

# Preschool Parent/Student Handbook

2010-2011



ST. THOMAS MORE  
CATHEDRAL SCHOOL  
• STRIVE TO BE MORE •

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**Please retain this handbook in a safe place.**

*(REVISED August 2010)*

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*The Catholic School of the future, rooted in the riches of Catholic traditions, will be a Christ-centered learning environment, focused on cultivating the potential of children and adults within the faith community.*

*As an educational center where Gospel values are learned, embraced and integrated by all Members, the Catholic School will be a center for life-long learning, which both challenges and empowers persons to assess the present and to design the future.*

*The Catholic School will create an integrated curriculum that accommodates the diversity of learning in a global society.*

Dear Parents and Students,

Welcome to St. Thomas More Cathedral School. We are very happy to have you as a member of our community.

I think you will find that St. Thomas More School embodies the ideals set forth in our vision statement in a unique way. We are a school with deep tradition, rooted in the teachings of Christ and looking forward to the opportunities of the future. The mission of our school—to nurture and fulfill the spiritual, academic, social and emotional promise of each student in accordance with the teachings of Jesus Christ—requires the best effort of students, parents, teachers and staff.

In this handbook we have sought to provide the information and policies that will help us work, play and pray together each day. Please read it and use it throughout the school year. Let us pray for one another as we work and learn together this year. May our center always be Christ and our focus the students.

God bless,  
Eleanor McCormack  
Principal

# 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<sup>1</sup>. 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.

<sup>1</sup>Declaration on Christian Education #3

## ***SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT/PHILOSOPHY***

### ***Mission***

Our mission is to nurture and develop the spiritual, academic, social, and emotional promise of each child in accordance with the teachings of the Catholic Church, rooted in Gospel values and led by the examples of the Master Teacher, Jesus Christ.

### ***Philosophy of Learning***

We believe learning is fostered in a safe, faith-filled nurturing environment.

We believe learning is a cooperative experience involving self-motivation, peer assistance, teacher direction, and parent support.

We believe learning occurs most successfully in an atmosphere of acceptance and mutual respect that allows the student to question, to experiment, and to take risks while maintaining positive self-esteem.

We believe students have unique learning styles, talents, and abilities and each deserves the right to excel.

We believe all students need skilled, caring, and fair teachers who establish clear and reasonable expectations that challenge each student to reach his or her potential.

We believe in celebrating the diversity of our school and community, training all students to understand and appreciate the wider world of today while preparing them to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.

We believe learning is a life-long endeavor bringing us closer to knowing God and understanding His world.

faculty June 2009

Adopted by the

## ***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 Diocesan 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-1 and AG-2). 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 result in disciplinary action being taken and/or prevent a student from enrolling (or continuing 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 Diocese, the Diocesan policies guidelines or regulations shall be of controlling force and effect.

## ***PARENTAL ROLE***

The Catholic Church recognizes parents as the primary educators of their children. 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 child's non-parent legal guardian or to any person or agency authorized to act in place of parents.

Parents are expected to display an attitude of respect and support toward the school, the staff, and the educational process by:

- Supporting the school's mission and commitment to Christian principles;
- Supporting the school policies as outlined in the school handbook;
- Participating fully in school programs that are developed to support the education of their children;
- Remaining informed about and involved in the religious instruction of their children.

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 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 (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.

## ***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:

- Non-Catholic children are expected to participate in the religious formation and education programs of the school.
- Non-Catholic children must participate in liturgies, retreats and other religious functions incorporated within the program.
- Non-Catholic children may not be exempted from the catechesis held during the school day.
- 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:

- Daily outdoor play, weather permitting
- Altering periods of quiet time and active play
- A balance of large muscle and small muscle activities is provided
- Various small group or large group activities through most of the day
- 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***

Each child will need the following items:

- 1 backpack
- 1 lunchbox
- 1 container *Lysol or Clorox* table wipes
- 2 containers *Wet Ones* antibacterial hand wipes
- 1 box of tissues
- 1 roll of paper towels

The school provides most of the supplies and materials used in the curriculum. Parents may be asked to provide smocks and materials for special projects.

