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I. PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION/MISSION STATEMENT

**DIOCESAN PHILOSOPHY OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION**

Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations...  
Teaching them to carry out everything I have commanded you.  

*Matthew 28:19-20*

These words of Christ addressed to the apostles at the Ascension bestowed on the Church the office of teacher. Obedient to this divine challenge, the Church provides education permeated with the spirit of Christ and dedicated to promoting the full development of the human person.\(^1\) The two-fold goal of Catholic schools is to provide an environment which will foster rich religious training as well as solid academic education in a Catholic value-oriented manner.

\(^1\) Declaration on Christian Education #3

**DIOCESAN MISSION STATEMENT**

The Catholic schools in the Diocese of Arlington are an essential component in the educational ministry of the Church. Our schools are committed to providing an education rooted in the Gospel of Jesus Christ where Catholic doctrine and values and academic excellence prepare each student for a life of faith, service and integrit

**SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT/PHILOSOPHY**

**Mission Statement**

St. Thomas Aquinas Regional School, founded by the Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia Congregation, is dedicated to providing each student with a firm foundation in the Catholic faith and a Christ-centered environment where they may grow in truth and love and meet their full spiritual and academic potential.

**Our Purpose**

St. Thomas Aquinas Regional School serves the parishes of Our Lady of Angels, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, and Sacred Heart as well as the wider community in the Catholic Diocese of Arlington, Virginia. It was founded and is partially staffed by the Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia Congregation. The charism of the Dominican Sisters gives Aquinas its distinctive character.

The Church recognizes parents as the primary educators of their children. We are committed to aiding parents in developing children who can live their Christian vocation, become productive citizens, and unite with God for all eternity. We believe in the human dignity of each person as unique and unrepeatable.

We follow the teachings of the Catholic Church and apply it in every aspect of our curriculum. Our setting is both traditional and welcoming of new technologies and current teaching practices.
Echoing the Desire of St. Thomas Aquinas

Although Saint Thomas Aquinas lived eight centuries ago, his spirit and philosophy have lived on, not only through his timeless writings, but also through those institutions dedicated, as his life was, to the pursuit of Truth. When he was only five years old, Thomas began his formal studies under the direction of the Benedictine monks of Monte Cassino Abbey. Even from his youth, his soul burned with the desire to know the one truth that gave meaning to all other truths: "What is God"?

As the years of Thomas' studies passed, his great desire for a life of prayer and study led him to the Dominican Order, whose motto of "Veritas" or "Truth" mirrored the object of his longings. Within the Order, he encountered the genius and holiness of Albert the Great. Under Albert's influence, Thomas was not only moved to a deeper hunger for study, but also to live more fully the Dominican religious life of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Thomas sought truth wherever it could be found, not fearing to delve into the writings of thinkers of other times and beliefs. Although his reading was so extensive that it enabled him to write one of the greatest syntheses of theological thought of all time, Thomas attested that he learned more at the foot of the Cross than from any book.

In keeping with the legacy of our patron, we at St. Thomas Aquinas Regional School strive first and foremost to nurture in our students a spirit of prayer, sustained by a comprehensive knowledge of truth. This emphasis on the sacred does not, however, negate the value of the secular courses of study. In his Summa Theologica, Saint Thomas wrote that grace builds on nature. The natural gifts of mind and body are the foundation for the greater, supernatural gifts of the soul. By instructing our students in a well-rounded curriculum, we hope to impart to them those truths which prepare them to accept the grace to know, love, and serve God, Who is the source of all Truth.

Reflecting on the life and relying on the intercession of Saint Thomas, who sought God from his childhood, we endeavor to instill, even in the very young, a love for learning and a desire for prayer. It is our goal that through our apostolate of Catholic education, we will each be formed in the spirit of Saint Thomas Aquinas, so that at our lives' ends we will echo his great desire. When asked by the Lord what reward he would have for writing well, Thomas replied, "Nothing, Lord, but Thyself."
STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOK

Each school shall utilize the OCS template to develop and distribute a handbook for students and parents. All local policies and procedures must be in conformity with Office of Catholic Schools policies, guidelines and regulations.

A committee, representative of the total school community, shall be involved in the development and periodic revision of this handbook.

All parents are required to sign a form stating they have read the rules and regulations outlined in this handbook and they agree to abide by those rules (Appendix AG-3). This signature form will be given to students when they receive a copy of the handbook and the form must be signed and returned as soon as possible. Failure to have a signed form on file will not prevent the school from enforcing its policies, but could result in disciplinary action being taken and/or prevent a student from enrolling (or continued enrollment) in the school.

Faculty and staff members shall be given copies of all school handbooks.

Handbooks and all subsequent changes are subject to prior written approval by the Diocese. To the extent any local handbook or policy statement therein may be inconsistent with the policies, guidelines or regulations of the Office of Catholic Schools, the Office of Catholic Schools policies, guidelines or regulations shall be of controlling force and effect.

PARENTAL ROLE

Since parents have given their children life, the Catholic Church recognizes parents as the primary and principal educators of their children. The Catholic parents’ promise at baptism to raise their children as Catholic supports this premise. The Catholic school exists to assist parents in the Christian formation of their children.

In this Handbook, the term parent refers not only to a child's natural or adopted parent, but to a student's non-parent legal guardian or to any person or agency authorized to act in place of parents.

The Diocese of Arlington Catholic Schools respects the role of parents as the primary educators of their children. Since the school is a continuation of the education children are receiving at home, Diocesan schools should demonstrate respect and support for the parents in their important and challenging task.

Parents are expected to support the school's mission and commitment to Christian principles; support the school policies as outlined in school handbooks (i.e., annually sign the school’s Handbook Agreement Form). One of the conditions for initial and continued enrollment at the school is receipt of this signed form indicating the parent’s support of the school’s philosophy, policies, and regulations. In the event a parent desires to discuss a problem with his/her child's
teacher, the parent should make an appointment for a private meeting with the child’s teacher. Teachers welcome the opportunity to discuss a matter of concern with parents before it becomes an actual problem. Any parent who wishes to speak with the principal/director may do so, but after an initial meeting with the classroom teacher.

If a parent repeatedly or seriously violates proper school protocol, displays inappropriate or disruptive conduct toward students, or displays disrespectful, disruptive or harassing behavior toward teachers or toward school, parish or diocesan staff, the school may take corrective action. Such corrective action may include, at the discretion of the principal/director (and, for parish schools, the pastor of the parish) the following: imposition of particular rules or procedures the parent must follow in interacting with the school and its students and staff; restriction or termination of the parent’s access to school or parish property; dismissal of the parent’s child(ren).

The school may impose other appropriate corrective action, without prior recourse, based upon the nature of the parent’s conduct and the surrounding circumstances.

As foundation for a faith-community, parents are invited and encouraged to participate in the school’s celebration of prayer and Liturgy.

Parents are encouraged to participate in the programs, which are developed for the education of their children. The wide spectrum of this involvement includes volunteer work, participation in parent-teacher conferences, attendance at meetings and seminars designed to help parents assist their children at home and active involvement in the school's Parent-Teacher Organization.

NON-DISCRIMINATION CLAUSE

Catholic Schools, administered under the authority of the Catholic Diocese of Arlington, comply with those constitutional and statutory provisions, as may be specifically applicable to the schools, which prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, age, marital status, disability, national origin or citizenship in the administration of their educational, personnel, admissions, financial aid, athletic and other school administered programs.

This policy does not preclude the existence of single sex schools, nor does it conflict with the priority given to Catholics for admission as students. This policy also does not preclude the ability of the school to undertake and/or enforce appropriate actions with respect to students who advocate on school property or at school functions any practices or doctrines which are inconsistent with the religious tenets of the Catholic faith.

NON-CATHOLIC CHILDREN

The presence of children from other faiths provides a wonderful diversity to the school. However, the presence of non-Catholic children in the school shall not alter the primacy of Catholic religious
formation as an integral component of the educational program in the school. As such:

   a. Non-Catholic children are expected to participate in the religious formation and education programs of the school.
   b. Non-Catholic children must participate in liturgies, retreats and other religious functions incorporated within the program.
   c. Non-Catholic children may not be exempted from the catechesis held during the school day.
   d. While Catholic teaching respects the various faith traditions of the children attending the Catholic school, parents must be aware that it is the Catholic position that will be taught.

In light of the unique situations which may arise in the educational process, and because it is impossible to foresee all school issues that arise, the faculty and administration reserve the right to address and to take appropriate action for any such situations not specifically referenced in this manual. In addition, in view of the unique and essential religious mission of the school, it is expressly understood that the school may take actions in cases where moral offenses occur which reflect adversely on the school, the Catholic Diocese of Arlington or the Roman Catholic Church, or which interfere with the ability of the school to perform its religious mission or to effectively maintain the intimate working relationship of the school and the Community of Faith.

This handbook may be modified by the school after reasonable notice to the parents of the effective date of any changes. Any section headings are for convenience of use, and shall not affect the interpretation of any provisions. If the school should elect not to take action in a particular situation, this shall not be construed or interpreted as a waiver or preclude the school from acting in a subsequent situation of the same or similar kind.
II. CURRICULUM

The curriculum is not just the goals of the program and the planned activities but also the daily schedule, the availability and use of materials, transitions between activities and the way in which routine tasks of living are implemented. Young children are expected to learn through active and positive manipulation of the environment and concrete experiences that contribute to concept development.

Without limiting the rights of the school under section VIII of this handbook, modifications may be made in the environment and staffing patterns for children with special needs.

The daily schedule is intended to provide a balance of activities with attention to the following dimension of scheduling:

a. Daily outdoor play, weather permitting
b. Alternating periods of quiet time and active play
c. A balance of large muscle and small muscle activities is provided.
d. Various small group or large group activities through most of the day
e. A balance of child-initiated and staff-initiated activity is provided. The amount of time spent in staff-initiated, large group activity is limited.

Developmentally appropriate materials and equipment that project heterogeneous, racial, gender and age attributes are selected for use.

The school will use media, such as television, films, videotapes and computers, that have been previewed by adults prior to use. Another option for activity is always available. No child is required to view or interact with the program; and the staff discusses what is viewed with children to develop critical viewing skills. Technology is incorporated as an integral part of the day.

The goal of the school is to emphasize concrete experiential learning and to achieve the following goals:

a. foster positive self-concept;
b. foster spiritual development;
c. encourage children to think, reason, question and experiment;
d. develop social skills;
e. encourage language development;
f. enhance physical development and skills;
g. encourage and demonstrate sound health, safety and nutritional practices;
h. encourage creative expression and appreciation for the arts;
i. respect cultural diversity.

Staff provides materials and time for activities, but children choose from among several activities that the teacher has planned or the children initiate. Staff respects the child’s right to choose not to participate at times.
Children are not always required to move from one activity to another as a group. Unregimented transitions are also used as a vehicle for learning.

