of the development program at St. Thomas includes helping our students understand their roles in the world around them. Children learn about empathy through planned giving opportunities such as the Matthew 25 program as well as through other teachable moments that occur daily in the classroom. We teach the importance of showing simple acts of kindness, such as holding doors open or sharing the

sidewalk, as a way of respecting others. Respecting adults includes learning habits such as shaking hands when greeting one another, making eye contact when conversing, and responding to adult requests with “Yes, m’am” or “Yes, sir”. Adults in the school model positive relationships, and we work with students to learn to interact with each other in a positive manner. Service learning at school and in the community is encouraged for our elementary students, especially those in the upper grades.

Living lives of excellence means we address the developmental needs of our students. It also means we pay attention to the small details that set our students apart. Above all, it means we make every effort to help the children in our care know the love that their Savior has for them.

Non-Discriminatory Policy

St. Thomas Episcopal School is open to all qualified students of any race, color, religion, nationality, or ethnic origin. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in the administration of educational policies, admission policies, or financial aid programs.

Admission

Student Application Procedures and Guidelines

All students must reapply for admission annually. Priority will be given to returning students only during specified re-registration dates. After the close of the re-registration period, returning students will lose their priority status, unless during the re-registration dates, the school is advised in writing of extenuating circumstances and agrees to extend priority status. Students will be processed in the following order:

- Currently enrolled students
- Siblings of currently enrolled students
- Parishioners of St. Thomas Episcopal Church who have been active for 6 months or longer.
- New applicants

Re-registration begins in January and a committee determines application for financial aid in the first week of May. All applications for financial aid may be completed on-line and must be submitted by the end of April. Financial aid disbursements are for one year, and families **must** reapply each year.

Information about Open Houses and Admissions can be obtained by contacting the school office.

Specific Admissions Requirements

According to state law, the school **must** have these forms in hand before any child will be allowed to attend class:

- A completed medical emergency form
- A health record form signed by a physician that includes a current vaccination and immunization record.
- A copy of a birth certificate must be submitted for each new student.
- Additionally, students with allergy, medical, or educational needs must complete an action plan for services. The director will determine if the school is able to meet the needs of the student. A physician must approve the allergy/medical plan. Educational plans must include outside testing and recommendations from a qualified specialist.

Students, who are four years of age and older, are required by state law to have vision and hearing screenings. The school offers free vision and hearing screenings annually in the fall semester.

In addition to state law requirements, St. Thomas Episcopal School requires:

- Report cards from all previously attended schools.
- Results from previously taken standardized tests.
- Permission to contact previous teachers and administrators.
- An evaluation to determine appropriate placement (preschoolers will schedule a visit in the classroom).
- Personal interview and/or classroom visit.

St. Thomas Episcopal School follows the Texas state school age requirements for admission to preschool and kindergarten. September 1st is the cutoff date assigned by Texas law to determine eligibility for enrollment.

Preschool children must be toilet trained as a requirement for admission in the three-year and older classrooms. Parents of a student who demonstrates consistent problems will be asked to keep their child home until toilet training is completed.

Admission Decisions

The head of school will make the final decision for acceptance. The St. Thomas educational program is designed for a diverse student population with respect to pace and style of learning. Modifications in the presentation of curriculum are made in response to individual student's readiness, overall maturation, and personal learning needs.

While St. Thomas serves a diverse student population, we recognize that some students have learning and/or behavioral-guidance needs that may exceed the resources of the school. For this reason, St. Thomas reserves the right to evaluate all new students prior to admission to determine their chances for success in the school.

All students at St. Thomas are expected to exhibit age-appropriate respect toward adults, students, and the physical learning environment. It is normal for students to err on occasion, and faculty and staff will handle such isolated incidents promptly and respectfully. *Students who*

exhibit persistent patterns of disruptive or disrespectful behavior that are judged to be harmful to others or degrading to the learning atmosphere will not be allowed to remain at St. Thomas.

The issuance of a student enrollment contract will signify admission. Enrollment contracts must be signed and returned to the school office within 15 days of the issuance date. The tuition deposit must accompany the signed contract. The tuition insurance (if tuition is paid monthly) is due with the first month's tuition.

Financial Aid

Financial aid applications will not be considered as a factor in admission decisions. Applicants for financial aid must have already completed the application process and have paid the \$75.00 nonrefundable application fee. Applications for financial aid must be completed and submitted at the time of re-registration or admission. *Initial disbursements of financial aid occur in the first week of May, so all applications must be completed by the end of April.* After that time, financial aid will only be available if some candidates have not accepted their financial aid package. *Families must apply for financial aid yearly.* Each disbursement is for the current year only. Please contact the school office for information, forms, and procedures regarding financial aid.

Attendance

Absences and Tardies

Regular and punctual attendance is important for your child's successful progress and growth. **Texas law requires** elementary age children to attend school. Parents are asked to notify the school office before 8:30 a.m. when their child must be absent.