## ***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**

Teachers will provide semi-annual scheduled opportunities for parents to discuss their child's progress and the Preschool program. Conferences may be requested at other times during the school year by the teacher or by the parent. Parents may schedule

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any additional conferences before or after regular school hours. Parents may also make an appointment to observe their child's class.

## ***PROGRESS REPORTS***

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

A semi-annual written progress report will be provided to parents describing their child's development, behavior, adjustment and needs.

## ***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.

- 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/director.
- Parents will be kept informed about the inability of their child to progress satisfactorily.
- 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.

### **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:

1. Presentation of an original Birth certificate (schools are expected to keep a copy of the certificate on file)
2. Baptismal certificate for Catholic students
3. Proof of custody where applicable
4. Progress reports (if available)
5. Completed Diocesan Application Form (Appendix J)
6. A non-refundable application fee
7. A fully executed MCH-213 Commonwealth of Virginia School Entrance Form or equivalent, which stipulates the following must be submitted prior to the student beginning school:
  - a. Proof of exact dates of immunization as required by the Code of Virginia
  - b. Current Certification of Immunization and proof of TB screening
  - c. Physical examination covering all required aspects as mandated on the MCH-213, 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.)
8. Proof of satisfying tuition requirements at any former Diocesan school if previously enrolled in a Diocesan school.

### 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).

### Foreign 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. Foreign students who apply for admission to a Diocese of Arlington School will be considered for admission, if all the following requirements are satisfactorily demonstrated:
  1. Students with F-1 Visas:
    - a. if a foreign student is a baptized Catholic, valid proof of baptism is required;
    - b. student guardian has guardianship of no more than two students at same local address;
    - c. documentation of legal guardianship
    - d. tuition payment is made in full upon admission;
    - e. if the student is represented by an educational consulting firm, an I-20 Sponsorship Survey is completed and returned to the Office of Catholic Schools.
  2. 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 Immigration and Naturalization Service I-20 form for eventual admission and stay in the United States as an F-1 student. Foreign students who enroll in a school in the Diocese for the first time must provide documentation they are free from communicable tuberculosis.
  3. In order to maintain a better accounting of F-1 (non-immigrant) status students, the Immigration and Naturalization Service requires ongoing accounting. In that regard, schools are responsible for reporting the status of these students via the Report on Status of F-1 (non-immigrant) Students form. Specifically, the school shall:

- a. Report each semester to the Office of Catholic Schools regarding the status of any F-1 (non-immigrant) student as long as that child is enrolled in the school;
  - b. Notify the Office of Catholic Schools if an F-1 (non-immigrant) student who has been issued an I-20 and has been accepted by that school, fails to report to the school within 30 days of the designated start date;
  - c. Notify the Office of Catholic Schools within 15 days when an F-1 (non-immigrant) student transfers to another school or departs the United States;
  - d. Report any legal change in the name or address of an F-1 (nonimmigrant) student within 10 days.
4. Foreign students enrolling in a school in the Diocese must show a B-1 or a B-2 Visa. In addition to a B-1 or B-2 Visa, any foreign student seeking temporary enrollment, must provide the following documentation:
- a. Diocesan Emergency Care Form
  - b. State Immunization Form
  - c. Local Admissions Forms
  - d. Signed statement indicating no grades will be given (i.e. the student is maintaining audit status)
  - e. Tuition Agreement

B. Foreign students who enroll in a school in the Diocese for the first time must provide documentation they are free from communicable tuberculosis.

C. Any student applicant whose passport, United Nations travel document, or other Immigration and Naturalization documents indicate that he or she is a refugee, asylee, parolee, lawful non-immigrant, 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/director and faculty reserve the right to place a child in a class to ensure the best interests of the child.

## ***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/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

If a child is ill or cannot attend class for some other reason, the parent should call the school office by 9:00 AM to inform the school of the absence. A written excuse signed by the parent that explains the reason for the absence must be presented upon return to school.

### 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.

Parents must sign their child in when arriving late. The first minutes of the day are very important in setting the tone for a successful day at school. Tardiness deprives the child of the opportunity for a good beginning of the school day, interferes with a child's progress and creates a disturbance for the teacher and the class as a whole.