Planned or routine activities may be changed according to the needs or interests of children, and/or to cope with changes in weather or other situations that affect routines without unduly alarming children.

Routine tasks such as toileting, eating, dressing and sleeping are incorporated into the program as a means of furthering children’s learning, self-help and social skills. Through complimentary actions at home, parents are expected to assist and cooperate with staff to make feeding and the development of other independent skills a positive experience for children. Provision is made for children who are early risers and for children who do not nap.

**SUPPLIES AND MATERIALS**

Supplies are provided by St. Thomas Aquinas Regional School and are subsidized by the student fee paid at the beginning of each school year.

**ASSESSMENT**

The school’s program is intended to assist staff and administrators in a systematic evaluation of the program, to diagnose children’s strengths and weaknesses and to aid in revision of the curriculum and planning of instruction.

**PARENT-TEACHER COMMUNICATION**

Teachers are available to parents throughout the school year to keep the lines of communication open in the best interest of the children. Parent-teacher conferences can be scheduled throughout the school year if necessary. Parents should first privately contact a teacher with any concerns about a child or class situation before seeking intervention of the director or school administration.

**SCHEDULING AND OTHER CONFERENCE INFORMATION**

Parent-Teacher conferences are formally scheduled once a year. Parents may visit with the Pre-K teacher at any time by calling or writing to the teacher to set up an appointment.

**PROGRESS REPORTS**

Evaluation of the child must be based on teacher judgment, observation, daily performance, class participation and effort.
RETENTION/PROMOTION/PLACEMENT

A major goal of the school is to assist children to complete each year satisfactorily. Retention is recommended only when it is deemed necessary and advantageous to the particular needs of the child.

a. The final decision to promote or retain a child is based on the child’s developmental performance and best interests, as determined by the principal/director.
b. Parents will be kept informed about the inability of their child to progress satisfactorily.
c. Children who would not benefit from being retained may be "placed" in the next level; however, the school may prepare and implement an Intervention Plan for the child as a condition of placement.

The following are some of the criteria used to determine if a student is ready to enter kindergarten:

- Actively and interactively participates in preschool activities, games, songs, etc.
- Follows 2 to 3 step directions.
- Recognizes printed first and last name.
- Prints first name.
- Demonstrates number recognition.
- Knows basic shapes.
- Demonstrates a familiarity with alphabet letters.
- Displays adequate attention span.
- Demonstrates self-discipline.
- Demonstrates an effective pencil-holding position.
- Displays positive social interaction.
- Exhibits independence in appropriate situations.
- Demonstrates a level of maturity that is indicative of success in kindergarten.
III. ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

ADMISSIONS

DIOCESAN INITIAL ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Children who desire an educational experience founded on the Catholic philosophy of education and who fulfill the age, health and behavioral requirements are eligible for admission to the school.

ELIGIBILITY

The school sets registration procedures and admission policies. The availability of space and the order of preference for admission are determined by the school according to the following general criteria:

a. Children from the parish
b. Children from parishes without schools
c. Children from parishes with schools (for sufficient reason)
d. Children from non-Catholic families

If approved by the pastor, and where practicable, the siblings may receive special consideration.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR PRESCHOOL ADMISSION

There is no testing for pre-school admission. However, readiness assessment may be utilized to determine the developmentally appropriate placement in the pre-school program. The following list of documents/information is required:

a. Presentation of an original birth certificate (schools are expected to keep a copy of the certificate on file)
b. Baptismal certificate for Catholic students
c. Proof of custody where applicable
d. Progress reports (if available)
e. Completed Diocesan Application Form (Appendix J)
f. A non-refundable application fee
g. A fully executed MCH-213 G Commonwealth of Virginia School Entrance Form or equivalent, which stipulates the following must be submitted prior to the student beginning school:
   i. Proof of exact dates of immunization as required by the Code of Virginia
   ii. Current Certification of Immunization
   iii. Physical examination covering all required aspects as mandated on the MCH-213 G, within 12 months prior to entering school for the first time. Equivalent school entrance physical forms from another state may be acceptable. (Note: A preschool physical does not take the place of the required kindergarten entry physical unless it is completed within 12 months prior to kindergarten entry.)
h. Proof of satisfying tuition requirements at any former Diocesan school if previously enrolled in a Diocesan school.
i. Student Recommendation form and Parent Questionnaire

**GENERAL CONDITIONS OF ADMISSION**

A child is admitted to the school on the premise the child intends to learn the Catholic religion and be educated in a Catholic environment. In certain cases, a child may be admitted on a probationary basis subject to the child successfully completing one or more subsequent interim evaluations. A child with academic or other needs (i.e., behavioral), which cannot be reasonably addressed by the school may be denied admission.

School application forms may request disability-related information. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) does not prohibit a school from asking questions about a student’s disabilities provided that information does not discriminate (automatically prohibit a student from applying).

All applications and documentation submitted to the school become the property of the school and will not be returned

**INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

The Diocese of Arlington endeavors to remain certified by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service to admit F-1 Non-Immigrant students. The school, therefore, adheres to the following policies for enrolling non-U.S. persons:

A. International students who apply for admission to a Diocese of Arlington Catholic school will be considered for admission, upon meeting the following conditions:

a. Meets Diocesan admission requirements as stated in Policy 601.2;
b. Currently holds or is in the process of obtaining an F-1 (Non-Immigrant) student visa;
c. Resides at the same U.S. address as the guardian:
   i. Guardian cannot house more than two international students;
d. Pays tuition in full upon school admission:
   i. There is no refund given for registration, tuition or other related fees;

The F-1 (non-immigrant student) status applies to those aliens who are in the United States for the purpose of attending school. Once a student is determined to meet the school’s requirements for admission, the family must contact the Office of Catholic Schools or other "designated official" to process the Certificate of Eligibility for Non Immigrant (F-1) Student Status form for eventual admission and stay in the United States as an F-1 student. International students who enroll in a school in the Diocese for the first time must provide documentation they are free from communicable tuberculosis.
For students who hold a visa other than F-1, refer to Appendix AJ (Nonimmigrants Who Can Study); International students who are currently in B-1, B-2, F-2 or M-2 status cannot begin their studies prior to approval of their change to F-1 (Non-Immigrant) student. Obtaining a change of status is the responsibility of the parent or guardian.

B. Any student applicant whose passport, United Nations travel document or other Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) documents indicates that the student is a refugee, asylee, parolee, lawful non-immigrant¹ or permanent resident may be admitted to the schools of the Diocese of Arlington under normal requirements for admission. This policy would also include undocumented children.

CLASS PLACEMENT

The principal/director and faculty reserve the right to place a child in a class to ensure the best interests of the child.

Parents may not request a particular teacher for their child. The child’s present teacher and the principal work together to place students in the most favorable learning environment possible to accommodate their individual learning styles. Twins are normally placed in separate rooms.

ATTENDANCE

ABSENCE/TARDINESS/LEAVING SCHOOL

Regular attendance in the program is strongly encouraged for setting the groundwork for a successful school experience. Neither the school, the Diocese, the Office of Catholic Schools, nor any of its employees/staff are responsible for ensuring actual attendance; this is the responsibility of the child’s parent(s)/guardian(s).

Except in cases of emergency as determined by the principal/director and/or a staff member (as applicable or necessary), a child may only be released from school to another authorized adult with the prior written or verbal authorization of the child's parent. The adult will be required to produce identification before the child is released.

ATTENDANCE/REPORTING PROCEDURES

ABSENCE

Verification of Absences: Parents must notify the school office by 9:30 AM (session 1) and by 1:00 PM (session 2) each day a student is absent. If a student is absent and the school has not been notified, the office will contact the parents. In addition, students must bring a note from parents explaining any absence from school when they return.

¹ Appendix AJ for a listing of lawful non-immigrants who may attend school.
Any absence not explained by a note will automatically result in an unexcused absence, and all unexcused absence policies will apply (see below).

Excused Absences: Absences will be excused for the following reasons after verified contact with the parent or guardian, to include a written explanation of the absence:
- student illness
- medical and dental examination and/or treatment of the student when such appointments cannot be scheduled other than during school hours
- student participation in school-sponsored activities taking place during school hours (no note necessary)
- death in the immediate family
- emergency conditions in the student’s home which require special help from the student in caring for the sick or injured;

Unexcused Absences: Absences other than those mentioned above, or any absences without a written explanation from parents, will be considered unexcused. In the case of an unexcused absence, the following policies apply:
- Teachers will not instruct again.
- Teachers will not provide make-up assignments.

Work Missed Due to an Absence: Work is not issued ahead of time for students who anticipate being out of school whether for excused or unexcused reasons. Students may obtain and make up missed work only if the absence is excused.

(Although the above policy regarding missed work for unexcused absences does not pertain to Pre-K students, parents should be aware that this is a school policy for students in grades K-8. Parents should take this information into consideration when making long-range vacation plans.)

TARDINESS

A student who is tardy should report to the principal/director's office or attendance office. A student who arrives late with an excused reason (i.e. director’s note) is counted tardy.

Frequent cases of tardiness should be brought to the attention of the principal/director so that the parent may be contacted.

Pre-K children arriving after 8:00 AM (session 1) and after 12:00PM (session 2) are considered late. Parents must bring their child to the school office to collect a tardy slip.

Late arrival at school will be excused for the following reasons:
- emergency situations arising from unusual weather conditions;
- unusual delays due to major traffic congestion;
- medical, eye, and dental examination and/or treatment of the student.
**MEDICAL EXCUSES**

Parent or guardian must send a written explanation of an absence for

- student illness
- medical and dental examination and/or treatment of the student when such appointments cannot be scheduled other than during school hours

Students may be required to bring a note from a physician if they are absent for more than three days.

**ANTICIPATED ABSENCE**

Work is not issued ahead of time for students who anticipate being out of school.

**Vacation:** Parents are asked to plan family vacations during the scheduled breaks from school. Parents are asked not to extend the school’s scheduled breaks by leaving early or returning late. Vacations are not permitted outside of scheduled breaks, and are considered unexcused absences (see above).

**RELEASE OF CHILDREN**

Parents must sign in/out their children when arriving late or being released outside of regular school hours.

**Parents Going to the Classroom:** Parents coming to school for dismissal of a student are to go to the office to sign the student out. THEY SHOULD NOT GO TO THE CLASSROOM, since no student may be released from school when proper procedures are not followed.

Siblings and students who ride to and from school with St. Thomas Aquinas Regional School sports players may not leave school early to attend a sporting event. Parents must make other arrangements for transportation for their children.

Parent/school cooperation is critical to ensure constant supervision of children. The school will be informed of individuals who are forbidden access to a student. While only parents or persons authorized by parents and made known to the principal have access to students in our care, there are circumstances when written custody/court documentation must be on file. Please speak directly to the principal concerning these sensitive areas.