Upon returning from an absence, elementary students (kindergarten – 5th grades) must bring a written statement, signed by a parent or guardian, explaining the reason for the absence or a medical note from the doctor in case of illness.

Arrival and Departure

School begins at 8:00 a.m. Students may enter the building at 7:55 a.m. Students dropped off in carpool will be brought into the building at that time. Any student not in the building at 8:00 a.m. will be considered tardy. If a student has more than 3 tardies in any grading period, the child's citizenship grades. Parents must bring students to the office to acquire a late pass and then proceed to walk their children to class. Students are considered tardy if they arrive after 8:00 a.m. and before 10:00 a.m. but still meet the criteria for being present at least ½ day. *Students who are tardy may miss important class work which may affect their grades. Teachers will not be expected to reteach or give extra time to complete assignments due*

to tardies. Excessive tardiness may adversely affect a student's acceptance to many private middle schools.

School ends for elementary school students at 3:00 p.m. Preschool dismissal is at 11:45 a.m. for ½ day students and 3:00 p.m. for full day students. Parents of carpool students left after 3:10 p.m. will be charged an Extended Care drop in fee.

Parents are expected to use the carpool to drop off and pick up children. Families with both preschool and elementary students may use the preschool carpool line. Please use the sign provided by your child's teacher in your car so we can identify proper placement with minimum delay. Please obey the one-way expectation on campus.

Once the passcard security system is in place for preschool and the double-locked doors in the elementary building are complete, students who are dropped off late must use the following procedures:

Preschool parents use the passcard at the West Campus door near Mrs. Cady's class, sign in their child as indicated by the teacher, and make sure the door is locked behind you. The Garden Door will no longer be left unlocked. If you forget your passcard, you will need to check into the main office for admittance. Please do not knock on the door or window; that will interrupt the class.

Elementary parents will buzz the intercom at the administration front door for admittance to the building and then will be buzzed into the school wing after signing in at the reception area.

Permit to Leave School

Children are released only to their parents or other persons approved by their parents and listed on the release form in the office. If someone will pick up your child not on your list, you must call the office or send a note to your child's teacher. School staff will ask for a photo I. D. for any person not previously on your pick up list. If there are additions or deletions, please make changes in the school office. Please notify the school office if your child needs to leave early. Parents may pick up children in the school office.

Extended Care/ Tiger Cub Care

Extended hours of care are available in the mornings from 7:00 a.m. – 8:00 a.m. and in the afternoon from 3:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. with availability Monday through Friday. **If you are registered for Extended Care on a monthly basis your place is secured.** Early Childhood students have the option of extending their day. If a student is registered for a morning class, additional time may be added from 12:00 noon – 3:00 p.m.

Tiger Cub Care is available for those who have arranged for it in advance by signing a contract addendum for the school year. Drop in care will not be guaranteed for those who have not arranged for Tiger Cub Care in advance. (Tiger Cub Care is available for most days that

preschool students are not in class.) Please check the school calendar for Tiger Cub Care scheduled dates.

All students arriving for care before 7:45 a.m. must be signed in by their parent.

Fees are as follows: Monthly fee schedules are available through the business office. Students may be registered by having it added to their contract. **All changes must be processed *directly* through the business office.**

Drop-ins are accepted on a space available basis. Please notify the office ahead of time. Drop in care from 11:45 to 3:00 must be arranged with the office, not the teacher. Only the office can approve drop in care to ensure proper staff supervision.

Drop-in fees:	7:00 a.m. – 8:00 a.m.	\$5.00
	11:45 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.	\$30.00
	3:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.	\$30.00

Payment is due to the business office on the day the service is used.

Late pick up: If parents arrive after 3:15 p.m., students will be in the Extended Care Program, and the child must be signed out with the Extended Care teacher. Parents will be assessed a drop-in fee for the afternoon.

If parents arrive after 6:00 p.m., a fee of \$1.00 per minute will be assessed.

Nut Free Campus

St. Thomas considers the safety of its students the number one priority. Because we have many students who are allergic to nuts, we ask that no foods containing nuts be brought on campus during school hours. Soy butter and Sun Butter can be satisfactory substitutes for peanut butter. Because we are not able to differentiate peanut butter from other spreads, please send a note to the office or teacher that your child's spread does not contain nuts. Please note: all nuts can be harmful to students with nut allergies due to cross-contamination, so please check product labels.

In recognition of this serious health and safety hazard, the school board prohibits peanuts or tree nuts in snacks, lunches, classroom parties, and other school activities. To ensure the safety of the students across the spectrum of school-related activities, the school board recommends that PTF-sponsored activities be peanut/tree nut free. The board recommends that joint church-school activities also be peanut/tree nut free.

Food brought into the school for classroom distribution should have ingredient information provided with it. Food that is not peanut/tree nut free will not be served in the classroom. Homemade food may be served in the classroom if it does not contain peanuts/tree nut products.