### Medical excuses

A written excuse signed by the parent that explains the reason for the medical absence must be presented upon return to school. Students who are absent for more than three days or who cannot fully participate in school activities, may be asked to provide a doctor's note.

### Anticipated absence

A written excuse signed by the parent that explains the reason for the anticipated absence should be provided to the school. It is very helpful to the school to be made aware of any anticipated or extended absences.

### Release of children

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

## ***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" from the new school. All Fees and Tuition **MUST BE PAID** prior to the release of the child's records.

*The school requests 30 days notice in the event of the withdrawal of a child. **Payments for any portion of the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter are non-refundable after June 1. Once school begins refunds will only be given for the 2nd, 3rd or 4th quarters paid in advance. No refund can be made within a payment period in which a student attends school.***

## ***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.

STM contracts with a catering firm to provide a hot lunch three days per week. Parents may purchase the lunch for a block of time. A menu and order form is sent home periodically throughout the year.

If a child is not buying lunch, he or she must bring a lunch to school each day. Lunches must be ready to eat and not require refrigeration or heating prior to being eaten. Students who bring their lunch from home may purchase milk or juice. Neither carbonated drinks nor glass containers may be brought to school. Parents are discouraged from bringing lunches to school except for the occasional forgotten lunch. Lunches brought from home should be in a clearly marked container with the child's name and class.

## ***ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL***

### **Arrival**

Children should arrive at school no earlier than 7:45 AM. Pre-K parents have two options for dropping their child off at school:

- Morning Pre-K Carpool Drop-off from 7:45 AM to 8:00 AM by way of the Thomas Street entrance to the parking lot
- Morning Pre-K "Park and Walk" Drop-off beginning at 7:45 AM through the STM

courtyard entrance (Entrance #1)\*

- 7:45 AM Pre-K Carpool opens or Park and Walk (Park in the Cathedral parking lot and escort your child to the classroom through the courtyard entrance (Entrance #1).
- 8:00 AM Pre-K Carpool closed (After 8:00 AM, all Pre-K children must be escorted to the classroom by a parent through the courtyard Entrance #1)
- 8:15 AM Pre-K Morning Circle Time begins

\*Parents should park in the Cathedral parking lot and enter the school building beginning at 7:45 AM through the STM courtyard main entrance (#1) by the school office. Parents will then walk their child down to his/her classroom (Room 21 or Room 22). The children will be welcomed into the classrooms beginning at 7:45 AM.

**IT IS IMPORTANT FOR THE SAFETY OF OUR STUDENTS THAT PARENTS FOLLOW THE FOLLOWING PROCEDURES FOR ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL.**

- Special precaution is required when entering from Thomas Street in the morning and by Cathedral Lane in the afternoon. Please be courteous to local traffic and obey all instructions from the safety patrols.
- SAFETY comes before convenience. Patience is a safety requirement. Thank you for the patience and cooperation our system requires.

**Dismissal**

**12:45 AM Dismissal**

Parents should enter the parking lot by way of Cathedral Lane and park in the Cathedral parking lot. Parents will then enter the school through the courtyard entrance (#1) to pickup their child. The children will remain inside the building and will be waiting at this entrance with a teacher. A child will only be released to a parent or designated guardian. Please provide written notification to the teacher in the morning if your child is going home with someone other than his or her parent.

**11:30 AM Early Dismissal and 2:55 PM Pre-K Extended Care Dismissal**

Please follow the regular afternoon dismissal procedures for the grade school. Enter the parking lot from Cathedral Lane and line up beginning at 11:15 AM for Early Dismissal or 2:45 PM for regular dismissal. School staff and safety patrols stationed outside will assist you. You do not enter the school building. The teachers will meet you outside with your Pre-K student. Follow the directions of the school staff and safety patrols to exit the parking lot.

**Carpool Procedures**

1. The first car enters the lot from Cathedral Lane at approximately 2:35 PM.
2. The lines are then filled with 6-7 cars.
3. When all the lines are filled there should still be enough room behind the cars for an emergency vehicle to pass through if necessary.