Any change in plans for the student leaving school must be in writing and bear the signature of the parent for all students. This is for the students’ protection, for the legal protection of the school, and the peace of mind of all concerned. Cooperation and patience are requested when the school asks for clarification of plans. At all times the school will be overly cautious in releasing a student when circumstances appear unusual.
TRANSFERRING TO ANOTHER SCHOOL

The school must be notified in writing by the parent(s) of a child regarding a decision to transfer a child to another school, including the last day the child will attend classes at school. All school-owned materials must be returned to school and all fees paid before leaving. Scholastic information will be sent to the new school upon a “Release of Student Records Form” from the new school. All Fees and Tuition MUST BE PAID prior to the release of the child’s records.

All records of student progress will be sent to the office of the next school a child will be attending. They may not be hand-carried by parents. A record release form must be signed by a parent or legal guardian before the school will transfer academic records.

LUNCH/MILK PROGRAM

Rules for acceptance and participation in the U.S. Department of Agriculture Child Nutrition Programs are the same for all children without regard to race, color, sex, age, handicap or national origin. Any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against in any USDA related activity should write to the Secretary of Agriculture, Washington, DC, 20250.

Pre-K children bring their own snack each day. The school milk program is offered to Pre-K children. Payment for milk will be made through the school office at the beginning of the school year.

Each family is responsible for providing their child’s snack for each day, Monday through Friday. Our Pre-K program falls under the Virginia State Guidelines and Regulations listed below. Your compliance with these guidelines is essential and will insure for the ongoing health and safety of your child.

- The snack is provided by each individual child’s family. Please note: Our Pre-K program does not provide snack.
- The child’s name must be clearly written on the food bag, food package, food container, can, cup, etc. Please Note: Writing the name on the outside bag, lunch bag, etc. does not meet this requirement.
- Each day’s date must also be written on the food packet.
- Pre-K families must notify the Pre-K program of any child food allergies.

Important Note: Every year we have several children with serious peanut allergies. *** Please do not send any peanut butter or peanut products with your child as the children all sit together during snack time.***
**ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL**

There are 2 Pre-K sessions. The sessions are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Days</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Session 1</td>
<td>8:00-11:00AM</td>
<td>Monday through Thursday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8:00-10:45AM</td>
<td>Friday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 2</td>
<td>12:00-3:00PM</td>
<td>Monday through Thursday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11:15-2:00PM</td>
<td>Friday</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Noon Dismissal:
Session 1 8:00-9:50AM
Session 2 10:10-12:00PM

**Session 1 ARRIVAL PROCEDURES**: Morning carpool drop-off is 7:35 – 8:00AM. Pre-K teachers will be at the carpool circle by the outside door in the morning to welcome students beginning at 7:50 each morning. There is no early morning care provided for Pre-K.

**Afternoon Session**: Parents are asked to park in the main church parking lot and walk with their children directly to the Pre-K glass doors (facing the chapel) and wait for the Pre-K teacher or aide to open the doors and accept the students:
- Mon-Thurs at 12:00pm
- Fri at 11:15am
- School Noon Dismissal at 10:10am

Students must stand with and be under direct parent/guardian supervision until directed by the teacher or instructional assistant to enter the building.

**DISMISSAL PROCEDURES**:

**Session 1**
Please park your car in the church’s large parking lot, come to the Pre-K glass door at dismissal time. Pre-K teacher and instructional assistant will call and personally hand off each student to the parent/guardian. Parents will collect their children from the teacher or aide and escort them directly back to their car. Students and siblings may not run or play in the pick-up areas due to safety and noise concerns.

**Session 2**
Please park your car in the church’s large parking lot, come to the Pre-K glass door at dismissal time. Pre-K teacher and instructional assistant will call and personally hand off each student to the parent/guardian. Parents will collect their children from the teacher or aide and escort them directly back to their car. Students and siblings may not run or play in the pick-up areas due to safety and noise concerns. Drivers are to follow directions of faculty/staff exiting parking lot for school wide dismissal.

Students must be picked up timely as the teachers have a tight schedule. Students who are not picked up 10 minutes after the dismissal time will be brought to the school office. A late pick-up fee of $15 will be invoiced for each occurrence. It is understood that this should be a rare occurrence.
IV. GENERAL SCHOOL POLICIES

ADMINISTRATIVE

CHILD CUSTODY AND GUARDIANSHIP

At the time of school entry or at any other time where a change in custody status/arrangements occurs, it is the responsibility of the parent(s) to provide the principal/director with a true and correct copy of the legal document for any child for which there is a legal custody agreement or for any child not residing with his/her parent.

School communication with the appropriate guardian is essential. Accordingly:

a. Custodial parents should identify in writing other adults who may have access to information regarding their child.

b. Non-custodial parents may receive information (when requested) regarding the child unless specific documentation to the contrary is provided in the legal custody agreement.

ACCESS TO RECORDS

Parents have a right (unless prohibited by the courts in a custody agreement) to the timely inspection of the educational records (cumulative and confidential) of their child during school hours. The school shall respond to reasonable requests for explanations and interpretations of the records.

If the educational records of a child contain information on more than one child, the parents are limited to the specific information about their child only.

Student records shall be open to authorized school personnel only (principal, director, assistant principal and those to whom they extend access within a given year.)

The school administration may elect to provide at cost photocopies of a child’s educational records to parents, but documentation is to be stamped "unofficial."

Parents are obligated to share educational/psychological testing results and any resulting plan with the school. If a student has a documented disability, a copy of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP), Individualized Services Plan (ISP), 504 plan, and/or Student Assistance Plan (SAP) should be maintained in the student's confidential file. The refusal to provide such information is a ground for terminating enrollment in the school.

Confidential records for dis-enrolled students are merged with the students’ cumulative files.
RETENTION OF RECORDS

The following student records are to be retained indefinitely:

Permanent record card (to include transcripts, attendance record and standardized test results)

The following student records are to be retained for 25 years:

a. IEP/ISP or 504 Plan
b. Student Assistance Plan
c. Eligibility Minutes
d. Student Assistance Team minutes

The following student records are to be retained for 7 years or age 25 whichever is greater:

a. Application
b. Counselor notes
c. Discipline notes
d. Court Documents
e. Psychological reports

SCHOOL VISITORS

All persons other than school staff and currently registered children must first report to the school office immediately upon entering school grounds, sign in and wear an identification tag when visiting the school.

Visitors or volunteers must notify the receptionist when changing work locations. Aquinas alumni will be permitted to visit former teachers only after 3:00 PM.

SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS

PRINCIPAL/DIRECTOR’S COMMUNICATION

Any communication from the principal to parents/guardians will be in the form of writing or a telephone call. If parents/guardians wish to speak with the principal, please call the school office during regular school hours and an appointment will be made.

TAKE-HOME COMMUNICATION

All materials prepared by parents for release to the parish or school community must be approved by the principal/director or his/her designee.

Each Tuesday* an Aquinas Connection and school flyers will be emailed and posted to the News page of the school website. A folder will be sent home daily for Pre-K students and will contain papers, notes, etc. The folder will be reviewed and emptied by the
parent and returned daily.

*On the weeks when there is a Monday holiday, Connection will be emailed/posted on Wednesday.

Parents are encouraged to inquire and discuss the progress of their child at any time during the school year. To make an appointment with a teacher, a parent should leave a message on their voicemail, send a written note, or email the teacher. The teacher will return the call during a free period or after school hours within 24 hours. Teachers should return written communication within 48 hours.

Teachers will communicate a more specific communication framework on back to school night.

Email may be used as a form of communication between parents and administrative staff for business purposes as deemed appropriate by the administration. The school uses email as a form of communication of school news and events.

**Email Communication Policy for Parents**

Below are the guidelines and expectations to follow when using electronic communication.

Parents may send email to faculty and staff under these circumstances:

1. In reply to a faculty and staff email
2. Asking a question that does not need an immediate response
3. Setting up an appointment for the future, either in person or via the phone
4. Advance notice of a student’s absence. Please make sure you email by 8:00AM the day of the absence to ensure the email is received.

Parents should not email faculty and staff under these circumstances:

1. In response to a disciplinary measure
2. To ask a question that needs an immediate answer
3. To express disagreement with a classroom policy, procedure, activity, etc.

Additional Notes for Parents:

- Expect a minimum 48 hour response time to an email.
- Email is not the forum to hold lengthy discussions requiring explanations.
- Teachers reserve the right to respond to an email with either an email or a phone call, as they see appropriate for the subject matter.
- If you, as a parent, prefer an email response, please say so. If email is not the proper method of communicating on the subject, an email reply requesting a phone call or face-to-face meeting may be sent by the teacher.
- Include a phone number, as well as a good time to reach you, should the subject matter be deemed inappropriate for email.
- Abuse of this email policy can result in your email address being blocked by the school administration.
• Parents should not use email for solicitation purposes.

**Email Communication Policy for Teachers**

Below are the guidelines and expectations to follow when using electronic communication.

1. In reply to a parent’s email
2. Setting up an appointment for the future, either in person or via the phone
3. To request specific information
4. Making announcements to the entire class’ parents

**TELEPHONE USE**

Students will not be called out of class for telephone messages. If the matter is urgent, the message should be given to the receptionist. If an emergency arises and proper permission is granted from the office and/or from the teacher, students may use the phone in the school office.

Students will not call home for items they may have forgotten. Messages and deliveries must be made through the school office. Only emergency messages will be delivered.

**INCLEMENT WEATHER/SCHOOL CLOSINGS**

In addition to the traditional 180 school days, schools should add at least three extra days to the Diocesan school calendar each year to accommodate days off due to inclement weather or other non-weather related emergencies. In the event these inclement weather/emergency days are not used, schools may dismiss for summer after completing the required 180 school days. If, however, during the course of the year, the school uses more than three inclement weather/emergency days, it is not necessary for the school to extend its school year beyond the 183 budgeted days, provided the school has surpassed 990 hours of instructional time (as defined by the Commonwealth of Virginia).

If during the course of the year, the school uses inclement weather/emergency days, it may be necessary to modify the published school calendar.

St. Thomas Aquinas Regional School normally follows the directives issued for Prince William County (PWC) when road or weather conditions or other emergency situations are severe making it impractical to operate school. The school’s website and telephone will also announce closings. Parents are asked to refer to the website or call the school phone system when radio and TV stations do not broadcast the announcement. On days when we anticipate a coming snowfall, teachers will send students home with a snow day packet.

It is to be assumed that Aquinas will follow PWC unless Aquinas makes an announcement to the contrary. To do so Aquinas will use the school messenger system.
In the event that the principal finds it necessary to announce an unscheduled closing of school or if Prince William County schools are closed and it is not a school holiday for St. Thomas Aquinas Regional School, the school messenger system will be used, as well as a posting on the website, and email.

Faculty and Staff will not receive a separate announcement. The school messenger system will only be used to notify a decision that is contrary to PWC.