Food package labeling:

“Contains peanuts or tree nuts”: FDA legally requires this statement if food item contains peanuts or tree nuts. Such items should not be brought to school.

Foods that have labels that say “CONTAIN” or “MAY CONTAIN” nuts are PROHIBITED.

Foods that have labels that say “MANUFACTURED IN A FACILITY OR ON EQUIPMENT THAT ALSO PROCESSES NUTS” are allowed.

Detailed Food Allergy Policy is available in the school office

Birthdays

St. Thomas celebrates the life and birth of all students and staff during the school year with a special blessing in Chapel. Arrangements may be made with the teacher about setting a date to celebrate the child’s summer birthday. If you wish to provide a special birthday snack for your child’s class, please contact the teacher ahead of time. Because we encourage students to eat healthy foods, we suggest a healthy, fun snack for birthday celebrations. For students in preschool, your child’s turn to bring snacks will fall on or close to his/her special day.

We have a special St. Thomas tradition where a child donates a book to the school library on his/her birthday during Chapel. Our school librarian keeps a wish list of suggested titles as well as some carefully selected books to help you avoid duplication and to save time.

Birthday party invitations may be sent through backpack mail if all of the students in the class are being invited. Birthday gifts and thank you cards may not be brought to school unless all of the students in the class were invited to the party. All invitations must be given to the teacher for distribution.

Cell Phones

Students are not to use cell phones while on school property during school hours (7:45-6:00) and on field trips without faculty permission. School personnel reserve the right to ban cell phones while on school trips. Students who violate this policy risk having their phones confiscated. Teachers on campus use cell phones to communicate with the office. The use of cell phones to communicate with other staff is limited, but important. Often after-school staff use cell phones to let the after-school director know about emergencies, schedule changed, or to clarify instructions. Teachers will not use the cell phone for personal conversations during school hours; all communication to teachers should be through email after school hours or with the school secretary.

Change of Address, Phone, or Employment

Notify the school office immediately of any changes to student address and/or phone number, parent employment address, and/or phone number, and cell phone number. Complete and current school records ensure that we are able to reach parents promptly should an emergency arise.

Communications

The school office is open from 8:00—6:00 p.m. (210) 494-3509. Messages may be left on the office voice mail (ext. 210 if office staff is on the other line or out of the office when you call. You may also fax us at (210) 494-0678. The school website is www.stthomaskids.com. If you email teachers, please allow 24 hours for a response. You are welcome to schedule an appointment with the director by contacting the school office at the above number.

Inclement Weather/Emergencies

Weather conditions or emergencies may occur which make it necessary for us to close the school and Tiger Cub Care. Television stations in San Antonio will carry school closings or changes in starting and ending times. St. Thomas typically follows Northeast (NEISD) school district for school closings.

KMOL (Channel 4) NBC

KENS (Channel 5) CBS

KSAT (Channel 12) ABC

As required by Texas law, St. Thomas adheres in all fire, safety and health school and building requirements and participates in fire and safety drills monthly.

Backpack Mail

School papers, tuition envelopes, calendars, announcements, newsletters and notices may be sent home in your child's backpack or book bag. Your child's teacher will inform you of procedures at the beginning of the year. Please check your child's book bag or backpack daily. The goal of the business office is to offer on-line payment in the near future. At that time, the school will notify parents and tuition will no longer be handled during backpack mail.

All important documents will be mailed directly to the home address we have on file. The school website will also offer important information about upcoming events and ways to contact your child's teacher.

Classroom teachers may agree to send party invitations home via backpack mail only if every child in the class receives an invitation.

We are constantly striving to keep parents informed of the daily events in the life of our school as well as the exciting extras that make St. Thomas so special. The newsletter of St. Thomas

Episcopal Church is also sent home to families monthly to keep parents informed of services and special events.

Preschool students will be issued a St. Thomas school bag when they enter St. Thomas. The cost is \$10.00. Elementary students may bring their own backpacks.

Conferences/Progress Reports

Throughout the year, communication between home and school will be a part of building your child's continuing success. There will be one mandatory conference period in the fall and an optional one in the spring. There will be no childcare provided during conferences unless students are enrolled in the Tiger Cub Care program. Progress reports for elementary students are sent midterm of each marking period as needed.

Informal progress reports from teachers concerning academic, social, or any other area needing attention may be sent home at any time. For preschoolers, formal reporting will be accomplished with a combination of parent/teacher conferences and a written report.

Parents of preschool children will receive a written report at the end of the first nine weeks during the mandatory conference. A second written report will be sent home at the end of the school year. Parents are encouraged to request a conference as the need arises.

Teachers of children in kindergarten will use a system of conferences and written evaluations. At the end of the 1st nine weeks a conference and a written report will be the method of evaluation used. A written report card, and possibly a conference, will be used for the remaining grading periods of the year.

