

2022-2023

Family Handbook

Omaha Catholic School Consortium



St. Thomas More School



"The Omaha Catholic School Consortium challenges all students to be disciples of Jesus Christ by empowering them to reach their fullest potential through quality academic, spiritual, and social experiences."

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INTRODUCTION

The Omaha Catholic School Consortium (“OCSC”) was founded after a study of our Archdiocese was completed by the Meitler Group. Archbishop Lucas had the goal to ensure that Catholic education was affordable and accessible to families in southeast Omaha for generations to come. In an effort to achieve that goal, a unique governance model began in 2012—the Consortium. Initially, it brought together five schools: Holy Cross, Our Lady of Lourdes, St. Bernadette, St. Thomas More, and Sts. Peter and Paul. In 2018, we opened the Dual Language Academy, increasing our school number to six. These six schools operate at individual locations but share one leadership team and one business office. The Consortium proudly serves 13% of the overall elementary school student enrollment for the entire Archdiocese. The Consortium provides academic, administrative and financial support to its schools to ensure students have access to an exceptional education in nurturing and culturally unique environments, where students are encouraged to explore their Catholic faith and become disciples of Christ.

SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Omaha Catholic School Consortium is to challenge all students to be disciples of Jesus Christ by empowering them to reach their fullest potential through quality academic, spiritual, and social experiences.

CHARISMS

A charism is a spiritual gift or talent granted by God to the recipient not primarily for his own sake but for the benefit of others "in order to perfect the saints for a work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ". Through the intercessory power of our patron St. Thomas More, our school is guided by the charisms of **Courage, Holiness, Intellect, Leadership, and Service.**

MOTTO

“St. Thomas More, a man for all seasons, a school for all children.”

GUIDING BELIEFS

The Omaha Catholic School Consortium will....

1. provide an excellent Catholic community of faith and learning.
2. nurture students who will develop a personal relationship with God by witnessing their faith through participation in the sacraments, community worship, and service to others.
3. develop students of character and self-discipline who model personal and social responsibility and who display a concern for others.
4. empower our students to be critical thinkers who are fully prepared to use technology in an ethical way to further their learning.
5. provide a safe and nurturing educational environment guided by collaborative, professional, and administrative practices.

PHILOSOPHY

Each member of the OCSC community is a person created in the image of God with infinite dignity and self-worth and each has the desire, the capacity, and the responsibility to learn. Each Consortium school admits students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin. The faculty, parents/guardians, and the OCSC leadership share responsibility for providing learning opportunities for each child and each child has the responsibility to take advantage of those opportunities. The faculty and staff are responsible for providing a positive, affirming environment for learning that challenges every student and offers every individual the opportunity to experience success and God’s

love. The parent/guardian is responsible for supporting the school program, ensuring family participation, and providing time and encouragement for home study and independent reading. The OCSC is responsible for providing spiritual resources, and education in the faith, leadership and financial support in order to ensure that Catholic education is feasible for as many people as possible.

PURPOSE OF HANDBOOK

This Handbook is provided for informational purposes only and does not constitute a contractual agreement between OCSC and any student or any parent/guardian of any student. The information contained in this Handbook provides a general description of rules and regulations. Non-enforcement of any of the rules or regulations does not serve as a waiver of their future enforcement. This Handbook does not create any restrictions upon the OCSC's right to institute any course of disciplinary action which, in any OCSC's sole discretion, it believes is necessary and consistent with its Catholic educational mission.

The OCSC reserves the right to add, modify, or abolish any of the Handbook provisions at any time with or without notice.

ADMINISTRATION

School Contact Information:

Omaha Catholic School Consortium

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Omaha, NE 68107

Phone: 402-590-2810

Fax: 402-590-2811

Mr. Michael Goetz, Executive Director

Mrs. Chris Nelson, Director of Education

St. Thomas More School

3515 S. 48th Ave.

Omaha, NE 68106

Phone: 402-551-9504

Fax: 402-551-9507

Mr. Gary Davis, Principal

Parish Phone: 402-556-1456

EPISCOPAL SUPERVISION

The Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Omaha, Nebraska, as chief representative of the Church's teaching authority, is the head of the school system in the Archdiocese. Practically, the Archbishop delegates comprehensive regulatory and general supervisory authority, including policy-making, to the Archdiocesan Superintendent of Schools, Executive Director of the Consortium, and the Pastor of the Parish. The Archdiocesan Catholic Schools accept the authority of the Superintendent as delegated by the Archbishop. All Consortium schools will work in cooperation with the Catholic School's Office.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Executive Director serves as Chief Executive Officer of the OCSC and works closely with the Board of Directors in directing all internal and external activities of the Consortium. The Executive Director meets annually and works closely with the priests who are pastors of the parishes where Consortium schools are located, especially in the assurance of Catholic Faith Identity and the celebration of the liturgy and the sacraments. He/She supervises the Principals of the Consortium schools and collaborates with them in all aspects of school operations, including Catholic Faith Identity, academic excellence, school improvement procedures, personnel issues, student discipline issues, extra-curricular activities, use of facilities, scheduling, and other related school issues.