4. Preschool parents will meet their child at the preschool door to the school building (#3).
5. The children will remain with a teacher until they are released to their parent.
6. Children will not be allowed to leave with anyone except their parent or designated guardian.
7. As soon as all the children and their parents are secured in their cars in the first two lanes, the safety patrol signal the cars to exit.
8. After several lines are gone the “yellow flag” safety patrol signals the “chain” safety patrol to open the chain.
9. The children are released for the second pick-up when it is safe to cross the parking lot. Second pick-up leaves as soon as all children and parents are secured in their cars and the safety patrol gives the signal.
10. Authorized changes to your child’s regular dismissal routine must be made in writing by the parent. It is expected that parents will be prompt in both dropping off and picking up their child.
11. Any child not picked up by 12:45 and 2:55 PM respectively will wait outside the school office and parents will be required to pay a late fee of \$10.00 after 10 minutes. Subsequent minutes are then charged at a dollar per minute. Payment is due immediately upon pickup.

In the event of inclement weather or natural disaster, the students will remain in the classroom or the safest part of school. Parents will not be charged a late fee in the event of such a situation.

### **Late Pickup Policy**

Please make every effort to pick your child up on time. There will be a \$1.00 per minute late fee for pickup after 12:50 AM or 3:00 PM (if your child is enrolled in the Pre-K PM Extended Care Program.) A check for the amount due must be made payable to STM School at time of pickup on the day the charge occurs. In the event of traffic or a delay at work, please keep in mind there is no Extended Care available after 3:00 PM.

## **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/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:

- Custodial parents should identify in writing other adults who may have access to information regarding their child.
- 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, 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 are to be retained for five years after the student leaves school or his/her class graduates, whichever occurs first. However, the most recent copies of the following documents must be kept for 75 years

- the IEP/ISP, or 504 Plan,

- Student Assistance Plan,
- Eligibility Minutes and/or
- Student Assistance Team minutes

Confidential records for disenrolled students are merged with the students' cumulative files.

## **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.

Custodial parents are always welcome to visit the school and the classroom.

During school hours, parents and visitors must enter and exit the school building by way of the courtyard entrance (#1) and sign in at the school office. All visitors will be given an identification badge to wear while in the school. Visitors are expected to sign out and exit the school by way of the office as well.

Parents who have scheduled a conference with a teacher before or after school should also enter by way of the courtyard entrance and check in at the office.

Cooperation with these procedures by all adults will help maintain the safety of students and staff.

## **SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS**

### Principal/Director/Director's Communication

The principal facilitates the development and distribution of the weekly electronic message that is sent via email to all parents.

### Take-Home Communication

All materials prepared by parents for release to the Parish or school community must be approved by the Principal/Director/Director or his/her designee.

A weekly electronic message will be sent to all parents containing important information such as monthly calendars, lunch menus, PTO information, etc. Parents who do not reside with their child may receive an electronic copy of the weekly messages by providing the school office with an email address. Parents who do not have access to a computer may request a printed copy of the electronic message. Parents are asked to make this request in writing to the principal. If the parents cannot rely on the child to deliver the hard copy of the message, the parent may supply the school with an adequate number of stamped, self-addressed envelopes and the information will be

mailed to the parent.

Teachers periodically will send home information containing classroom news, special events, and other important notes. Parents are asked to regularly check their child's take-home folder.

### **TELEPHONE USE**

Use of the school telephone is generally reserved for emergencies only. Phone calls to teachers and staff should be made only to the school. The school office number (703-528-6781) is to be used for all school and student related matters.

### **INCLEMENT WEATHER/SCHOOL CLOSINGS**

St Thomas More Cathedral School follows Arlington County's procedures for emergency closings. Announcements are made on television and radio. You may call the Arlington County Public School hotline at 1-866-322-4277. You may also log on to [www.arlington.k12.va.us](http://www.arlington.k12.va.us) for information. If we have a delayed opening on an 11:30 AM dismissal day, the school will dismiss at 2:50 PM. When the school opens late, Extended Day will open late.