Children in 1st – 5th grades will receive a combination of narrative and numeric grades for academic reports as well as citizenship reports. At the end of the 1st nine weeks a conference and a written report card will be the method of evaluation used. A written report card, with the possibility of a conference will be used for the remaining grading periods of the year. A conference may be indicated and called for by either the parent or teacher at any time.

Electronic Mail

Weekly newsletters and other announcements will be sent home via e-mail each week.

Behavior Management

St. Thomas Episcopal School is committed to providing educational excellence in a positive setting. Appropriate behavior and a courteous attitude toward teachers, staff, parents, and other students are expected at all times. If discipline for misbehavior becomes necessary, it will be handled in a fair and positive manner. Disciplinary action will involve teaching students to use decision-making skills effectively and to accept ownership of their behavior. Parents are an important part of the discipline process at the school.

Additionally, we promote a peaceful playground approach to social interactions at school. The teachers will model positive interactions with others, and students will be taught explicit social skills for handling conflicts. Because we are a peaceful playground, toy guns and other toy weapons will not be permitted on campus; teachers will discourage students from “shooting” with pretend guns as well. Spoken threats such as “shooting”, even if the child is just playing will be followed by a conference with the child and the head of school. In this modern age of school violence, we will encourage students to refrain from making remarks related to threats against the school and others.

Statement on Bullying

Bullying is defined as:

unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time

Not all unpleasant interactions between students are bullying. Children in elementary school learn to get along with others as they interact over the years of school. Along the way, many learning opportunities occur. The teachers and director of St. Thomas work with students to learn how to get along well with others. All children make mistakes, and students tend to see situations from their perspective. Teachers are able to view situations more objectively than students. If you believe your child is having social problems at school, please contact the teacher. The teacher may have a greater understanding of the situation or may not be aware of some situations.

Disciplinary Procedure

- The teacher will address most disciplinary procedures.
- Teachers are the first contact that students encounter after an incident.
- Teachers will encourage a learning opportunity when students do not follow the rules.

Behavior Plan

1. The student will be acquainted with the expectations and rules of the school.
2. The teacher will redirect and give a warning if an elementary student breaks a rule.
3. Upon a second infraction, the student will have a conduct mark in his/her folder for the week.
4. A third infraction requires the student to meet with the head of school and a phone call home.
5. Continued infractions will require a meeting with parents, teachers, and the head of school and a behavior plan.
6. The consequence for acts of violence or threats of violence include in-house suspension, home suspension, or expulsion from school.
7. All students are entitled to due process in disciplinary matters.

Lunchroom Behavior

Students are expected to keep their areas clean in the lunchroom. Every student will be expected to throw away his/her own trash. Students may not shout, push, leave the lunchroom without permission, or throw food or trash. Students may not share lunches.

School Sponsored Trips

Students will have opportunities to represent St. Thomas on numerous school-sponsored trips. For this reason, they are expected to exhibit superb behavior. Misconduct that occurs on such a trip will, upon the student's return to school, result in disciplinary action above any steps taken to redirect the student while on the trip.

Illegal Substance/Items Policy

Students who bring illegal substances or illegal items such as, but not limited to guns, knives, needles, or other potential weapons, will be brought to the head of school for immediate disciplinary action. Such action could include suspension or expulsion.

Preschool Biting Policy

Biting is a natural developmental stage that many children go through. It is usually a temporary condition that is most common between thirteen and twenty-four months of age, but can continue through preschool. The safety of the children in our preschool is our primary concern. The school's biting policy addresses the actions the staff will take if a biting incident occurs.

Toddlers bite other toddlers for many different reasons. A child might be teething or overly tired and frustrated. He or she might be experimenting or trying to get the attention of the teacher or his peers. Toddlers have poor verbal skills and are impulsive with little self-control. Sometimes biting occurs for no apparent reason. The classroom teacher will encourage the children to "use their words" if they become angry or frustrated. The staff members will maintain a close and constant supervision of the children at all times.

The following steps will be taken if a biting incident occurs at our school:

- The biting will be interrupted with a firm "No...we don't bite people!"
- Staff will stay calm and will not overreact.
- The bitten child will be comforted.
- The biter may sit in "time out" if this is a reoccurring problem for no more than one minute per year old
- Staff will remove the biter from the situation. The biter will be given something to do that is satisfying.
- The wound of the bitten child shall be assessed and cleansed with soap and water and ice applied.

- The parents of both children will be notified of the biting incident. We will make an accident report of the incident. The Head of School will be notified.
- Confidentiality of all children involved will be maintained.
- The bitten area should continue to be observed by parents and staff for signs of infection.

If the biting problem does not cease, a child may be sent home at the discretion of the school. A conference with the parents to solve the biting issue will follow.