OCSC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

In accordance with the policies and guidelines of the Omaha Archdiocese Catholic Schools Office, the Board of Directors is responsible for establishing uniform policies on all matters pertaining to the school sites, including matters pertaining to employees, salary scales, educational, athletic and related programs, the school calendar, development, finances, physical plans, public relations, educational standards, recruitment, and applying Catholic principles to the educational programs and all catechetical courses. The board also is responsible for establishing a formula for the financing of the school sites.

THE PASTOR

The Pastor of the parish acts as the official delegate of the Archbishop in the "teaching mission" of the Roman Catholic Church. All Catholic Schools/programs and their personnel are responsible to the Archbishop and his delegates in all matters concerning the Catholic Faith. This includes serving as the officially designated spiritual leader of a Consortium School, monitoring the Catholic Faith identity and quality Religious education curricular offerings of the school, and overseeing the sacramental preparation for the students of that particular OCSC site.

THE PRINCIPAL

The Principal, under the direction of the Executive Director and the Board of Directors, is the chief administrative and supervisory office of the school. The Principal is the official representative and spokesperson for the school and is the administrator primarily responsible for assuring the policies enacted by the OCSC Board of Directors and Omaha Catholic Schools Office are implemented.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (SIP)

Each school must create and maintain a School Improvement Program (SIP). The SIP team is comprised of teachers from varied grade levels, including Specials. This group is responsible for the overall School Improvement Process. This process formalizes our School Improvement Process as we analyze the whole institution—the programs, the cultural context, and the community of stakeholders—to determine how well the parts work together to meet the needs of students. The SIP teams at each site will be responsible for guiding this continued process of achieving academic excellence at each Consortium school.

HOME AND SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS

The Home and School Association is the organization at the school level that maintains good communication between the home and the school, provides a vehicle through which parents/guardians can provide service to the school, offers a mechanism for parent/guardian education, and organizes fundraising activities. Membership is open to all parents/guardians of school children. For information on your school's H&S, please contact your Principal.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Communication and cooperation between a parent/guardian and a teacher are essential to a student's success. **If at any time issues or concerns arise, the parent must always first consult with the teacher to seek understanding or resolution.** If the parent is unsatisfied with the results of that conference then they may seek consultation with the Principal. The Principal may choose to convene a conference to address the matter and may also seek the advice of the Executive Director. If a satisfactory solution is not achieved, the Executive Director may become involved in the process.

If a parent/guardian has a concern regarding an issue/situation in school, the following steps are recommended and expected. The steps to resolving any conflicts or concerns should be followed in the order they are presented below:

1. Contact the child's teacher to discuss any concern and a possible solution. In cases relating to specific school policies or procedures and outside their child's classroom, parents/guardians should begin with a discussion with the principal.
2. If the concern cannot be resolved with the teacher, the parent/guardian should then schedule a conference with the principal.
3. Should the principal, upon hearing the concerns of the parent/guardian, feel it is necessary, he/she may schedule a meeting that involves the parent/guardian, teacher(s) and the principal to help facilitate a solution to the concerns being addressed in the classroom.
4. If the parent/guardian still feels the problem/concern has not been resolved, the parent/guardian should contact the Executive Director. The Executive Director's decision on any grievance shall be final.

Academic Concerns: Always contact your student's Teacher first. If additional assistance is needed then the participation of the Principal may be requested.

Physical and Emotional Concerns: Teacher, then Guidance Counselor, then Principal

Special Education Concerns: Teacher then Principal

Athletic Concerns: Coach, then Athletic Director, then Principal. Be mindful that our sports club is an entity of the Parish and is not under the jurisdiction of the school.

Other Extracurricular Activities: Extracurricular Sponsor, Teacher, then Principal

Financial Concerns (Tuition, etc): OCSC Financial Director, then Principal

ADMISSIONS

ADMISSION GUIDELINES

The Principal at each individual school site will make the decision concerning your child's acceptance and placement into our school. We will use the following criteria in descending order when we have a waiting list:

1. The family has current students attending the desired school.
2. The family has siblings of accepted, new students.
3. The family is a registered and active member of any Consortium parish.
(length of registration may be a factor)
4. The family is Catholic, non-parishioner; date of school application and availability of parish school will be considered;
5. The family has students planning to attend our K-8th grade program (this applies only to preschool and prekindergarten programs).
6. The family is non-Catholic; date of school application will be taken into account.

As a way to better acquaint them with the given school, all parents/guardians and students will be required to meet with the Principal at school as part of the enrollment process. Each Consortium school requires all parents/guardians to give the school a copy of their child(ren)'s birth certificate and baptismal certificate if baptized.

NONDISCRIMINATION ENROLLMENT POLICY

All parishioners, non-parishioners, and non-Catholics are welcome to attend a Consortium school. OCSC does not discriminate and admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. Since we are religiously oriented for the Catholic community, we give preference to members of the Catholic Church, but welcome members of the other denominations after the Catholic community is served.

ADMISSION AGE REQUIREMENTS

OCSC complies with Nebraska State age requirements for kindergarten and grade one students. Children entering kindergarten ordinarily must be five years old on or before July 31st. The Principal will make final placement and approval.

TRANSITIONAL KINDERGARTEN REQUIREMENTS

Transitional Kindergarten, TK, is meant to support students who are eligible for kindergarten (already meet the cut-off date or who can test to enter kindergarten), but who may need another year of support before starting. In essence, this program creates a two-year kindergarten program. The curriculum is a mix of our PreK curriculum and our kindergarten curriculum. Students in TK will focus on reading, math, social studies and science, Spanish, physical education, music, art, and socio-emotional skills.