Occasionally schools are closed before regular dismissal time because of weather. These closings will be announced via the STM electronic notification system by sending messages to both phone and email addresses provided by the parents to the school. Messages may be sent over the radio stations as well. Please do not call the school office, as it is very important for the phone lines to be open for any emergencies. Extended day will only be open for a short time as parents are expected to pick up their children without delay. When school is closed for the day, no Extended Daycare is provided.

### **PHOTOS AND OTHER MEDIA**

The School requires the use of the *Waiver/Right to Object* Form when children are participating in videotaping, audio recording, school pictures, other photography, or Internet (see Appendix). Schools must state in their Parent/Student Handbook the right for parents to forbid 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.

### **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.

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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. 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**

Preschool classes will only participate in Family Field Trips which require one parent to accompany the child on the field trip, provide transportation to and from the designated field trip location and supervise the child during the activity.

- 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).
- In the event private automobiles/vehicles of children, parents or other authorized adults 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/director for review and approval prior to the use of such vehicles. The Principal/Director/director shall have the right to prohibit for any reason a proposed driver from transporting children on a field trip. 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.

## **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 body. The parent organization is subject in all respects to the control of the school, and all parent organization activities and all materials prepared by parents must be submitted to the Principal/Director/director for approval prior to implementation and/or distribution.

The parent organization should strive:

1. to serve in an advisory capacity to support the Principal/Director/director;
2. to provide a means by which parents can respectfully articulate their values and expectations regarding the school so that these can be examined and addressed by the Principal/Director/director;
3. to support and promote quality Catholic education at the school;
4. to encourage Catholic values of family life;
5. to share with teachers the values that parents are attempting to develop with their children at home;
6. to acquaint parents with up-to-date information concerning current developments in educational initiatives as they may affect the school so that they can be in a better position to promote the legitimate rights of their children;
7. to unify parents in an effort to raise funds each year for the school.

## ***FUND-RAISING***

Any program of fundraising at the school must have the approval of the pastor and the Principal/Director/director. Fundraising activities should be organized and executed so that the school program is not interrupted. Children may participate in and cooperate with worthy collections and fundraising projects conducted by the school or parish.

Children are not permitted to participate in any type of door-to-door solicitation.

## ***TRANSPORTATION/PARKING***

Drivers and students should follow the directions under Arrival/Dismissal Procedures. Parents who visit the school during the school day are asked to park in the Cathedral parking lot. Orange cones are set up to delineate the playground area. Cars are not allowed beyond the line of orange cones. The speed limit in the parking lot is 5 MPH at all times.

## V. FINANCES

### ***SCHOOL TUITION POLICIES***

The school reserves the right to cancel enrollment of any student whose family falls two months behind in tuition payments. Failure to pay the tuition for two months will be reported to the Pastor. Report cards will be withheld for students whose accounts are in arrears and no waiver has been granted.

Tuition payments are payable by one of the following options:

1. Pay 100% of the tuition and fees directly to the school by June 1, 2011.
2. Sign up with FACTS to pay over eleven (11) months from June to April.

FACTS is an automated payment system. You will preauthorize your bank or credit card company to automatically transfer funds to the school on the installment payment dates set up by the school.

### ***TUITION AND OTHER FEE SCHEDULES***

St. Thomas More Cathedral School retains flexibility with the FACTS program. If a family is experiencing financial challenges, one need only contact the school and any adjustment can be made.

Tuition is divided into eleven (11) payments for your convenience. These payments are not based on the school calendar year. The 1st payment is due in June (or with Registration for new families). The 2nd through 11th payments are made from July through April. Please notify the school office if the payment will not be made on time. Timely tuition payments are essential to the financial stability of the school. Transcripts may be withheld if the tuition for a family is past due.

***The school requests 30 days notice in the event of the withdrawal of a child. Payments for any portion of the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter are non-refundable after June 1. Once school begins refunds will only be given for the 2nd, 3rd or 4th quarters paid in advance. No refund can be made within a payment period in which a student attends school.***

If a check is returned by the bank for any reason, a \$25.00 charge is added to the account. We reserve the right to require certified check or money order from families whose checks cannot be reliably deposited. Post-dated checks will not be accepted.