Grading Policy

In order to be consistent in our grading, the following alpha/numeric/narrative codes are used:

FIRST GRADE – FIFTH GRADE

CODES	NARRATIVE	SCALE POINT	ALPHA
E =	Excellent	90 – 100	A
G =	Good	80 – 89	B
S =	Satisfactory	75 – 79	C
N =	Needs Improvement	70 – 74	D
U =	Unsatisfactory	Below 70	F

KINDERGARTEN/SPECIALS GRADING

E= EXCEEDS GRADE EXPECTATIONS
 G=GRADE LEVEL EXPECTATIONS
 P =PROGRESSING TOWARD GRADE LEVEL
 N= NEEDS IMPROVEMENT

Homework Policy

Homework should be given on a regular basis in most of the subject areas. Some approximate times for homework are:

Kindergarten -	10 – 15 minutes a night
1 st Grade -	15 – 20 minutes a night
2 nd Grade -	20 – 30 minutes a night
3 rd Grade -	30 – 40 minutes a night
4 th Grade -	40 – 50 minutes a night
5 th Grade	50 – 60 minutes a night

Standardized Testing

Students in 1st through 5th grades are given the ITBS (Iowa Test of Basic Skills) each spring. Students in 2nd and 4th grades are also given the CoGAT (Cognitive Abilities Test).

Health

St. Thomas Episcopal School is required by the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services to have on file an updated health certificate, signed by the child's physician, and an emergency form.

Children who are ill may NOT be sent to school. Children exhibiting a rash, vomiting, elevated (above 100 degrees) temperature, any signs of a contagious disease, or other symptoms must remain at home. Children may not return to school until after they have been well for 24 hours or have a medical release from a doctor. If your child becomes ill with a communicable disease, please contact the school immediately so that we may notify other parents.

Children at school are expected to follow the full program and outdoor play. Parents may not send notes that students are to miss recess or P.E. without making prior arrangements with the head of school. Specials and recess are times for teachers to work on lesson plans and conference with parents; often it is not possible to ensure supervision for sick or injured child unless the head of school has made arrangements.

Students with chronic health concerns: allergies and other serious conditions must be outlined and treatment detailed by the physician. In some cases, the child's doctor will be asked to meet with a staff member in order to guarantee the safety and health of the child (if there is a charge for this meeting, the parent will be responsible).

Medications: Please note, the school will no longer keep over-the-counter medicines in stock. Parents may send a labeled bottle with a signed note that indicates frequency and dosage.

Medications will be administered to a child only under the following conditions:

1. Medications must be in the original prescription bottle with the label listing the child's name and dosage intact. Pharmacies will provide extra bottles on request.
2. Instructions must be written on school forms including the date and time to be administered and signed by the parent/guardian.
3. Outdated medication will be disposed of if not claimed by parents.
4. Parents must walk the medication in to the school office or classroom teacher.
PLEASE DO NOT SEND ANY MEDICATIONS IN SCHOOL BAGS.
5. We strongly encourage parents of children with allergies or asthma to leave Epi-pens, asthma treatment materials, and inhalers with the school personnel.
6. Medications must be approved by the FDA and prescribed by a physician licensed to practice in the state of Texas.

The classroom teacher will dispense most medication in the classroom unless special circumstances are present. Student records for medications dispensed will be kept in classroom student files.

Pesticides

STES has a policy to provide guidelines for the application of pesticides in those areas where school children, parents, and faculty have access. Adherence to these guidelines will preclude human exposure to the effects of pesticides. Companies applying pesticides will only use pesticides approved by the Texas Department of Education and only trained personnel will apply pesticides. Pesticides will be applied as indicated by the state to ensure the safety of our students.

Physical Education

If a student must miss physical education activities, a note signed by a parent or guardian is required. If the excuse is for more than 3 days, a statement from a medical doctor is required.

Vision and Hearing Screening/Diabetes Screening

Chapter 36 of the Texas Health and Safety Code requires that all children enrolled for the first time in any public, private, parochial or denominational school, or Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services licensed childcare facility in Texas, or who meet certain grade criteria (specified below), must be screened or have a professional examination for possible vision and hearing problems. In the latter case, proof of professional examination must be in our files.

Vision and hearing screening is provided in the fall for all 4 year olds, kindergarten, 1st, 3rd, and 5th grade students and any other first time entrants.

Food at School

Lunches

The campus at St. Thomas School is a nut-free zone. Appendix A Allergy Policy outlines the specifics of our nut policy. Please check the ingredients of your child's lunch as many granola bars and candies include nuts. Soy or sun-butter may be substituted for peanut butter, but please let the office or teacher know that the sandwich does not contain nuts. A parent may include a note that the sandwich does not contain nuts. Products such as Nutella contain nuts. Students may bring lunches from home or purchase them from the school lunch program. Parents are asked to keep track of the days that lunches are purchased. Classroom teachers and the school office personnel will not be responsible for contacting parents if a child has forgotten a lunch.

Students who do not have a lunch will be given a soy butter and jelly sandwich, and the parents will be billed.