Our TK program will be taught by a certified teacher and will be a day-long class. Students will wear our school uniform. Transitional Kindergarten is part of our K-8 tuition structure.

TK is a two-year kindergarten program meant to support students who are eligible for kindergarten (5 year olds by July 31, 2022), but who could benefit from additional academic and/or social preparation prior to a traditional kindergarten setting.

The program also supports children who have just missed the Nebraska age guideline for entrance into kindergarten and will turn five between August 1 and October 15. Students should be mature enough and academically ready for a step past prekindergarten. Families wishing to enroll in the TK class will need to have a conversation with the TK instructor and/or Prekindergarten Director before enrolling in TK. Through a combination of prekindergarten and kindergarten curriculum, the program intends to help every child be on grade level by third grade, if not sooner. TK students partake in all aspects of a school day just like kindergarten through eighth grade students.

PRESCHOOL REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible for the 4/5-year-old prekindergarten classes, your child must be 4 on or before July 31. To be eligible for the 3-year-old preschool class, your child must turn three on, or before, July 31. He/she must be independently toilet trained.

NEW STUDENT ADMISSIONS

For the admission of a kindergarten student or a transfer student, the parent/guardian must follow these guidelines:

1. BIRTH CERTIFICATE

OCSC complies with Nebraska State Law requiring that a Birth Certificate with a raised seal must be on file for every student who is enrolled. The original should be brought to the office to be copied.

2. HEALTH RECORD

An up-to-date health record must be on file with the school office. Record of a physical examination by a doctor is required of any student entering kindergarten, seventh grade, and of all students who transfer in at any grade level from outside Nebraska. A dental examination is also recommended as well.

3. IMMUNIZATION RECORD

An up-to-date immunization record must accompany the health record. Immunization records are also required for all students entering preschool or prekindergarten.

4. SACRAMENTAL RECORDS

Parent/guardian is required to submit a Baptismal Certificate, regardless of religion if the child has been baptized.

5. CUMULATIVE RECORDS

For students transferring into any Consortium school, a copy of student records from the previous school attended is required.

Transfer Student and New Student Admission

All transfer and new students shall complete an on-line Registration, set up their FACTS account, and submit their Registration Fee and Form to the St. Thomas More School Office. All registrations are subject to approval by the Principal. All applicants shall be reviewed by the Principal and assigned a priority in accordance with current admissions policy. There is to be an interview with the child and parents by the Principal and Pastor if requested. Pending the results of the interview, and on a space available basis, the parent shall be notified verbally or in writing regarding acceptance or non-acceptance. Any application for admission, which cannot be honored due to classroom size shall be placed on a waiting list, and so advised in writing. The applicant will be assigned a position on the waiting list based on the admission policy. In order to remain on the waiting list, the applicant shall re-contact St. Thomas More Catholic School at the beginning of the next fall term. It may be determined by the principal, that due to the circumstances associated with an applicant's prior school experiences, the student should be placed on a **Behavior Contract**. The purpose of the Behavior Contract is to clarify expectations of the school for the student and the parents. Students placed on a Behavior Contract are accepted conditionally and may be asked to withdraw if they are unable to comply with the mutually agreed upon contract. Applicants for admission, which do not meet the admission guidelines, shall be returned to the applicant with reasons for non-acceptance.

Students who have been determined to have special education needs shall follow the guidelines set forth by the Archdiocese, which are on file in the Principal's office. Every effort will be made to collaborate with the public school district of residence to provide the designated services identified for a special education student in accordance with the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP). **All transfer students and their families shall be made aware that acceptance for admission is conditionally based upon the ability of the student to successfully acclimate to their new environment and to academically prosper. If after a sufficient time to allow for necessary adjustments to our new school setting, it is evident that the student is not progressing, the student and family may be asked to leave the school to find a setting where the student may be more successful.**

ENROLLMENT

Enrollment for students currently attending a Consortium school will begin in February for the following school year. Confirmation of enrollment is the payment of the Registration Fees, completion of paperwork or completion of on-line forms and, when needed, a meeting with the Principal. Open school enrollment is held in February/March for the upcoming school year.

WAIT LIST

If a class is full and a student is placed on a waiting list, the student fee will not be collected. To be placed on a waiting list, the parent communicates with the Principal. When an opening occurs, the parent will be notified by the school. Within three (3) days of notification, the parent must pay the student fee and tuition according to the option chosen in the FACTS program. Any special considerations to the above policy must be approved by the Principal with involvement from the Executive Director as needed.

REGISTRATION FEES

All families are required to pay a **non-refundable** registration fee per child each year. For families with multiple children, OCSC will collect the fee for one student, per family, and the remaining fees will be rolled into tuition. This fee is expected even if students enroll during the school year. It will secure a position in the desired school.

TUITION AND STUDENT FEES

Tuition/Student Fees will be reviewed and established annually by the OCSC Board of Directors. Parent/guardians will be advised of tuition and fees in the spring prior to the opening of the school in the fall. Tuition is to be paid either annually (due June 30), or using one of the payment options available in FACTS. Tuition guidelines have been established in order to create a viable financial structure and process for school families and parish administration.