**Tuition rates** for the current school year are posted on our web site [www.stmschool.org](http://www.stmschool.org).

### **PRE-K tuition rates\*\***

**\*\*Please note: Tuition rates for Pre-K students are per child. Pre-K students are not eligible for the multiple child discounted rates given to students in K-8 grades.**

Pre-K has two tuition rates – one rate for the academic hours 7:45 am to 12:45 pm. The second rate is for the academic hours with extended day child care costs. Extended Day hours for preschool only ends at 2:55 pm. There is no extended day available for preschool children on the 11:30 am early dismissal days.

### **K-8 Tuition Rates\***

\*The rates are for students enrolled in K-8 only. **Tuition rates for Pre-K children are entirely separate and Pre-K students are not counted in the multiple child discounts.**

Catholic (Registered in a Parish – to qualify for this rate, the student must be a Baptized Catholic whose family is registered and active in a Catholic Parish. Families must bring a copy of their weekly envelop to the school.) Current rates are posted on the school website.

Non-registered or non-Catholic tuition must be paid if the above information can not be verified.

### ***ADDITIONAL FEES***

**Registration Fee: \$250.00 per family** - Non-Refundable, due with Registration in late fall.

**PTO Dues: \$20.00 per family payable by August 1<sup>st</sup>.**

**Books Fee: \$250.00 per student payable by August 1<sup>st</sup> K to 8 only.**

## **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:

1. will be truthful.
2. will be respectful and courteous toward all teachers and adults.
3. will refrain from harassment of any kind.
4. will use appropriate language.
5. will speak respectfully to and about others.
6. will respect all school and personal property.
7. will play only in assigned playground areas with good sportsmanship and cooperation.
8. 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/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 appraise the Principal/Director/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**

The goal of all guidance is to help children become individuals who can make appropriate decisions and direct themselves. Within this framework, certain restrictions are enforced. Acts that endanger a child's safety or infringe on the rights of others are prohibited. Verbal guidance, re-direction, and parent conferences are used in guiding a child's behavior.

### **SUSPENSION**

Suspension may be imposed as determined by the Principal/Director/director. Once the Principal/Director/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/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:

1. a serious infraction of school rules occurs;
2. the child has demonstrated continuing disregard of school rules for which other means of discipline have proven ineffectual;
3. 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;
4. 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/director believes it necessary to expel a child, the Principal/Director/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/director.

Children who have been expelled from any Diocesan school may not apply for admission to 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/director.

### **DRESS CODE REQUIREMENTS & OTHER PERTINENT INFORMATION**

Please dress your child for active play. Clothes should be comfortable, worry-free for painting and projects and easy for your child to handle. The children play outside everyday except for extreme weather conditions. The children should be dressed in clothing appropriate for outdoor play.

## ***PLAYGROUND REGULATIONS***

Children have a daily outdoor play period each day unless it is raining or extremely cold. All children will be expected to participate in this activity. Children who are not well enough to play outdoors should not attend school. Children must follow the safety rules of the playground and the direction of the teachers supervising the children.

## ***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.

The Preschool children do not use the lunchroom. Snack and lunch are eaten in the classroom.

## ***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,

- must comply with applicable reporting and other requirements of state and local law;
- 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 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 loc parentis, or school personnel.”

#### **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, 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, 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 (*no fever, no vomiting and/or no diarrhea*) for 24 hours without taking anti-fever medications or other medication, 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.

When parents are notified by the school that their child is ill, they are expected to pick up the child within one hour of the call.

### **MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION OVERVIEW**

Medications, sunscreens, diaper ointment/cream and insect repellent will not be administered to St. Thomas More Cathedral School Pre-K children by the school staff.

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:

1. When the need for administration of medicines during school hours has been confirmed by the school nurse/health assistant (or the school administration) ;
2. After the first dose of any medication has been given at home;

3. 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;
4. 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;
5. 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;
6. When the appropriate medication authorization form (Appendix) has been completed, signed and accompanies the medication;
7. 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 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). 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/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.