If the announcement for Prince William County is "to open two hours late" on a day that dismissal for St. Thomas Aquinas Regional School is scheduled for 12 noon or 2:00PM dismissal Aquinas will then open two hours late and have a regular dismissal at 3:00 PM that day. Another early dismissal day may have to be scheduled. Hot lunch will be served on days when a 2:00 PM dismissal was scheduled. Milk and snacks will be sold as usual.

On days when the opening of school is delayed, Pre-K sessions will be as follows:
- Session 1 10:00-12:00 PM
- Session 2 1:00-3:00 PM

**PHOTOS AND OTHER MEDIA**

Parents may opt out their children from participating in videotaping, audio recording, school pictures, other photography or participation involving the Internet. When a parent decides to exercise this right, the school is required to use the Waiver/Right to Object form (Appendix N). All student or parental publications are subject to review and approval by the school administration prior to publication.

The Waiver/Right to Object form is available on the Parent Overview/Forms page of the school website.

**LIBRARY**

All books chosen for classroom reading in Diocesan schools must be appropriate for students not only in age level and reading ability but also for the moral development which we are working to foster. All books shall conform with Diocesan policies and guidelines regarding Catholic education.

Parents or teachers who object to reading or audio-visual/computer materials must complete an Objection to Content Form (Appendix K) and submit it to the school principal/director. A review committee (to include an Office of Catholic Schools member) will subsequently discuss the objection and decide the disposition of the challenged material. The parent or teacher initiating the review should be personally notified of the results of the review.

**FIELD TRIPS**

Field trips are privileges planned by teachers and approved by the school administration with educational purposes as the primary objective and in light of financial considerations.
Field trips are considered an extension of the school day and the code of conduct will apply.

A child must give to the sponsoring teacher a permission form signed by a child's parent(s) prior to a child participating in each activity (Appendix R).

In the event private automobiles/vehicles of children, parents or other authorized adults of at least 21 years of age are to be utilized to transport children on field trips, the drivers and/or the vehicle owners must have a valid driver's license and sufficient liability, medical and uninsured motorist insurance coverage as defined by the Diocesan Risk Manager. Evidence to this effect must be presented to the principal/director for review and approval prior to the use of such vehicles. The principal/director shall have the right to prohibit for any reason a proposed driver from transporting children on a field trip.

Youth weighing less than 100 pounds may not be seated near the front seat air bag. Cell calls and texting are not permitted while driving. Teachers and other school employees should not drive students in their personal vehicles.

Parents/guardians are to be furnished with detailed written information about the field trip, and must be given the opportunity to “opt out” their children from the field trip.

It should also be understood, in light of world conditions and specifically threats of terrorism against Americans, it may be necessary to cancel school-sponsored trips due to world and national developments at any time.

All medications given on field trips must comply with medication administration policies. For a student with prescription medication and/or medically necessary health related procedures or treatments, a trained individual needs to be present on the field trip such as; a school nurse, parent/guardian or designated family member to ensure care in the case of an emergency. If a trained individual of the school is unable to chaperone the student on a field trip, it is the responsibility of the parent to provide a trained individual to accompany the student.

ST THOMAS AQUINAS REGIONAL SCHOOL PRE-K CLASSES DO NOT GO ON FIELD TRIPS.

OVERNIGHT TRIPS

Overnight trips are not permitted for preschool children.

PARENT ORGANIZATIONS

Parent-teacher (and/or home-school) organizations are sponsored by the school to promote a cooperative effort at meeting certain needs of the child. The parent organization is subject in all respects to the control of the school. All parent organization activities and all materials prepared by parents must be submitted to the principal/director for approval prior to implementation and/or distribution.

All PTO monies must be deposited in the parish or school account as designated by the pastor. In
consultation with the principal/director, the PTO officers should prepare a budget and submit it to the pastor and principal/director for approval.

Persons nominated to serve as a PTO board member must receive the approval of the pastor and principal/director.

Every school should have an effective Parent-Teacher Organization. An effective Parent-Teacher Organization should strive to provide support and assistance to the principal/director regarding advancement of the school’s mission and legislative issues concerning the school as directed by school leadership.

Every school should have a representative on the Diocesan Council of PTOs.

The PTO is an essential component in St. Thomas Aquinas Regional School education ministry of the Church. The PTO is committed to supporting the Parents, Teachers, Administration, Staff, and Students in providing an education rooted in the Gospel of Jesus Christ where Catholic doctrine and values, and academic excellence prepare each student for a life of faith, service, and integrity.

In addition to the goals listed above the St. Thomas Aquinas Regional School Parent-Teacher Organization will:

- Provide a means through which parents can articulate their values and expectations regarding the school so that these can be examined and addressed by the appropriate school authority. The PTO is not an official hearing board of the school administration.

- Unify parents in an effort to raise funds each year for specific school events that benefits the parents, students, and alumni. Fundraising efforts will be planned in advanced with ample notification for parents to participate.

- Gain parental involvement and awareness through personal invitation.

- PTO Membership consists of PTO Committee Chairs (PCC), Sub-committee event coordinators, and Aquinas parents at large. Membership of the PCC shall comprise of a husband and wife team or the parent in the case of a single parent family. To the maximum extent possible the teams will represent the three parishes that encompass the regional composition of St. Thomas Aquinas Regional Catholic School.

The PCC shall have the responsibility for conducting the PTO business and for reviewing and acting upon PTO events. The officer’s positions include the Chair of the Core, Treasurer, Spiritual Life Chair, Athletics Chair, Performing Arts Chair, Academic Enrichment and Extra-Curricular Activities Chair, Faculty and Staff support Chair, and Community Events and Hospitality Chair.
The PTO shall have six (6) meetings during the school year. The frequency of the meeting shall be one every other month commencing in July.

The PTO Sub-committee meetings shall be scheduled by each committee chair. The frequency of the Sub-Committee meeting shall be as required to ensure the event assigned to the Sub-Committee is successful. Committee Chairs will provide status updates on all Sub-Committees until the event/activity is completed.

A general meeting will be held twice (2) during the school year to encourage parent participation and communicate the PTO goals and objectives for the school year. These meeting shall be held at Back to School Night and Open house for Prospective Families.

**FUNDRAISING**

Any program of generating additional revenue should have the approval of school leadership (pastor, principal, director). These activities should be organized and executed so that the school program is not interrupted.

Students may participate in and cooperate with worthy collections and fundraising projects conducted by a school or parish, provided such activities have been approved by the school leadership (pastor, principal, director).

**Solicitation of Donations**

Donations must not be solicited on behalf on the school without express permission from the school administration.

All such donation solicitations should be discussed with and approved by the Development Office. The proposed donation solicitation will then be submitted for approval by the principal. Donation solicitations must not be initiated prior to receiving both approvals.

Approved donation solicitations must report back to the Development Office with the response to the donation request, including details about the nature of the donation (cash, gift in kind, etc.), description and who received the donation.

A list of all donation solicitations must be received by the Development Office within five (5) business days of the response to the donation solicitation. Failure to comply with these requirements may result in a revocation of prior approval, loss of future approvals on all requests by that parent and disavowing the actions of the non-compliant parent by the school.

These requirements exist to protect our non-profit status, preserve existing relationships with outside resources built by the school, ensure that donation requests are coordinated and to fulfill financial details for audit purposes, as administered by the Business Office. There are no exceptions to these requirements. If a parent is unsure...
whether a particular contact would fall under a donation solicitation, please contact the Development Office.

TRANSPORTATION/PARKING

Parents may make arrangements with private childcare facilities for the drop off and pick up of their children. The school office must be notified if these arrangements are made.

There is no school bus that services St. Thomas Aquinas Regional School students.

LOST AND FOUND

Articles lost by students are kept in a designated area at the end of the hallway designated as Spirit Street. They may be claimed by the student or parent. Articles not claimed after a reasonable length of time will be given to charitable organizations. Parents will mark all articles with the child’s name. Students will not bring valuable items or large sums of money to school.
V. FINANCES

SCHOOL TUITION POLICIES

St. Thomas Aquinas Regional School tuition and fees may be paid in full by June of the current school year.

OR

Payments may be made monthly for 12 months from either a checking or savings account beginning in June and ending in May for each school year through FACTS Tuition Management Company.

The Annual $38.00 FACTS registration fee will be billed to the checking or savings account separately by the FACTS Tuition Management Company.

The monthly tuition payment will be calculated by adding the tuition amount to the fees and prorating the payments over 12 months, if beginning in June and ending in May. All monthly payments must be completed by May of the current school year.

St. Thomas Aquinas Regional School Institution FACTS ID# is 827. The FACTS Tuition Management website may be accessed through the school's website.

TUITION AND OTHER FEE SCHEDULES

TUITION AND FEES 2015-2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Children in Grades K-8</th>
<th>PARISHIONER (Our Lady of Angels, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Sacred Heart)</th>
<th>NON-PARISHIONER</th>
<th>NON-CATHOLIC / NON-ACTIVE CATHOLIC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Annual cost not including fees</strong></td>
<td><strong>Estimated Monthly cost including fees</strong></td>
<td><strong>Estimated Monthly cost including fees</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one</td>
<td>$5,810</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td>$6,210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>two</td>
<td>$10,750</td>
<td>$923</td>
<td>$11,490</td>
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<tr>
<td>three</td>
<td>$14,235</td>
<td>$1,224</td>
<td>$15,215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>four</td>
<td>$16,560</td>
<td>$1,428</td>
<td>$17,700</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pre-K Tuition $3,355 per year not including fees or $295 **

*Monthly costs are based on a 12 month payment plan. All monthly payments must be completed by May of the school year. Your payments may differ if an alternate payment plan is selected or delayed enrollment.

APPLICATION FEE $50 per student. Paid when the application is submitted. (non-refundable)

REGISTRATION FEE $55 per family. Paid after acceptance. Included on invoice for tuition. (non-refundable)

STUDENT FEE $130 per student (non-refundable). The Student Fee is assessed per student for PTO dues, field trips, classroom events, Youth Rally, testing materials, classroom parties, and school supplies including composition books, pencils, crayons, scissors and other necessary items.
Financial Policies

- As part of the registration process, all Aquinas parents will sign the St. Thomas Aquinas Regional School Tuition Contract. In signing this contract, parents make a conscious commitment to educate their children at St. Thomas Aquinas Regional School and help to ensure their enrollment for the upcoming school year. The contract also helps the administration with budget planning, class lists, and placing new students from the large waiting pool.

- **The first FACTS payment (or equivalent if paying upfront) for the upcoming school year, due in June, is nonrefundable.**

- For families who withdraw before the end of the current school year, the tuition will be pro-rated through the month of withdrawal to calculate the final payment or refund due. Student fees will not be refunded in any part.

- If the tuition payment is delinquent and an acceptable alternative arrangement has not been approved by the principal, the following will occur:
  - The student’s continued enrollment at St. Thomas Aquinas Regional School will be jeopardized.
  - Records for students leaving St. Thomas Aquinas Regional School may not be forwarded.
  - Middle school students may not be permitted to take exams in June.
  - A student may not be permitted to graduate if there is an outstanding tuition balance.