It shall be the policy the Omaha Catholic School Consortium that:

- Unless an exception is made by the Executive Director, no student will be allowed to re-enroll in a subsequent semester if tuition is not current.
- In addition, all fees (such as lunch, library, damaged textbooks service hours, etc..) from the year must be paid in full prior to re enrollment or registration being finalized.

Registration fees will be collected at the time of registration for all students. No space will be reserved until the fees and any required paperwork are received.

Payment plans are set up through the FACTS program.

FULL PAYMENT DISCOUNTS

Full payments made by the first day of school will be discounted. Inquire with the Principal for details.

WITHDRAWAL

Should it become necessary for a student to leave a Consortium school for a reason such as moving or transferring to another school, the parent/guardian must give the Principal at least 48-hours' notice. The student must return all books, including library books, pay any fines, activity fees or lunch balance, and tuition must be paid at the time of withdrawal. Tuition will be prorated to reflect the number of days attended. Records cannot follow a student without the completion of a Transcript Request form from the child's next school.

PARENT'S ROLE IN EDUCATION

At OCSC, we consider it a privilege to work with parents in the education of children because we believe parents are the primary educators of their children. Therefore, it is your right and your duty to become the primary role models for the development of your child's life physically, mentally, spiritually, emotionally, morally and psychologically. Your choice of a Consortium school involves a commitment and exhibits a concern for helping your child to recognize God as the greatest good in his/her life.

Good example is the strongest teacher. Your personal relationship with God, with each other and with the Church community will affect the way your child relates to God and others. Ideals taught in school are not well rooted in the child unless these are nurtured by the example of good Catholic/Christian morality and by an honest personal relationship with God in your family life.

Once you have chosen to enter into partnership with us at OCSC, we trust you will be loyal to this commitment. During these formative years (PreK- 8th grade), your child needs constant support from both parents and faculty in order to develop his/her moral, intellectual, social, cultural and physical gifts. Neither parents nor teachers can afford to doubt the sincerity of the efforts of their educational partner in the quest of challenging, yet nourishing, the student to reach his/her potential. It is vital that both parents and teachers remember that allowing oneself to be caught between the student and the other partner in education will never have positive results. To divide authority between school and home or within the home will only teach disrespect for all authority. If there is an incident at school, you as parents must make investigation of the complete story your first step. Evidence of mutual respect between parents and teachers/administration will model good mature behavior and relationships.

Students are naturally eager to grow and learn. However, sometimes in the process of maturation new interests may cause them to lose focus. As this natural process occurs, the student needs both understanding and discipline. At times your child may perceive discipline as restrictive. However, it is boundaries and limits which provide a young person with both guidance and security.

It is essential that a child takes responsibility for grades he/she has earned and be accountable for homework, long-term assignments, major tests, service projects and any other assignments. This responsibility also extends to times of absence. Together let us support one another in helping your child to become the best person he/she is capable of becoming.

As partners in the educational process at a Consortium school, parents are expected:

1. To set rules, times, and limits so that your child:
 - a. Gets to bed early on school nights
 - b. Arrives at school on time and is picked up on time at the end of the day
 - c. Is dressed according to the school dress code

- d. Completes class assignments on time
 - e. Has lunch money or sack lunch everyday
2. To actively participate in school activities such as Home & School, Parent/Teacher Conferences, etc.
 3. To notify the school with a written note/email when the student has been absent or is tardy.
 4. To notify the school office of any changes of address or important phone numbers.
 5. To meet all financial obligations to the school.
 6. To inform the school of a special situation regarding the student's well-being, safety and health.
 7. To complete and return to school any requested information promptly.
 8. To read school notes and newsletters and to show interest in the student's total education. A weekly newsletter entitled "Bengal News" will be e-mailed to parents via Sycamore and posted on the school's website at www.stmbengals.org. It will contain important information about upcoming news, events, opportunities, and the new monthly lunch menu. In addition, each Thursday is designated as Communication Day when other fliers and reminders for the week will be available on the website or be sent home with students. **It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to review and retain this information for future reference.** All groups requesting to have information sent home with students or added to the Bengal News must e-mail their request to the principal **on Tuesdays, by the end of the day (or on the day before the last day of the week on shortened weeks).**
 9. To support the Home & School Association, the Church festival, More di Gras, or other school and parish events to help meet the essential building needs of the school.
 10. To support the religious and educational goals of the school.
 11. To support and cooperate with the discipline policy, uniform policy and all procedures in this handbook.
 12. Parents/guardians are encouraged to provide input; however, they are expected to treat staff, teachers and administration with respect and courtesy. Discussion on any student or school issues should be done in a professional and respectful manner. If a parent/guardian's behavior is disrespectful, rude, or disruptive to the educational program, or damages the reputation of the school, the school administration will decide whether the child(ren) will be allowed to continue education at the school. OCSC reserves the right to dis-enroll any student when parents/guardians do not meet the standards set forth above.

REQUIRED PARENT MEETINGS **SNEAK-A-PEEK**

In early August each year, students and their parents/guardians come to meet their student's teacher, open their lunch accounts, register for Extended Care, sign-up for membership and volunteer projects with Home & School, and shop for Used Uniforms, if available.

TK – 8th GRADE CURRICULUM NIGHT

This is an evening for parents, to meet with their student's teachers to learn about the curriculum, classroom routines, and expectations for the school year.