Menus will be sent home prior to the beginning of a new month. You may make your selections at that time. Milk coupons may be ordered using the menu form or through the office. Because the school shares space with the church, we occasionally have to serve lunch in the classrooms.

Snacks

St. Thomas supports proper nutrition for our students. Snacks should provide energy for children to complete their morning with success. Elementary teachers prefer snacks that are individually wrapped, and each child is responsible for her or his own snack. All children in preschool will take turns providing a daily snack and will receive a snack schedule. Teachers will provide a monthly calendar in the newsletter indicating the child's turn to bring snack. PLEASE SEND NUTRITIOUS SNACKS and be aware that many classes have children with food allergies.

The school will provide water for snack time. During the extended care portion of our program (3:00-6:00) a nutritious snack is served around 3:25 p.m.

Field Trips

We make full use of the excellent educational, cultural, and scientific resources available in San Antonio as a way to enhance learning. We bring in special guests such as Majik Theatre, Institute of Texan Cultures, Mobile Dairy, Fire Department, etc. In addition, appropriate field trips may be planned for GOT and the elementary school. Parents will be informed in advance of all field trips. Parental permission is on file in the school office on the "Triple Release Form." There are some extra costs associated with field trips, but they generally do not exceed \$10. Teachers will send information regarding lunch plans and proper uniform for each field trip. Children may ride with their own parent on field trips; however, if a parent intends to drive other children, a background check and attendance of the "Safeguarding God's Children" (within the last 5 years) must be documented. **Children and siblings who are not enrolled at St. Thomas are not permitted to attend field trips.**

Fundraising

Tuition at St. Thomas funds approximately 85% of the total educational costs during the year. Our annual fund allows us to provide even more enriching, exciting programs for our children. Participation in these events provides necessary funds for various budgeted items. We have several ways to contribute to our annual fund.

- **Gala**—Normally in the spring and features dinner, live and silent auctions, children's classroom crafts, raffle, and so much more! Don't miss this evening of fun and fellowship! Corporate sponsorships (tables) are encouraged, as well as donations of items or services for the auctions.
- **Jeremiah Fund**—Contributions are tax deductible. Our "Jeremiah Fund" drive will take place in the fall. Parents and friends of St. Thomas are invited to partner with us through financial contributions. All annual fund supporters and volunteers are invited to special events throughout the year.

- **Others**—Book Fairs, directory pages, and the fall walk-a-thon are fundraisers that enhance the programs at St. Thomas.

Library

If a library book is not returned, the librarian will send a note home that will include the book's title and replacement cost. All books must be returned and fees paid before the end of the school or the release of transcript. Students from the four-year old class through elementary will be able to check out a book each week. Parents who have a background check and proof of Safeguarding God's Children on file may volunteer to help with library.

Parent/Teacher Fellowship

One of the St. Thomas Episcopal School's major strengths is the great interest the parents have in the success of their children's learning experiences and ultimately, the success of the school. The Parent teacher Fellowship (PTF) is an organization made up of St. Thomas parents and teachers. These parents mobilize to staff fundraisers, work in the library, serve as homeroom parents, organize special events, work in the school office, and so much more.

All parents are encouraged to choose several activities throughout the year that would interest them and help the school accomplish important goals. Activities with children in the school require that the volunteer submit to a background check and take the 3 hour Safeguarding God's Children program. Volunteer positions are available on a one time only, daily, weekly, monthly, or seasonal basis. There is truly something for everyone. An important volunteer activity is to act as receptionist for the school and church. This volunteer position is important for the security of our children.

Homeroom parents contact each family at the beginning of the year to determine which areas parents are willing to commit to volunteer hours. All parents are expected to donate five hours of work to the school to keep the school running well and prevent large tuition hikes. Virtually all St. Thomas events are staffed by and organized by parent volunteers and school staff.

Pictures

Individual and class pictures are taken in the fall. The photographer will have packages available for purchase. Retakes can be done during the picture retake scheduled date.

Rest Time/Naps

Preschool students who stay for afternoon enrichment will have a rest time. The students may bring a small beach towel or blanket for rest time. Preschool children may bring a crib-sized sheet to cover the plastic-covered mat provided for nap time. Students in the preschool may bring a special toy to enable them to settle in for nap. It is important for preschool children to rest

each day to ensure that they are able to function well in the afternoon. Kindergarten students will have a quiet rest time each afternoon. Please label everything.

Safety Patrol

Students in the 3rd through 5th grades who exhibit qualities of good leadership and reliability will be invited to serve as members of the Safety Patrol. Traditionally, these students are used at car pool times during the morning arrival time and the afternoon dismissal to assist younger students getting in and out of cars. The hours that students dedicate to safety patrol can be counted as service learning hours that the teacher can record in the on-line portal.

Sexual Harassment

St. Thomas adheres to the sexual harassment policy of the Episcopal Diocese of West Texas. All school and church personnel are trained in appropriate adult/child relationships using “Safeguarding God’s Children.”