- The tuition payments must be current by January 20 in order for a family to register for the following school year. By registering for the following year, a family commits to the payment of the first month’s tuition and fees, which are non-refundable.

- For families who enroll after September, the tuition payments are prorated, but the entire student fees will be paid.

- There will be a $10.00 charge for any checks returned by the bank. The amount of the returned check and the charge must be paid with a money order or cashier’s check. Any payment made after May 25 may require a money order or cashier’s check. Personal checks may not be accepted.

Classroom Money (Collection / Reimbursement and Purchase) Guidelines

In an effort to simplify and streamline the money handling process, strengthen our internal controls, and satisfy our auditors, the following Aquinas money handling guidelines and procedures have been established:
Collections and Deposits:

- All monies collected at the school are sent to the front office to be accounted for by a designated person
- All deposits are made by the business manager

Check Requests:

- Parents may submit an itemized check request to your homeroom teacher for initial approval and a check directly to the vendor prior to the purchase using Class account funds.
- Checks are requested by Tuesday at noon and cut Wednesday afternoon
- For all purchases under $50, you may submit a request to your homeroom teacher for your expected reimbursement and provide the receipts as soon as available. Nominal overages and initial outlays can be reimbursed through petty cash.

Class Accounts:

Each grade level will have an account for the school year. There is only a notational separation between homerooms. Funds are allocated each year from the student fee to cover planned classroom events and field trips. Each teacher is responsible for their homeroom budget and is the primary contact for funds usage. Information or check requests made directly to the Business Office will be referred to the classroom teacher for their approval.

Middle School Class Accounts

*Primary objective:* Middle school class accounts will be funded through an annual Middle School Fee starting in 6th grade. The funds raised by each grade will accumulate in their class account until 8th grade. At that time, funds may be drawn to pay for 8th grade graduation expenses that will include:

- Evening Graduation reception
- Awards Breakfast
- Graduation t-shirts
- End of year field trip
- Class gift to the school

As with all grades, funds collected through the student fee will cover planned classroom events and field trips.

It is anticipated that if each student participates in the annual middle school fee, there should be sufficient funds for those expenses listed above. If necessary, the 8th grade would be permitted to participate in additional fundraisers to supplement their funds.
VI. CHILD RESPONSIBILITIES & BEHAVIOR

CODE OF CONDUCT

In all areas of learning, discipline must be considered in the development of children. The Code of Conduct is based on the Gospel message of Jesus. Growth in self-discipline, a responsibility for Catholic moral values and a loving respect for the rights of all persons is encouraged and nourished by the Code of Conduct. To achieve these ends, parents, staff and children work together to create a Catholic school environment. Based upon the Catholic moral values and loving respect for others taught by Jesus, children:

a. will be truthful.
b. will be respectful and courteous toward all teachers and adults.
c. will refrain from harassment of any kind.
d. will use appropriate language.
e. will speak respectfully to and about others.
f. will respect all school and personal property.
g. will play only in assigned playground areas with good sportsmanship and cooperation.
h. will bring to school only appropriate show & tell items from home.

The school observes this Code of Conduct because it is built on fundamental Catholic social teachings. The role of the principal/director and staff is to work with the children and parents to assist the children in developing a strong Christian attitude toward life.

DISCIPLINE

Classroom rules are designed to protect persons and property and to promote pro-social behaviors, such as sharing and taking turns. If problems arise, the children in question will be reminded of acceptable behaviors and redirected to more positive activities.

USE OF DISCIPLINARY ACTION

In cases where a child is continually disruptive of others or in the case of a single serious disciplinary infraction, the teacher will apprise the principal/director of the situation. They will assist in the development of a course of action to be taken to correct the situation.

Children who lack self-discipline or who violate the rights of others can expect disciplinary action. Each offense will be dealt with on an individual basis according to the age of the child, the nature of the infraction and the severity of the case. Repeated infractions can result in more serious consequences, up to and including suspension and/or expulsion, but there is no requirement for progressive discipline.
**SPECIFIC DISCIPLINARY POLICIES**

All St. Thomas Aquinas Regional School students will contribute to the Christ-like spirit that is at the heart of the school community.

All disciplinary actions taken with Pre-K children will be age-appropriate.

Teachers and administration routinely investigate a disciplinary issue with a child without the parent present.

**SUSPENSION**

Suspension may be imposed as determined by the principal/director. Once the principal/director suspends a child, parents may be required to sign a behavioral contract in which they signify their understanding of the problem and agree to work with the school in correcting the situation.

The failure of the parents to execute the above referenced agreement shall preclude the child from returning to the regular program.

**DISMISSAL**

Conduct which is disruptive to the learning atmosphere and/or contrary to the school’s Code of Conduct is justification for a principal/director to dismiss a child at the close of the school year.

Children who are dismissed may apply for readmission to any Diocesan school after one full year.

**EXPULSION**

Expulsion may be resorted to when one or all of the following are present:

a. a serious infraction of school rules occurs;

b. the child has demonstrated continuing disregard of school rules for which other means of discipline have proven ineffectual;

c. the child's continued presence in the school is considered by school officials to be a serious hindrance to the safety or welfare of the school community;

d. a parent repeatedly or seriously violates proper school protocol, displays inappropriate or disruptive conduct toward students or displays disrespectful, disruptive or harassing behavior toward teachers or toward school, parish or diocesan staff.

If the principal/director believes it necessary to expel a child, the principal/director will notify the child and the child's parents about the child's action and provide them with an opportunity to respond in accordance with the school’s disciplinary hearing process before making any final
decision on the matter.

A parent whose child is expelled may appeal this decision in writing to the Superintendent of Schools within 5 working days from the time of written notification.

During the pendency of any appeal, the expelled child shall be removed from the school community in compliance with the expulsion notice unless otherwise directed in the discretion of the principal/director.

Children who have been expelled from any Diocesan school may not apply for admission to that school or another Diocesan school for a minimum of one (1) year from the date of expulsion.

**REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES**

Privacy of individual children must be balanced against the need to protect the health, welfare and safety of other members of the school community. The principal/director or his/her designee has the right to protect the health, welfare and safety of school patrons by searching a child’s person and/or personal property on school grounds or at school activities. Lockers and desks are school property and are subject to searches by school personnel.

**CARE OF SCHOOL PROPERTY**

Children are to care for school property in a respectful manner. Children who deface or damage school property or the property of others will make financial restitution.

**DRESS CODE**

The dress code provides a standard for our children that fosters an environment conducive to learning and respectful behavior.

Final decisions regarding the school uniform rest with the principal/director.

**Dress Code Requirements & Other Pertinent Information**

**REQUIRED UNIFORM**

Pre-K / Kindergarten students will follow the uniform code modified in the following way:

- Belts are not required
- **Sneakers may be worn (Pre-k Only)**
- Teachers may assign special days where students are not required to wear their uniform.
GRADES Pre-K

GIRLS

a. Jumper: drop waist style, blue Aquinas plaid, length of skirt is to the knee
b. White blouse with Peter Pan collar with long or short sleeves
c. Navy cardigan sweater with Aquinas crest
d. Navy knee socks, navy opaque tights, or plain white ankle socks with cuffs two inches above the edge of the shoe; no sports socks may be worn.
e. Navy slacks from Flynn & O’Hara may be worn during the months of December, January, and February

BOYS

a. Navy blue trousers from Flynn & O’Hara
b. White polo shirt with Aquinas crest, long or short sleeves
c. Navy v-neck sweater or vest with Aquinas crest (optional)
d. Navy blue socks only.

Optional Uniform

Summer Uniform Pre-K
August to a date TBD(Fall) and from a date TBD(spring) to the end of the school year

- Navy uniform shorts and white polo shirt with Aquinas crest worn with white ankle socks, Girls in grades Pre-K-8 may wear navy uniform skort or uniform shorts.
- Regular uniform shoes or all white athletic shoes may be worn. No colored outlining or logos are allowed on athletic shoes.
- White Socks must have a cuff at least two inches above the shoe.

GENERAL DRESS CODE FOR GRADES PRE-K-8

- Uniform items that must be purchased by Flynn & O’Hara include the following: boy’s pants, girl’s slacks, jumpers, skirts, skorts, sweaters’ ties, polo shirts and the P.E. uniform (t-shirt, sweatpants, sweatshirt and shorts).
- Leather dress shoes in a solid color (black, dark brown, or dark blue), either buckle or oxford (lace-up). Navy and white or black and white saddle shoes are permissible for girls. All shoe styles must have a distinguishable heel of no more than one inch in height. Boots, moccasins, ballerina style shoes, flip-flops, shoes that light up or make noise or deck shoes are not permissible styles. Lace-up shoes should have laces replaced as soon as they become frayed or torn. Lace-up shoes must be kept tied at all times, and all shoe styles must be worn properly (i.e., fully tied or closed; foot fully inserted into the shoe.) Students will wear sneakers with the PE uniform.
• All students will wear clean, well-maintained in good condition uniforms, including shoes.
• A navy blue sweater with the Aquinas logo is the only sweater that is to be worn.

A. ACCESSORIES:

(GIRLS) A single pair of small, post earrings to be worn in the earlobe (no hoops or dangling earrings), one simple ring, a watch, and a religious medal, cross, or crucifix on a chain may be worn. Make-up, colored nail polish, or artificial nails or tips may not be worn.

(BOYS) A watch, one simple ring, and a religious medal, cross, or crucifix on a chain may be worn; no earring.

B. Plain, white T-shirts (without any design) may be worn under shirts or blouses. No colored clothing may be worn under shirts or blouses.

C. No pajama bottoms may be worn. On very cold days, girls may wear plain navy blue sweatpants under the uniform skirt or jumper during recess only.

D. All shirts and blouses must be tucked into the waist so that the belt or the waistline of the skirt is visible.

E. No body piercing, tattoos or colored contact lenses.

Hair Policy for Girls in Grades Pre-K -8

• Hair may not be dyed, bleached, tinted, tipped, highlighted; i.e. deliberate altering of a student’s natural hair color is not permitted.
• Hair must not cover the eyes or be spiked.
• No unusual haircuts are permitted.
• Small hair ribbons or clips may be worn. No hair accessories may extend out from the head.

HAIRCUT POLICY for BOYS in GRADES Pre-K-8

Boys' hairstyles are expected to be simple, clean cut, evenly trimmed, should not cover any part of the ears, eyebrows, or touch the shirt collar.