PARENT / TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent/teacher conferences are scheduled in the fall and early spring. All parents/guardians are expected to attend these conferences. Parent or teacher-initiated conferences may take place at other times throughout the year. Specific details will be sent home via school newsletters regarding conferences.

NONCUSTODIAL PARENT

OCSC policy on the rights to school information by a parent who does not have custody of his/her children is as follows:

1. Court Orders: At the time of registration and/or as the parent becomes aware, court orders must be presented to the Principal by either or both parents.
2. Records: A noncustodial parent must submit a written request for his/her children's records, unless a court order prohibits him/her from doing so.
3. School personnel may assume that the noncustodial parent has a right to the student's records unless a court order to the contrary has been provided.
4. School personnel do not need permission from the custodial parent to provide records to the noncustodial parent, but it will notify the custodial parent that it intends to comply with a request from the noncustodial parent.
5. Conferences and information: A noncustodial parent may attend regular parent/teacher conferences or arrange special parent/teacher conferences unless he/she has been restricted from doing so by court order. General school information, such as lunch menus or announcements of school events, is not considered part of a student's records. The school is not required to provide such information to noncustodial parents, but may comply with requests if it is feasible.
6. Other contacts: The school will assume a noncustodial parent can pick up his/her children from school unless a court order provides otherwise.
7. Joint Custody Information: If parents have joint custody, each parent will have the same rights unless restricted by court order. The school may require a copy of the custody order and may also require identification from the noncustodial parent.

PROGRAMS

K-8th GRADE ACADEMICS

CURRICULUM

Our curriculum provides for the proper education of the student at each grade level. The subjects of Religion, Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies are taught in each grade. Basic instruction in the core subjects is enhanced by placing additional emphasis on the processes of learning, creativity and the acquisition of study skills. Each school offers added support to students and their families through our resource program.

SPECIALS

VISUAL ART

All TK – 8 students are scheduled to have art once per week. For some schools, art is taught by a classroom teacher, while others have a part-time designated art teacher. Exploration in art helps our students with the development of motor skills, language skills, social skills, decision-making, and creativity.

MUSIC

TK-8 Students are scheduled to have Music class at least once a week. Once each year, the students will showcase their musical abilities to their families and friends with a performance that will be scheduled. See the school calendar for more details. In addition to vocal music, students may experience instruments like the recorder, guitar, and keyboard. Students also have the opportunity to participate in the Music in Catholic Schools Band Program.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Students are scheduled to have P.E. class at least once per week. On P.E. days, students should wear appropriate shoes (tennis shoes). If a child is unable to participate in P.E., a doctor's written note should be provided to excuse him/her from class. Students in grades 5-8 will be required to wear P.E. attire. Shorts and t-shirts that adhere to the school's dress-down day policy are to be worn. P.E. grades will be based on participation, appropriate dress, and behavior.

SPANISH

When offered, the emphasis in Spanish for grades K-6 is to create a solid foundation of basic vocabulary, reading, and written skills. Students in grades 7-8 cover about the same material as the first semester of level one Spanish. Students learn vocabulary, grammar, and how to conjugate verbs. This class is intended to provide a knowledge base so they can successfully participate in High School Language.

LIBRARY/MEDIA

Students in K-8th grade have a scheduled weekly library/media period. During this time, they learn library skills and have the opportunity to check out books. Students will also engage in reading, writing, and research in the media center. In many of our buildings, the library media specialist may teach classes on video, animation, coding, or other digital media.

RELIGIOUS FORMATION

The traditions and teachings of the Catholic Church and the values of Christian living permeate the school day. This high priority is expressed through worship, prayer, religion class, and the general climate of the school. Catechesis on justice, mercy, and peace are an integral part of the curriculum and school because of our need to live them in our daily lives. Each student receives daily instruction in religion. The instruction follows the Archdiocesan curriculum guidelines. Content includes Doctrine, Scripture, Tradition, and Church History. Topics are taught using methods appropriate to the various age levels. Daily prayer is an integral part of the school day. Students use both formal and spontaneous forms of prayer several times daily. Prayer services are planned for special feasts and liturgical seasons, such as Advent and Lent. Additionally PK – 4th grade students participate in Catechesis of the Good Shepherd program as an additional once a week "Special".

MASS AND RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

OCSC students will attend Mass on every Holy Day. School Masses are planned for each school site as well. Please note the calendar for the Mass schedule. All students are expected to fully participate in Mass by singing and responding in prayer. All students in 2nd grade through 8th grade will participate in reconciliation at least once each semester. With the assistance of our 2nd grade & middle school teachers, the Parish Religious Education program will prepare the 2nd graders for their First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion and 8th graders for Confirmation. In October, the Month of the Rosary, and May, the Month of Mary, each class will recite the Rosary. During Lent, the children will attend the Stations of the Cross. By their good example and frequent reception of the Sacraments and weekly attendance at Sunday Mass, parents/guardians can establish, in their children, habits that will remain with them forever.

REPORT CARDS

PK and Kindergarten report cards are issued as a paper card usually sent home on the first Thursday following the end of each trimester. Report cards for 1st – 8th grade are issued each trimester in both paper form and are available on-line in the **Sycamore Student Information** grading program.