Requirement of Reporting

The law **requires** any person who believes that a child, or person 65 years or older, or an adult with disabilities is being abused, neglected, or exploited to report the circumstances to The Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS). A person making a report is immune from civil or criminal liability provided they make the report in good faith, and the name of the person making the report is kept confidential. Any person suspecting abuse and not reporting it can be held liable for a Class B misdemeanor. Time frames for investigating reports are based on severity of allegations. Reporting suspected child abuse makes it possible for a family to get help. Please talk to the head of school or the parish priest if you have any questions about reporting abuse of a child.

Definition of Child Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation

The definition of “child abuse” and “neglect” are very broad. Chapter 261.001 of the Family Code provides the legal definitions of those terms.

Contact information for the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services is 3635 SE Military, San Antonio, TX 78223.

The website is www.txchildcaresearch.org.

210-337-3399 Child Abuse Hotline 1-800-252-5400

Parents do have the right to review Minimum Standards and the school’s most recent licensing report.

School Board Policies

The school board meets at 6:00 on several Mondays during the school year. Any member of the St. Thomas community is welcome to attend open sessions, but should first call to schedule time to speak to the board and give background information prior to the meeting. From time to time, the board must go into executive session to discuss sensitive issues. These sessions are not open to any guests.

The school board for St. Thomas welcomes guests and encourages input from all members of the school community. To ensure that guests who wish to offer their thoughts can be heard, the board will adhere to the following policy:

- Individuals who wish to speak at a regularly scheduled board meeting must notify the board chair of the head of school by noon of the Wednesday prior to the meeting. Such a notification will make sure these individuals will be placed on the agenda.
- The board chair will set the amount of speaking time for each individual. Guests will be heard when the board chair calls on them.
- In the event that a large group of individuals who share the same concerns appears at the meeting, the board president may ask for a representative to speak for the group.
- Further discussion from guests who are not on the agenda or who have used their allotted time will be discouraged unless the board chair decides to allow their input.
- Input received from guests will be considered informational only. The school board will certainly note concerns and ideas of its guests, but it reserves the right to make decisions based on the information as it deems best.
- The board chairman reserves the right to cancel remaining speaking time of any individual whose comments become personal or otherwise unproductive.
- The board may go into executive session at any time to discuss sensitive matters including personnel issues, security devices, matters pertaining to students and/or families, issues that require legal counsel, donations or gifts to the school, and property needs.

Tiger Connection Community Education

St. Thomas provides an enrichment program for our students and the surrounding community. St. Thomas students are given preference, but the program is available to the public.

Programming consists of classes which take place on a semester basis. Classes and activities such as piano, guitar, violin, voice, recorder, karate, gymnastics, ballet, tap, jazz, science, art, crafts, cake decorating, tutoring, phonemic awareness, sewing, quilting, CPR/First Aid and more are offered throughout the year.

There are three catalogs per year. Catalogs are sent home via backpack mail and are available through the website. You may also request one through the school office.

Tuition

Tuition is due and payable at the beginning of each month. Following the initial contract payment, envelopes labeled with your child's name will be sent home with your child. At the beginning of the next month, simply return the tuition payment in that envelope. After the 10th of the month, a late fee of \$25 will be charged.

In the event there is a failure to pay the required tuition according to the previously agreed upon payment schedule, the following actions will be taken to collect funds:

1. When an account is 45 calendar days past due, the school's business manager will send a letter to parents requesting payment.
2. After 60 calendar days, the school's business manager will send a second letter requesting payment. The parents will also be required to meet with the head of school to discuss available options.
3. After 75 calendar days, the school board and head of school will discuss options for retrieving late tuition.
4. Upon receiving vestry approval, the school will pursue all available legal options to claim unpaid tuition.

Visitors

You are welcome to visit the campus at any time. **All visitors must check in at the school office** to receive a Visitor's Badge. Please sign out at departure. All school personnel will wear identification badges during school hours. Adults on campus will be sent to the office by school personnel to sign in and receive a badge. Please do not proceed to your child's classroom.

Dress Code

Preschool

Preschool students must wear clothes appropriate for a busy day. Usually students in preschool will have art lessons and will have active play on the playground. Students must wear close-toed and healed shoes. For student safety, footwear such as sandals, flip-flops, and crocs are not allowed.

Students in grades K-5 are required to wear uniforms (see below).

Free Dress Day

The first Wednesday of each month is a free dress day. Students may wear street clothes that are appropriate for a Christian school. T-shirts with words must be appropriate for young children and should not include references to alcohol, racial slurs, or inappropriate language. **Students may not wear tops with spaghetti straps, show midriffs, or wear bottoms that are too short. They must have tennis shoes for P. E. and playground.**

Friday Spirit Day

All K-5 students may wear Tiger tale or other St. Thomas t-shirt and nice jeans or jean shorts. Shirts are to be tucked in and uniform belts are to be worn. Appropriate closed-toed comfortable shoes should be worn.