• No unusual haircuts are permitted.
• Hair must be cut within five days after a teacher or administrator requests a student to do so.
• Deliberate altering of a student’s natural hair color is not permitted.
• No facial hair is permitted.
• Hair may not be spiked.
OUT OF UNIFORM DAYS

Out of uniform days may be casual or dress up days. The following guidelines are to be followed:

**Dress up days (Picture Day)**
- Skirts will not be worn shorter than the uniform length (must cover the knee).
- All dress pants will be worn at the waist.
- Skorts (skirt/shorts combination) are not permitted.
- No tennis shoes, flip-flops, or ballerina type shoes
- No T-shirts
- No jeans
- No shorts
- No make-up will be worn.
- All clothing will be worn modestly. No bare midriffs, low-cut tops, or excessively tight clothing will be permitted.
- Dresses with spaghetti straps may be worn if a jacket or sweater is worn over them or dress straps must be at least 4” wide.
- Colored bracelets may not be worn.

**Casual Dress Day**
On days when students are permitted to dress casually, tennis shoes may be worn. All clothing must be worn modestly. All casual pants must be worn at the waist. No bare midriffs, low-cut tops, or excessively tight or revealing jeans or tops are permitted. Shorts and skorts are permitted on casual dress day only during the time when the summer uniform is allowed to be worn. Shirts must be appropriate for school. (ex. No reference to bands, etc.)

If a student is improperly dressed on any out of uniform day, they will be given alternate clothing to wear or their parents will be called to take them home or bring a change of clothes.

**Spirit Wear Dress**
Spirit wear days are distinct from out of uniform days. Spirit wear days are special days designated by the principal when the students, faculty, and staff may come to school dressed in official Aquinas spirit wear. These days usually fall on the last Friday of the month or on a spirit night. All spirit wear days will be listed on the calendar. Spirit wear days are optional, and if a student does not choose to dress in spirit wear on these days, he/she should come to school in the regular school uniform. The following are guidelines for spirit wear days:

- Students should wear an official Aquinas spirit wear shirt*.
- Any other official Aquinas spirit wear can be worn on these days with the exception of hats which may not be worn inside of the building.**
- Blue jeans should be worn to school on these days. However, jeans with rips, holes, or are too tight are not permitted. Colored jeans are not allowed.
- Students may wear shorts within the time frame that the summer uniform is allowed.
• Temporary colored hair is not allowed. No nail polish.
• No alterations should be made to the spirit wear resulting in tank tops, or shortened tops revealing bare midriffs.
• Excessive jewelry should not be worn, as it can be a distraction in the classroom. No make-up may be worn. No face painting.
• Shoes with heels higher than 1", sandals, or flip-flops may not be worn.
• Shorts or skirts may not be shorter than 2" above the knee. An easy way to measure is to have the piece of clothing extend below the student’s fingertips when arms are hung by the side.

* Examples are: youth rally t-shirts, PTO produced Aquinas and Crusader t-shirts, Non-uniform Land’s End items, athletic t-shirts (but not game jerseys), or Aquinas uniform polo shirt.

**When the weather turns cold, spirit wear should be visible. For example: it would be unacceptable to be wearing an Aquinas t-shirt which was covered completely by a Virginia Tech sweatshirt. The student would then appear to be wearing Virginia Tech spirit wear instead of Aquinas spirit wear.

On or before special holidays (only as designated by the principal) students may wear colored (related to the occasion) accessories as listed below:
  • Socks, ribbons, sweaters, nice sweatshirts, ties, colored nail polish, or jewelry (no colored bracelets).
  • NO OTHER ACCESSORIES MAY BE ADDED TO THE UNIFORM.

Aquinas Events Outside of the Regular School Day
Whenever students are representing St. Thomas Aquinas Regional School, they are expected to dress modestly and appropriately, whether at school or at a different venue.

Students who abuse any of the guidelines stated above will lose the privilege of coming out of uniform or wearing accessories on designated days.

THE SPIRIT OF THE UNIFORM POLICY IS TO BE MAINTAINED AND STUDENTS ARE REQUIRED TO ABIDE BY WHAT THE ADMINISTRATION DEEMS APPROPRIATE WHEN NOT EXPRESSLY IDENTIFIED IN THE ABOVE LISTS.
**PLAYGROUND REGULATIONS**

- Pre-K children will only play on the playground when the teacher, the aide or another adult is present.
- Children will play within the fenced or coned area.
- Children will not leave the playground area without an adult.
- Children are not permitted to participate in any inappropriate physical contact; i.e., hitting, kicking, pushing, inappropriate display of affection, etc.

**LUNCHROOM REGULATIONS**

Given the risk of potential harm, students’ access and use of microwave ovens are prohibited. Student meals provided by parents must not be heated in microwave ovens by school personnel and/or school volunteers.

Pre-K children do not participate in the St. Thomas Aquinas Regional School lunch program.

**SHOW & TELL**

Children are allowed to bring toys from home for the purpose of Show and Tell only. Weapons (whether real or toys) of any kind are not appropriate Show and Tell items, and shall not be brought to school for any reasons. If weapons of any kind are brought to school, the child shall be subject to immediate disciplinary action which may include but not be limited to expulsion.
VII. HEALTH, SAFETY & WELFARE

STUDENT HEALTH, SAFETY & WELFARE

Parents and guardians have the primary responsibility for the health and well-being of their children. School health services supplement, rather than substitute, for parental care and concern for the health of the students.

PREVENTION OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT AND/OR CHILD ABUSE

The Catholic Diocese of Arlington Policy on the Prevention of Sexual Misconduct and/or Child Abuse generally applies to all clergy, all employees and all volunteers.

It is the policy of the Diocese that sexual misconduct and/or child abuse while performing any work or activities under the auspices of the Diocese is contrary to Christian principles and outside the scope of any authority, duties and/or employment of any clergy, employee or volunteer.

Any clergy, employee or volunteer with the Diocese who knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that an incident of child abuse or illegal sexual misconduct has been perpetrated by any individual, including clergy, employee or volunteer with the Diocese,

a. must comply with applicable reporting and other requirements of state and local law;

b. must report the incident to the Moderator of the Curia of the Diocese of Arlington.

Virginia law imposes upon school personnel the legal responsibility of reporting to the local child protective services agency any incident of suspected child abuse or neglect.

School personnel who suspect the abuse or neglect of a student must report the matter directly to Child Protective Services and to the school principal/director who in turn will call the Moderator of the Curia. At that point, confidentiality must be respected.

According to the Code of Virginia, (Section 63.2 – 1518) Authority to Talk to a Child or Sibling, “Any person required to make a report or conduct an investigation or family assessment, pursuant to this chapter may talk to any child suspected of being abused or neglected or to any of his siblings without consent of and outside the presence of his parent, guardian, legal custodian or other person standing in loco parentis or school personnel.”

WELLNESS POLICY

The Diocese of Arlington Office of Catholic Schools Wellness Policy (2006) meets minimum federal standards and establishes goals for physical education, nutrition and healthy environments in schools. All schools must develop, and continue to evaluate, local school wellness policies. The local policies create a framework for increased student activity, staff wellness, safe and healthy environments and the elimination of foods of minimal nutritional value, during the school day. All schools have wellness committees to implement, sustain and evaluate the local wellness program.
ACCIDENTS AND FIRST AID

The parents of an injured student will be notified of the accident/injury by the principal/administration or the principal/administration's designee as soon as reasonably possible, taking into consideration such factors as the apparent severity of the accident/injury and the priority of providing assistance to the student.

If an incident results in a medical condition or injury which can be reasonably known to the appropriate supervisory faculty/staff member and/or the principal/director, the school and/or its staff are authorized to render reasonable basic first aid if such direct medical assistance would, in the opinion of the school, serve to minimize the severity of the injured person's condition. In addition, staff may secure professional diagnosis and/or treatment if such action, in the opinion of the school, appears to be reasonably warranted. The school and school officials shall be expressly held harmless from any liability costs or expenses associated with the professional diagnosis and/or any treatment or first aid provided (including but not limited to the cost of transportation), such costs or expenses being the responsibility of the injured party or, if a student, the student's parents.

ILLNESS

Each school will provide a health office or comfortable space, apart from the student population, where children who become ill or injured can be cared for following Virginia School Health Guidelines, 2nd edition.

Children with fevers, contagious or infectious diseases will be sent home promptly and excluded from school while in that condition, per Virginia Department of Health regulations. Once the student is confirmed to be free of communicable illness by a healthcare provider or is fever free/symptom free for 24 hours without taking anti-fever medications, the student may return to school, afterschool and extracurricular activities.

When a student is requesting a waiver from participating in Physical Education classes and/or recess, parents are required to submit a written statement from their child’s physician which states any activity restrictions with regard to participation in Physical Education classes and/or recess. The statement is expected to include a specific time frame for the activity restrictions.

Good health is necessary in order for a student to perform well in school. If a child becomes ill during school time and needs special attention, the parent or guardian will be contacted. If the school is unable to locate the parent or guardian, one of the other names noted on the emergency sheet will be called. No student will be sent home without permission of the parent or one designated to take the place of the parent. Students with fevers or communicable diseases will remain in the clinic until an authorized person comes to collect the sick child.

When a suspected case of chicken pox, measles, impetigo, hepatitis, mumps, conjunctivitis (pink eye), streptococcal infections, scarlet fever, head lice, or any other communicable
**Medication Administration Overview**

Detailed Diocesan medication policies and procedures can be accessed on the Office of Catholic Schools website, in the school clinic and in the appendix of this document.

All school clinic, administrators and staff are required to administer medication within the framework of the procedures outlined in Diocesan policy and summarized here.

All prescription and over the counter (OTC) medications may be administered during the school day under the following conditions:

a. When the need for administration of medicines during school hours has been confirmed by the school nurse/health assistant (or the school administration);

b. After the first dose of any medication has been given at home;

c. When the parent/guardian provides and transports the medication to and from school and the medication is given directly to the school nurse/health assistant or a senior member of the school administration;

d. When there is a health care provider’s written order signed by the parent/guardian requesting the school to administer medication or to permit the student to self-administer the medication;

e. When the medication is brought to the school in its original container stating the name of the student, the dosage and method of administration prescribed by a physician. It is the parent’s or guardian’s responsibility to notify the school of any changes to the original prescription. The new prescription must also be brought to the school in the original container as stated above;

f. When the appropriate medication authorization form (Appendix F-6) has been completed, signed and accompanies the medication;

g. For any medication, parents must document the number of tablets or dosages to be secured for administration by authorized school personnel. If tablets are to be divided, the parent or guardian is responsible for dividing the tablets that are to be divided in order to achieve their child’s proper dosage.

All OTC and prescription medications are to be kept locked in the clinic/school office and be administered by the school nurse, clinic aide, principal/director or trained designee. No student is to carry/possess medications, without appropriate medical authorization. No medication will be administered unless the school has received a signed copy of the Medication Authorization Form (Appendix F-6). OTC medications do not require a health care provider’s signature unless the medication is required for four (4) or more consecutive days.

It shall be the student’s responsibility to come to the clinic/school office at the appropriate time for
medication unless a health care provider or parent indicates in writing that the student cannot do this.