Parents are provided a log-in and password to this Student Information System so they can monitor student academic progress throughout the year. Parents/ Guardians are urged to take an active interest in their student's school behavior and academic progress letting the student understand that the school and parents have a shared goal of assisting them in achieving success. It is important that the student be commended for accomplishments and encouraged to work on areas that they are being challenged by. Trimester progress reports are issued at mid points of the trimester. They are indicators of progress and are not recorded on the student's cumulative folder. Trimester grades must be recorded on the cumulative folder along with attendance at the end of each trimester.

Grade Scale

For students in 3rd – 8th Grade St. Thomas More Catholic School uses a letter grading scale of (A, B, C, D, F) is used for daily classes.

A+ 100-98%	B+ 92-91%	C+ 85-84%	D+ 77-76%	F Below 70%
A 97-95%	B 90-88%	C 83-80%	D 75-73%	
A- 93- 94%	B- 87-86%	C- 79-78%	D- 72-70%	

In addition, **Satisfactory and Unsatisfactory** are used to indicate whether the student is working at his/her level of competence and to indicate behavior or attitude in class.

HONOR ROLL

OCSC curriculum challenges students to strive to become their best academically and recognizes achievement trimester in the 7th – 8th grades through an honor roll system. Students' G.P.A.s can earn them placement on honor roll. "First Honors"- for students who earn between 3.75 and 4.0 "Second Honors" - for students who achieve between 3.25 and 3.74.

For students in TK – 2nd a scale of M, S, D, N, NA is used.

M	= Mastered / Strong
S	= Satisfactory Progress
D	= Developing / Progressings
N	= Needs More Practice
NA	= Not Assessed

For Specials classes a scale of P = Passing and N = Not Passing is used.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Please be advised that it is the policy of our school that if your child has earned an F for two trimesters in one or more subjects, he/she will not participate in the graduation ceremony. Failure for two trimesters means that the student has not met the requirements in that subject. Students are given all the assistance needed to be successful, whether it be extra tutoring from a teacher(s), or from outside help, staying in the Homework Room to complete work, or redoing work to be certain students learn the curriculum. Failure in a class will only result from a lack of cooperation in completing assigned tasks.

Parents/guardians should be aware from first trimester and then second trimester grades if their son/daughter is in jeopardy. Frequent communication between parents/guardians, teachers, and students will occur during the third trimester to help students achieve passing grades.

HOMEWORK

Teachers may assign special projects or individual activities to engage the interest of students or to supplement assigned class work. Parents/guardians are encouraged to set aside time each evening for skill practice - approximately three to four minutes per year of age is a good rule of thumb. During skill practice time, children should read, write, draw, or do homework. The teacher holds the rights to have a child stay in during recess to complete homework, as well as requiring the child to come to homework room (grades 5 -8).

BOOKS & CLASSROOM MATERIALS

Each child is responsible for the care and proper use of schoolbooks, equipment, and school property. Students are to care for school/parish property in a respectful manner. Students, who lose, deface or damage school/parish property or the property of others will pay a financial restitution. The parent will be billed for any loss or damage, and appropriate disciplinary measures will follow.

RETENTION

A teacher may recommend retention of a student after conferring with the principal and the parent/guardian. Reasons for retention include, but are not limited to:

1. Low grades;
2. Excessive absences;
3. Immaturity/inability to interact with peers; and
4. Emotional immaturity.

After conferring with the parent/guardians and teacher(s), the Principal will make the final decision as to the appropriate placement and/or retention of all PreK-8th grade children.

STAR TESTING

The OCSC utilizes a computer-adaptive assessment called Renaissance Star Assessments. Star Assessments are a comprehensive Pre-K – 12 assessment solution that helps to accurately measure students' reading and math achievement and growth. Star Benchmarking Assessments can be given as often as three times a year (fall, winter, and spring). Benchmarking helps educators plan and deliver the most appropriate instruction by giving them reliable data and information about each student. Star Assessments can also be used to set and track student progress toward individual goals. Individualized goals can be measured as often as weekly and allows teachers to monitor student progress toward those goals. The Star Assessments program then provides instructional resources that teachers can assign to address individual needs. Some of these assignments may be worked at home or students may participate with others during class time. The goal is improved learning on targeted standards.

FOUNTAS AND PINNELL BENCHMARKING

Benchmark assessments are used to help a teacher determine his/her students' reading level so that instruction can occur at that level. OCSC teachers use Fountas and Pinnell Assessment Kits to help schools to determine those reading levels.

A baseline assessment is given at the beginning of the school year for grades 1-8 and at the beginning of the second semester for kindergarten students. A final assessment is given at the end of the year and is used to track growth. Additional assessments may be given at other times during the year if the classroom teacher believes it will be helpful instructionally. Classroom teachers will communicate student progress with parents at the end of each assessment period.

STUDENT ASSISTANCE TEAM (SAT)

Recognizing that individual differences exist among students, reasonable adjustments and accommodations will be made to help students develop skills affecting academic growth.

Enrichment instruction shall be offered when possible and deemed appropriate by the teacher in consultation with the parent(s) or guardian.

The Student Assistance Team (SAT) is comprised of the resource teacher and several classroom teachers. Classroom teachers with concerns regarding student performance may initiate the SAT process. The classroom teacher will bring samples of work and strategies or modifications that are already being used in the classroom. The team will offer additional suggestions and strategies for classroom implementation or will recommend resource support if needed. If significant progress has not been made, the team may suggest further testing by the local public-school district.