Elementary Uniforms *(Please note a one-year grace period of Dennis Uniforms during 2014-15)*

Uniforms may be purchased from Parker Uniforms. Please check the website for details.

Boys

Daily Uniform—Navy pants or shorts, red polo, **white undershirt (optional)** plain black belt, white crew socks (mid-calf length) all white tennis shoes*

Dress Uniform—Navy pants, white dress shirt, navy and red striped tie (from Parker only) with school logo, plain black belt, black shoes from Dennis, navy crew socks (mid-calf length)

Girls

Daily Uniform—Navy skort or pants, white tights with the skort for cold weather, plain black belt, midi blouse with tie, white ankle socks, all white tennis shoes*. Girls may wear the blue knit dress as the daily uniform as well.

Dress Uniform—Dress skirt, midi blouse with tie, knee high socks or white tights, navy and white saddle oxford shoes

Dress uniforms will be worn every Tuesday in conjunction with the special chapel music, on appropriate school trips, on days when the Holy Eucharist is observed, on picture days, and on other days that may be deemed appropriate.

**Daily uniform shoes may be purchased from Parker or from another source, but must be 100% white including logos, trim, and laces.*

Cold Weather Options

Outerwear—A variety of outerwear is available with the supplier and must have the embroidered school logo. A white turtleneck may be worn under the uniform shirt.

***WRITE YOUR CHILD'S NAME
ON EVERY ITEM WITH A PERMANENT MARKER***

SOCIAL MEDIA AND PARENTS

“Social Media” includes the various online technology tools that enable people to communicate easily over the internet to share information and resources. Social media can include text, audio, video, images, podcasts, and other multimedia communications. These websites not only provide information, but also allows for interaction during this informational exchange through user-generated content.

Before posting any photographs of students, content owners shall review the list of students

whose parents have not consented to having their child's photograph taken or published. No student photographs should be published for personal, promotional use or any other non-school related purpose. Posted photos may not be tagged by anyone except the parent; please do not tag photos of children who are not yours.

Parents should be sensitive about posting any reference to other students in the social media.

School Policies Regarding Social Networks

Individual Accountability

St. Thomas Episcopal School parents are personally responsible for the content that they post, share and respond to online. When posting online, all information is considered representative of your views and opinions and not those of St. Thomas Episcopal School.

Confidential Information

Online postings and conversations are not private. Do not share confidential information, internal School discussions, or specific information about students, staff or other parents. Do not use any School logo or image without permission. If you wish to promote a specific St. Thomas School activity or event, please contact Margaret Marble, business manager at mmarble@tom1604.org for permission or provide a link to the official St. Thomas Episcopal School Facebook page.

Staff-Parent Relations

We recognize that many members of our community are both staff members as well as parents or alumni parents. With this in mind, we ask that parents join the social networking site of faculty and staff with discretion. Parents should keep in mind that faculty and staff members are not required to accept invitations from parents, and should respect each individual staff member's personal preferences concerning their social networks.

You should never discuss sensitive School matters with staff or other parents using Facebook, blogs and other social media outlets. Guidelines for Acceptable Behavior on Social Networks are based on the common sense notion of asking if the posting represents the School in a positive light. If not, please delete any postings related to our School.

Privacy

When posting, even on the strictest settings, parents should act on the assumption that all postings are in the public domain. In microblogging (Twitter etc.), comments made using such

media are not protected by privacy settings. Parents are required to be supportive of the school, and social media should not be a forum to seek opinion related to the workings of the school.

School Values

St. Thomas Episcopal School encourages parents to set and maintain high ethical standards in their use of social networking. Staff, parents, and students reflect a diverse set of customs, values and points of view. Be respectful of the opinions of others in your posts or comments. Under no circumstances should offensive comments be made about students, parents or staff nor the School in general. Students will not be permitted to harass or spread rumors about other students. We respect others, and that rule pertains to the Internet as well. Students who use social media to harass others or speak ill of St. Thomas staff members will be subject to sanction by the school.

If responding to someone with whom you disagree about our school, remember to be respectful. Make sure that criticism should be constructive and not hurtful. Your posts and comments should help build and support the School community. Do not comment on nor forward unsupported information, e.g. rumors. If you mention our school in your social media, please remember to build up, not negatively affect our school.

Inappropriate Content

Even though you are of legal age, consider carefully what you post through comments and photos regarding alcohol and other age-restricted activities. This is especially important when commenting on the school's Facebook site. Do not use ethnic slurs, innuendos or any other inappropriate content. Do not use profane or threatening language when on the school Facebook or when you are discussing the school in you personal social media.

Students learn in their computer classes about digital citizenship which includes courtesy and safety on-line. Parents can model using social media as a fun and supportive opportunity to build up the family of St. Thomas.