Students are NOT permitted to self-medicate. The school does not assume responsibility for medications taken independently by the student. Exceptions may be made on a case by case basis for students who demonstrate the capability to carry and self-administer emergency life-saving medications (e.g. inhaler, Epi-pen).

Within one week after expiration of the effective date on the order, or on the last day of school, the parent/guardian must personally collect any unused portion of the medication. Medications not claimed within that period will be destroyed.

**SPECIALIZED STUDENT CARE NEEDS**

The parent of any student on a continuing regimen for a non-episodic condition shall inform the school principal/director/administration and identify in writing the student's supervising health care provider. If necessary, and with parental written consent, there may be occasions when the school needs to communicate with the health care provider regarding possible effects on the pupil's healthcare management, special emergency procedures or behavior at school.

**LIFE THREATENING ALLERGY**

All schools will provide an annual in-service for school faculty and staff to educate on the policy. Training will include minimizing the risk of exposure to life threatening allergens in the school setting as well as anaphylaxis recognition, medical management and incident reporting.

Schools will utilize the policy to develop allergen management communications for student handbooks, classrooms and parental publications. Schools will recruit and train teams responsible for managing an allergic crisis.

Parents and guardians of students with a life threatening allergy must inform principal/director and school health personnel of any allergies and provide schools with fully executed Diocesan documents. Parents/guardians are expected to supply schools with any emergency medications as prescribed and may additionally provide the student with “safe” foods for classroom celebrations involving food. Schools will utilize Diocesan documents to formulate an emergency care plan for the student and will share this care plan with those involved with the student including, but not limited to teacher(s), food service, bus driver, and janitorial staff.
INFECTIOUS/COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

DISEASE

Parents must notify the school within 24 hours if their child or any member of the immediate household has developed a communicable disease. Parents must notify the school immediately if the disease is life threatening. Parents must pick up their sick or injured child in a timely manner when contacted. If the parent cannot be reached, emergency contacts will be called to pick up the child.

The protection and welfare of each individual student is of importance in the schools of the Diocese of Arlington. In an effort to enhance protection of students:

a. No daycare/preschool student may attend class without documentary proof of adequate immunization in accordance with Virginia Department of Health’s school entry requirements (or modified schedule as approved by licensed health care provider) on the Virginia School Entrance Health Form (MCH-213 G).

i. Parents or guardians who object to the administration of immunizing agents for their child on the grounds that this conflicts with their religious tenets or practices must produce a notarized Certificate of Religious Exemption CRE-1 form, which will be retained in the student health record.

ii. Students who have traveled or resided in a foreign country for five months or more during the last three years are required to provide documentation of a recent tuberculosis skin test result prior to school entry.

b. Children with fevers and/or contagious or infectious diseases will be sent home promptly and will be excluded from school while in that condition, according to Virginia Department of Health regulations. Once the student is confirmed to be free of communicable illness by a health care provider or is fever free/symptom free for 24 hours without taking anti-fever medications, the student may return to school.

c. School health personnel will follow the Virginia Department of Health Communicable Disease Chart, found in the Virginia School Health Guidelines, 2nd edition, when referring suspected cases of communicable disease to the local health department for excluding or readmitting a student.

d. The Diocese of Arlington has comprehensive guidelines for school/parish based influenza vaccination clinics. The liability associated with the vaccination of children is great. The Diocese of Arlington does not promote school based vaccination clinics, for children during school hours and in the absence of the parent, with the exception of a state or federal emergency. Any school wishing to offer an onsite school influenza vaccination program must comply with all aspects of the Memorandum of Agreement (Appendix F-18). Vendors wishing to serve as vaccinators must be fully vetted by the
Office of Risk Management prior to the consummation of any contract for services.

LICE

All students determined to have an active case of lice will be excluded from school until they receive treatment. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to provide appropriate and adequate treatment for the student and home environment as recommended by their health care professional. Readmission to school is determined by the school nurse/administration based upon re-inspection and the effectiveness of treatment. Follow up treatment is expected and verified by the school nurse/administration. Classroom contacts may be inspected.

Once a child becomes infected, he/she will not be readmitted to school until the following criteria are met:
- A parent must accompany the child to the clinic before returning to class.
- The child must be examined by the school nurse and must be nit-free. If any nits are found, the child will be required to go home.
- A letter must accompany the student stating that treatment with approved head lice shampoo was used.

A strict NIT FREE policy will be enforced.

BLOODBORNE DISEASE

The Christian community is called to respond to the sick in our midst with compassion and justice. The diocese recognizes its obligation to protect the rights of individual students infected with Hepatitis and HIV to provide a safe environment for students, staff members and the public. Students who are infected with bloodborne Hepatitis, Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) or HIV-related conditions must be provided the opportunity to receive a Catholic school education in a regular classroom unless the student's health interferes significantly with school performance.

Since it is known that bloodborne Hepatitis and HIV are not transmitted through casual contact, any student who is infected will continue education in a regular classroom assignment unless his or her health status requires otherwise. It is the intent of the Diocese of Arlington Office of Catholic Schools to follow the recommendations of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Virginia Department of Health which state that, most bloodborne Hepatitis and HIV-infected children be allowed to attend school in an unrestricted setting and that decisions regarding school attendance be based on the medical condition of each child and the expected type of interaction with others in that setting.

Persons involved in the implementation and monitoring of this policy shall maintain confidentiality of records in compliance with federal and state law and diocesan policy. All diocesan schools shall also maintain a program of information and training for school staff members to ensure a consistent and accurate understanding regarding prevention of exposure to bloodborne pathogens. This includes training related to the proper application of universal/standard precautions.
FIRE/EMERGENCY DRILLS

Fire Drill Procedures
- Exit routes are posted in each room.
- Teachers will accompany students outside the building to assigned places.
- Students separated from their class at the time of the drill (in the restroom, on an errand, etc.) will use the closest exit, and then report to their classroom teacher outside. If this is not possible to do without crossing the fire lane, students will report to an administrator.
- Individuals instructing special classes (music, art, science lab, computer, band, library, etc.) are responsible for supervising the class during a fire drill. Students in a special class or assisting in another classroom at the time of a fire drill will remain with that particular teacher for the duration of the drill. Classroom teachers will meet their students where they are assembled with the specials teacher.
- **Students will exit and reenter the building in perfect order and in complete silence.**
  - All persons will exit the building.
  - The last student out of the room closes the door.
  - Teachers will bring their roll books for roll check.
  - Teachers will report roll to appropriate staff as designated by the administration.
  - An administrator will give an “all clear” signal allowing all to reenter the building.

In addition to fire drills, students participate in other drills for emergency situations – tornado, bomb, etc.

Shelter-in-Place
To prepare for the event of an exterior chemical or biological exposure to hazardous material, St. Thomas Aquinas Regional School has adopted an extensive Shelter-in-Place plan. This procedure utilizes the school building structure and its indoor atmosphere to temporarily separate people from a hazardous outdoor atmosphere. When the school has entered into a Shelter-in-Place situation, parents cannot enter the school building.

Should a situation arise that delays the release of students at the end of the day, parents will be notified in the following manner:
- The school receptionist will notify the parking lot parent contacts.
- The parent contacts will inform those in the parking lot of the delay by holding up red signs and walking through the parking lot. Parents are asked to please follow the direction they are given in a timely and respectful manner.
- Parents are asked to NOT CALL THE OFFICE. Phone lines must remain open to receive directions from county officials.
- Parking lot contacts will be in constant communication with the office.
- Once the emergency situation has been resolved and the okay is received from county officials, students will be released as usual.
SEXUAL HARASSMENT - STUDENTS

Sexuality affects all aspects of the person, including in a general way the aptitude for forming bonds of communion with others. The Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Arlington endeavor to provide for their students an atmosphere free from sexual harassment.

No student is to sexually harass another member of the school community. Any student who engages in sexual harassment shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion.

Sexual harassment is defined as any unwelcome sexual advances, unwelcome physical contact of a sexual nature or unwelcome verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. "Unwelcome verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature" includes, but is not limited to, “the deliberate, repeated making of unsolicited gestures or comments, or the deliberate, repeated display of offensive, sexually graphic materials via any media source which is not necessary for school purposes."

BULLYING

Bullying is defined as any aggressive and unwanted behavior that is intended to harm, intimidate, or humiliate the victim; involves a real or perceived power imbalance between aggressor or aggressors and victim; and is repeated over time or causes severe emotional trauma. “Bullying” includes cyber bullying. “Bullying” does not include ordinary teasing, horseplay, argument, or peer conflict.

Examples include but are not limited to:

- a. Physical intimidation or assault
- b. Extortion
- c. Oral or written threats, including text messaging
- d. Malicious teasing
- e. Putdowns
- f. Name calling
- g. Threatening looks
- h. Gestures or acts of aggression (Overt and Covert)
- i. Cruel rumors & false accusations
- j. Social Isolation
- k. Cyber-bullying

School personnel will not tolerate any bullying on Diocesan school grounds or at any school-sponsored activity (on or off school grounds). In addition, the Office of Catholic Schools expects students and parents who become aware of an act of bullying to report it to appropriate school personnel (e.g. principal/director, teacher, school counselor). The Office of Catholic Schools expects staff members who become aware of an incident of bullying to take appropriate steps to intervene unless intervention would be a threat to staff members’ safety. If a staff member believes that his/her intervention has not resolved the matter, or if the bullying persists, he/she shall report the bullying to the school principal/director for further investigation.
In cases of reported bullying, the principal/director or designee shall interview all students involved (i.e. the aggressor(s) and the victim(s)) and investigate, as appropriate. This investigation may include interviews with students, parents and school staff; review of school records; and identification of parent and family issues. Any student who retaliates against another for reporting bullying may be subject to appropriate consequences.

Consequences for students who bully others shall depend on the results of the investigation and may include:

a. Counseling  
b. Parent conference  
c. Detention  
d. Suspension and/or Expulsion  

Depending on the severity of the incident(s), the principal/director may also report incidents of bullying to law enforcement if appropriate.

**ASBESTOS MANDATORY YEARLY NOTIFICATION**  
June 29, 2015  

Dear Parent:  

As you may or may not know, our school has been recently inspected in accordance with the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA). In accordance with the Commonwealth of Virginia and Federal requirements, this letter is to inform you that *asbestos-containing materials are present in our school*. *(They are located in some old floor tiles in the gym which have been overlayed with non-asbestos tile, which is an acceptable practice).*  

For further information you may contact the school’s Asbestos Program Manager, Jimmy Bush at (703) 494-2444, or our Local Education Agency’s Designated Person, Raven Shad, at (703) 841-2572. A copy of the school Management Plan can be found in the assistant principal’s office at the school or alternately at 200 North Glebe Road, Suite 704, Arlington, Virginia 22203. The Plan will be available for your review and inspection during normal business hours.

Please feel free to request information on or about our Management Plan, the inspection findings, and our plans. We plan to provide you information on our progress in implementing the Management Plan on a periodic basis, through mailings, Parent Teacher Organization meetings, and other means.