When the diagnosis is made through the local public school district, suggestions for helping the student will be reviewed by the school and public-school representatives. Recommendations will be made to the parents/guardians based on the information gathered through assessments, teacher recommendation and observations. Parents/guardians may be encouraged to seek tutoring or other support services offered through the local public school district.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND CLUBS

St. Thomas More School offers a variety of extra-curricular activities throughout the year including:

LEGION OF MARY JR.

A parish based after school program dedicated to prayer through the Rosary. Students in 4th - 8th grade meet weekly to pray and plan Christ centered activities.

REACH

This is a 3rd – 8th Grade advance placement program that meets weekly on school days during the 2nd trimester to work on higher learning projects.

MCS BAND PROGRAM

An Archdiocesan provided program for an additional cost for students in 5th – 8th Grade

BIBLE BOWL

4th – 8th Grade Bible knowledge team

BOOK BOWL

A Jr. High book reading / knowledge bowl team.

NORRIS ATHLETICS

A partnership with Norris Jr. High to allow our Jr. High students to participate in swimming and track and field at Norris Jr. High

STM ATHLETICS

A variety of Parish based sports including Baseball / T-Ball, Basketball, Football, Soccer, Softball, Track, and Volleyball.

WITS CLASH

A Jr. High knowledge team

YOUTH CHOIR

A vocal music choir that sings at school Masses, monthly parish Masses, and occasional concerts

BAND

Music in Catholic Schools provides band opportunities for students in fifth through eighth grade. This is a service offered to families at cost and is coordinated by an employee of the Archdiocesan Catholic Schools Office. Participating schools provide a location for lessons and permits students to be excused from classes twice per week for 30-minute sessions. All costs, personnel, and arrangements are under the control of the Music in Catholic Schools coordinator. Students are responsible for all work missed in class due to band.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are intended to enhance curriculum and are selected carefully by the classroom teachers. Students may be denied participation if they fail to meet academic or behavior requirements. Teachers must have a parental permission slip for each occasion. Parents may be asked to assist in chaperoning a field trip; if there is room, parents may ride on the bus at no charge to them. Siblings are not allowed to attend field trips as they can often distract a chaperone from his/her duties. If a parent requests that he/she provide transportation for his/her own student in his/her own car, no other students may ride with them. If there is a fee for the field trip, parents will be notified. The fee will include the cost of the bus per student. All adult chaperones MUST be Safe Environment-trained through the Archdiocese of Omaha.

PRESCHOOL INFORMATION

PreS Program-- The PreS philosophy is that all children can learn in a play-based setting. A young child learns life-long skills through play. The child must be completely and independently toilet trained and must turn 3 by July 31st. Absolutely NO pull-up diapers are allowed. The PreS program will provide many opportunities for the 3-year-old to enhance his/her growth and development. Each child will learn a host of skills and acquire the confidence and self-esteem to succeed in future school readiness.

PreK Program-- The PreK philosophy builds on the preschool program to continue the academic growth to meet the high expectations of the kindergarten program. School readiness is at the core of the PreK program. Students entering the PreK program must turn 4 by July 31st. The PreK program places emphasis on academics, attention span, and cognitive skills. Each PreK student will be well prepared to meet the challenges at our Consortium schools.

The child's original birth certificate (with raised seal), immunization records, and \$100.00 non-refundable registration fee are required at the time of registration.

BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL EXTENDED CARE

Each Consortium school offers before and/or after school care for students. Registration materials, including information about costs, may be obtained from the specific school office. The disciplinary policy of each school applies to its before and after school program.

Extended Care is available for students in Transitional Kindergarten – 8th Grade. Hours in the morning are from 6:45 a.m. until 7:45 a. m. and in the afternoon from 3:10 until 6:00 p.m. Students enrolled in Extended Care must report **directly** to the gym. Afternoon students are to report **immediately** after class dismissal. All school policies are applicable in Extended Care.

Extended Care services are provided before and after school on a monthly commitment basis. On the 15th of each month, participating parents will receive a calendar to specify days and hours their student will be attending. These calendars will need to be submitted to the Extended Care Director by the end of each month with their payment to reserve your student's spot. If a calendar and payment have not been received by the first day of the upcoming month, unfortunately your child/children will not be able to attend Extended Care and may result in the loss of the Extended Care spot.

Extended Care rates are as follows:

- A Non-refundable Registration fee of \$50 per family.
- \$4 per hour, per child, \$8 per hr. from 5:15 – 6:00 p.m.
- Our facility closes at 6:00 pm. There will be a \$20 charge for every 15 minutes, per child, after 6:00 pm.
- Credit **will not** be given for missed days or early pick-up.

If additional hours are requested, and the Director approves the child/children to attend, after the calendar and payment is made the balance will be applied to the following month fees.

St. Thomas More School's Preschool/Prekindergarten program has a separate Extended Care program. Registration is done on a commitment basis. Commitment forms can be accessed at stmbengals.org through the preschool tab.

LUNCH

HOT LUNCH PROGRAM PROGRAM

All of our Consortium schools offer hot lunch programs for our families. We want to use the lunchroom as an opportunity to teach our children appropriate table manners. We also want to try and get the children to eat what the parents expect them to eat and not give it to other children or throw it away.