## ***INFECTIOUS/COMMUNICABLE DISEASES***

### **DISEASE**

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:

1. 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 ).
  - a. 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.
  - b. 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.
2. 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 (*no fever, no vomiting and/or no diarrhea*) for 24 hours without taking *anti-fever medications or other medication*, the student may return to school, afterschool and extracurricular activities.
3. School health personnel will follow the Virginia Department of Health Communicable Disease Chart, found in the Virginia School Health Guidelines, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, when referring suspected cases of communicable disease to the local health department for excluding or readmitting a student.

### **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 based upon re-inspection and the effectiveness of treatment. Follow up treatment is expected and verified by the school nurse. Classroom contacts may be inspected.

If a case of head lice is detected in a classroom, the nurse/clinic aide will immediately notify the parents of the child to pick him/her up. Parents will be provided with

information on how to treat the lice. The child may return to school only after the treatment is completed. Head lice are highly contagious. Parents of classmates of an infected child will also be notified.

## ***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/AHERA***

Fire drills are conducted monthly beginning in September and for the remainder of the year. Drills are scheduled at different times of the day. The school will:

1. Maintain a record of each fire drill indicating the date, time, length of time for evacuation, fire pull used, special circumstances, and problems experienced;
2. Post fire drill routes in each classroom and the hallway;
3. Have fire extinguishers serviced yearly;
4. Protect the school environment from all false alarms with appropriate disciplinary action.

Tornado, evacuation, and Shelter-in-Place drills are conducted twice a year

### **AHERA**

The 1987 Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) required the inspection of every school in the United States, public and private, for asbestos containing material. Trace asbestos was identified in 1987 and is properly confined to the floor tiles and fire doors. An asbestos management plan was prepared and is available in

the school office for your inspection.

## ***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.

1. 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.
2. 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 which is not necessary for school purposes."

## ***BULLYING***

Bullying is prohibited and is defined as one or more actions of abusive treatment of another. Examples include but are not limited to:

- a. Physical intimidation or assault
- b. Extortion
- c. Oral or written threats
- d. 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 incidence 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.

- a. Consequences for students who bully others shall depend on the results of the investigation and may include:
  - Counseling
  - Parent conference
  - Detention
  - Suspension and/or Expulsion
- b. Depending on the severity of the incident(s), the Principal/Director may also report incidents of bullying to law enforcement if appropriate.

## 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.

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

## **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**  
**11320 Random Hill Road, Ste. 200**  
**Fairfax, VA 22030**  
**(703) 934-1505**

**Northern Virginia Regional Office**  
**320 Hospital Drive, Suite #23**  
**Warrenton, VA 22186**  
**(540) 347-6345**

**Central Regional Offices**  
1604 Santa Rosa Road, Suite 130  
Richmond, VA 23229-5008  
(804) 662-9743

**Verona Licensing Office**  
Post Office Box 350  
Verona, Virginia 24482-0350  
(540) 248-9345

**Eastern Regional Office**  
Pembroke Office Park  
Pembroke Four Office Building, Suite  
300  
Virginia Beach, VA 23452-5496  
(757) 491-3990

**Piedmont Regional Office**  
Commonwealth of Virginia Building  
210 Church Street, S.W., Ste. 100  
Roanoke, VA 24011-1779  
(540) 857-7920

**Abingdon Licensing Office**  
190 Patton Street  
Abingdon, VA 24210  
(540) 676-5490

## ***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***

Medications, sunscreens, diaper ointment/cream and insect repellent will not be administered to St. Thomas More Cathedral School Preschool children by the school staff.

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,

- written parent authorization noting any known adverse reactions shall be obtained;
- shall be in the original container labeled with the child's name;
- does not need to be kept locked but shall be inaccessible to children under five years of age;
- any center-kept sunscreen shall be hypo-allergenic and have a minimum SPF of 15;
- 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. The school will send home optional policies each fall for the families to consider.

## ***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***

Incompliance 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).

## ***APPENDICES***

**Please note:**

**Diocesan forms are available on the Diocesan website:**

**[www.arlingtondiocese.org](http://www.arlingtondiocese.org)**

**Click on Catholic Schools; click on School Forms.**

**Additional forms may be found on the STM website:**

**[www.stmschool.org](http://www.stmschool.org)**