Sincerely yours,  
Sister Kateri Rose  
Principal
**VIDEO SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS**

School leadership at each individual school may elect to install video surveillance cameras in order to maintain a safe and secure environment.

a. In the discretion of the principal/director or his or her designees, video surveillance cameras may be placed in public locations deemed appropriate. Such locations may include, without limitation, school entrances/exits, lobby areas, hallways, classrooms, cafeterias, athletic areas, gathering spaces, and outdoor grounds, as well as school buses.

b. Restrooms, changing rooms, private offices, nurse’s offices and locker rooms are excluded from security camera use.

c. It is recognized that it will not be possible to monitor all building areas, rooms and grounds, or to monitor any location at all times.

Schools making use of video surveillance cameras will provide notice to staff, students, and parents/guardians, by means of inclusion of this policy in their respective handbooks, that video surveillance may occur on school property. In addition, school leadership may elect to install signs at building entrances or other locations deemed appropriate to inform visitors and invitees that video surveillance may occur.

To the extent video images may be deemed to create student records or personnel records, the school shall comply with any applicable state and federal laws related to record maintenance, retention and disclosure.

Video images obtained by the school shall be viewed by authorized school and diocesan personnel as necessary. The school and the diocese may rely on the images obtained by the video surveillance cameras in connection with the enforcement of diocesan or school policies, regulations, codes of conduct, building rules and other applicable laws or rules, including but not limited to use of such images in student and staff disciplinary proceedings and matters referred to local law enforcement agencies in accordance with applicable law. Video images may become part of a student’s educational record or a staff member’s personnel record in accordance with applicable law.

All video recordings shall be stored in a secure place. Recordings will be saved for no less than 30 days, and may be retained longer if deemed appropriate. All video recordings are the sole property of the Catholic Diocese of Arlington. Release of such videos will be made only with the permission of the diocesan Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee.
VIII. CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

The Catholic school recognizes the beauty and potential inherent within each child. In an effort to foster continued growth, the school embraces the challenge to provide assistance and programs to serve children with special needs according to the resources available within/to the school. Parents are considered an integral part of the process.

In order to accommodate a child who has been evaluated for special learning needs, parents are obligated to share educational/psychological testing results and any resulting plan with the school. The refusal to provide such information is a condition for negating enrollment in the school. A child may be admitted on a probationary basis with dates and criteria of evaluation clearly established in writing.

If a child has a documented disability, a copy of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP), Individualized Services Plan (ISP), 504 plan and/or Student Assistance Plan (SAP) should be maintained in the child’s confidential file. Children who have a documented disability but do not qualify for services through the local public school may be eligible for accommodations through a Student Assistance Plan written at the Catholic school.

When a student qualifies for special education services through the public school and will not receive services, an Individualized Catholic Education Plan can be written following the information in the Guidelines for Serving Students with Special Needs.

Failure of the parent to sign the Student Assistance Plan or Individualized Catholic Education Plan does not prevent the implementation of the plan.

Children with disabilities are expected to follow the school’s policies and honor code.

Aquinas has one full-time resource teacher, one full time school counselor and one part time English Language Learner teacher. Aquinas also hosts a part-time Title I teacher.

Students with identified learning disabilities receive priority scheduling followed by students who are under evaluation for learning disabilities. Students are considered to have an identified learning disability if they have an existing Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Individualized Service Plan (ISP) from a public school or a Student Assistance Plan (SAP) or Individualized Catholic Education Plan (ICEP) or equivalent from a public school along with supporting testing data.

A SAP is developed by Student Assistance Team (SAT) members in consultation with the parents. The parents’ signature on the SAP is considered permission for the student to participate in services. This permission remains in effect while the student is at St. Thomas Aquinas Regional School.

Resource help can take many forms from monitoring of classroom accommodations to inclusion services in the general education classroom, to pull-out services in which the
subject grades are provided by the resource teacher. The type and duration of services is determined by the resource teacher in consultation with the classroom teacher, school counselor, and administration as needed. Resource services may be limited due to professional availability.

Resource personnel are available to guide parents through the special education evaluation process in the public school system. However, if the parent would like assistance in this process, resource personnel must be contacted before contact with the public school is initiated. If resource personnel and the administration feel the student in question does not meet the criteria necessary to pursue an evaluation, resource personnel may decline to participate in the process. Please refer to eligibility criteria below.

If the school requests an evaluation as a means of meeting a student’s academic needs, parents must begin the process by scheduling a student intervention meeting with the public school or scheduling an appointment with a private evaluator within six weeks of the request. If an evaluation is not pursued, school personnel will make a determination if they can continue to serve the student.

**Eligibility for Special Education Services at St. Thomas Aquinas Regional School**

To be eligible for special education services at St. Thomas of Aquinas Regional School, a child must have a disability and must need special education services. Students determined eligible for special education services must meet all three of the following criteria:

1. The student must have a diagnosed disability or disabilities.
2. The student’s disability/disabilities adversely affect educational performance.
3. The student’s unique needs cannot be addressed through education in general education classes alone – with or without individual accommodations. The student requires specially designed instruction.

A diagnosis from a doctor or mental health professional alone is not enough to qualify for special education services. A child with a medical diagnosis does not automatically qualify for special education services. Eligibility is decided based on the type of medical diagnosis and whether the diagnosis affects the child’s education. Information from a doctor or mental health professional is very helpful, however, and should be provided to the school.

Eligibility is based on a comprehensive evaluation, which parents can request through either the public school system or a private evaluator. The public school system has 10 days following the receipt of the referral to convene a Child Study Committee to determine if an evaluation is warranted. The Virginia public schools have 65 days from the date of the referral to the special education administrator to complete the testing.
and hold the eligibility meeting to determine if the child qualifies for special education services. A comprehensive evaluation includes existing data gathered about the student through the referral process and any additional assessments needed to determine whether a student is eligible for special education. The initial evaluation report is used to determine what special education services are needed.

Children with disabilities enrolled in private schools by their parents have no individual entitlement to receive some or all of the special education and related services they would receive if enrolled in a public school. After an evaluation of a student and determining eligibility for special education, the school district where the private school is located will explain to you what services are available if the student remains in the private school and inform you that the school district where the child lives is responsible for providing a free appropriate public education (FAPE) if the child leaves the private school and enrolls in public school.
IX. PROGRAM INFORMATION

LICENSING INFORMATION

The Commonwealth of Virginia helps assure parents that child day programs that assume responsibility for the supervision, protection and well-being of a child for any part of a 24-hour day are safe. Title 63.1, Chapter 10 of the Code of Virginia gives the Department of Social Services authority to license these programs. While there are some legislative exemptions to licensure, licensed programs include child day centers, family day homes, child day center systems and family day systems. The state may also voluntarily register family day homes which are not required to be licensed.

Standards for licensed child day centers address certain health precautions, adequate play space, a ratio of children per staff member, equipment, program and record keeping. Criminal record checks and specific qualifications for staff and most volunteers working directly with children are also required. Standards require the facility to meet applicable fire, health and building codes.

Compliance with standards is determined by announced and unannounced visits to the program by licensing staff within the Department of Social Services. In addition, parents or other individuals may register a complaint about a program which will be investigated if it violates a standard.

Three types of licensing may be issued to programs. Conditional licenses may be issued to a new program to allow up to six months for the program to demonstrate compliance with the standards. A regular license is issued when the program substantially meets the standards for licensure. A provisional license, which cannot exceed six months, is issued when the program is temporarily unable to comply with the standards. Operating without a license when required constitutes a misdemeanor which, upon conviction, can be punishable by a fine of up to $100 or imprisonment of up to 12 months or both for each day’s violation.

If you would like additional information about the licensing of child day programs or would like to register a complaint, please contact the Regional Office of Social Services closest to you.

Fairfax Licensing Office
3701 Pender Drive, Suite 125
Fairfax, VA 22030
(703) 934-1505

Northern Virginia Regional Office
320 Hospital Drive, Suite #23
Warrenton, VA 22186
(540) 347-6345
CRISIS MANAGEMENT/EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN

A Crisis Management/Emergency Preparedness Plan has been developed and approved. All employees have been trained accordingly.

OVER-THE-COUNTER SKIN PRODUCTS

All non-prescription drugs and over-the-counter skin products shall be used in accordance with the manufacturer’s recommendations. Non-prescription drugs and over-the-counter skin products shall not be kept or used beyond the expiration date of the product.

For all over-the-counter skin products:

a. written parent authorization noting any known adverse reactions shall be obtained;
b. shall be in the original container labeled with the child’s name;
c. does not need to be kept locked but shall be inaccessible to children under five years of age;
d. any center-kept sunscreen shall be hypo-allergenic and have a minimum SPF of 15;
e. children nine years of age and older may administer their own sunscreen if supervised.

When insect repellent is used, a record shall be kept that includes the child’s name, date of use, frequency of application and any adverse reaction. Manufacturer’s instructions for age, duration and dosage shall be followed.
INSURANCE

The program is covered by public liability insurance through the Diocese of Arlington and the Catholic Mutual Relief Society of America. Student insurance must be provided by the family through their own policy or purchased through an independent school insurance provider.

TAX INFORMATION

Because the Internal Revenue Service requires identification of care givers in order to claim a credit for child and dependent care expenses, the school will complete and return to the parent any W-10 that is sent in, provided Part II is already completed by the parent.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

In compliance with state regulations for state licensed programs, a custodial parent shall be admitted to any child day program. Such right of admission shall apply only while the child is in the child day program (63.2-1813 of Code of Virginia).

The Aquinas Pre-K program is “not” considered a child care program. The regular school parental policies apply to Pre-K parents as well.
X. **APPENDICES**

School Forms are available at http://www.arlingtondiocese.org/catholicschools/forms.aspx and http://aquinastars.org/forms/

Diocesan Forms
- Permission for Emergency Care Form (*Appendix F-I*)
- Confidential Health History Update (*Appendix F-IA*)
- Virginia School Entrance Health Form (*Appendix F-2*)
- Virginia School Entrance Health Form Instructions (*Appendix F-2A*)
- Inhaler Authorization Form (*Appendix F-3*)
- Asthma Action Plan (*Appendix F-3A*)
- Epipen/Twinject Authorization Form (*Appendix F-4*)
- Allergy Action Plan (*Appendix F-4A*)
- Diabetes Reference Emergency Plan: Hyperglycemia & Hypoglycemia (*Appendix F-5*)
- Diabetes Medical Management Plan (*Appendix F-5A*)
- Medication Authorization Form (*Appendix F-6*)
- Confidential Individual Health Office Visit Record (*Appendix F-11*)
- Waiver Information/Right to Object Form (*Appendix N*)
- Parent Permission Form for School Sponsored Trip Participation (*Appendix R*)
- Academic Intervention Plan (*Appendix AA*)
- Preschool Handbook Agreement Form (*Appendix AG-3*)