Students are not permitted to eat at local restaurants on their own or to order food for delivery. **Fast food delivery by parents is not allowed.** Students may not bring pop/soda to drink with their lunch. Students are not permitted to leave the school for lunch with a parent/guest.

Since we participate in the federal government subsidy program, free and reduced prices for lunches are available to children whose families meet the income guidelines. Applications are available at registration or at any time in the school office. All information is confidential, and much care is taken to ensure that students receiving aid are not made to feel or appear different from any other lunch purchaser. Any family that qualifies for this assistance is encouraged to participate.

Even if you qualify, but do not wish to participate, we encourage you to apply due to the fact that the number of families in the area who qualify for free and reduced lunch determines the number of other services made available to our community schools, public and parochial, such as Title I services.

USDA NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation from prior civic rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the federal relay service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found on line at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to the USDA by:

Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410
Fax: (202) 690-7442; or Email: program.intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity employer.

In addition to the daily lunch listed on the lunch menu, we offer students an alternate choice to the main item served. They have a choice of string cheese, yogurt, and dinner roll, a chef's salad and dinner roll, or a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, string cheese and 1-bread alternate offered each day. Lunch prices will remain the same with each choice. To place their order students will need to let their teacher know each morning of their choice for the day.

Students are not allowed to have fast food from outside vendors / restaurants or soft drinks (pop) in the lunchroom.

LUNCH SCHEDULE

Preschool/PreK, TK, K, 1st	11:00 - 11:25 a.m.
2 nd , 3 rd	11:35 - 11:55 a.m.
6 th , 7 th , 8 th	12:05 p.m. - 12:25 p.m.
4 th , 5 th	12:35 – 12:55 p.m.

LUNCH PRICING

- **Student Lunch \$2.75**

- **Individual Milk cost: \$.50**

(Milk is included with school lunch and is available for purchase by students who bring their own lunch.)

- **Adults per lunch cost: \$4.00**

Lunch Charge Policy

The goal at St. Thomas More School is to provide students access to nutritious no or low cost meals each school day. However, unpaid charges place a financial burden on our school. The purpose of this policy is to insure compliance with federal requirements for the USDA child nutrition program.

When family lunch accounts fall below \$5.00 you will receive an email notice from Sycamore directly to the parents. You will continue to receive notices until payment has been made.

Should family accounts become over \$20.00 past due, a school employee will call a parent.

Negative balance status can be avoided by making a payment in the form of cash or check payable to OCSC, or we can accept a credit/debit card payment. A credit card payment will have an added 3% charge, no charge for a debit card payment.

We strongly **discourage meal charges**, but we understand that an occasional emergency is necessary. The following policies will apply regarding charges:

~All students are given a chance to charge.

~Any family accounts that are \$25.00 past due will require the establishment of a payment plan to be made.

Parents are strongly encouraged to submit a free/reduced price meal application yearly as well as when household or income information changes. All households can apply for meal benefits any time during the school year. Please notify the school office or the food service program for an application.

FREE AND REDUCED LUNCH

The new school year requires a new meal application. The application will be made available at the start of the school year.

- Only one meal application is needed for each household.
- Applications will be available online at stmbengals.org

Meals Served

Meals served at Consortium schools will:

- be appealing and attractive to children;
- be served in clean and pleasant settings;
- meet, at a minimum, nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal statutes and regulations;
- offer a variety of fruits and vegetables;
- serve only low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk; and will
- ensure that half of the served grains are whole grain.

Mealtimes and Scheduling

OCSC schools will:

- will provide students with 20 minutes for lunch;
- schedule meal periods at appropriate times, between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.;
- will not schedule tutoring, club, or organizational meetings or activities during mealtimes, unless students may eat during such activities; and
- will provide students access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks.

Sharing of Foods and Beverages

OCSC discourages students from sharing their foods or beverages with one another during meal or snack times, given concerns about allergies and other restrictions on some children's diets.

Nutrition Education and Promotion

OCSC schools aim to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by students by providing nutrition education that:

- is offered at each grade level designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health;
- is part of not only PE/health education classes, but also classroom instruction in subjects such as math, science, language arts, and social studies;
- promotes fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, healthy food preparation methods, and health-enhancing nutrition practices;
- emphasizes caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (physical activity/exercise);
- links with school meal programs, other school foods, and nutrition-related community services.

LUNCH VOLUNTEERS

Parents can earn PPP hours by volunteering in the lunchroom assisting the kitchen staff in the serving and cleaning-up after lunch. **All volunteers at the school must have successfully completed Safe Environment training and background check.** Volunteers are not to be disciplinarians of students. Should a discipline problem occur in the lunchroom, it should be brought to the attention of the **certified staff member** on duty.

SCHOOL INFORMATION AND POLICIES

ASBESTOS

The Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act, passed in 1987, requires all public and private schools to inventory and inspect all buildings for asbestos containing materials. All asbestos areas will continue to be inspected on a regular basis as required by law, and procedures implemented to assure no health hazards are present. All materials containing asbestos are sealed and in good condition and will be kept that way. The management plan has been filed with the Nebraska Department of Health and is on file in the office of the school's maintenance engineer/asbestos program manager. Copies of the management plan will be provided to requesting parties for the cost of reproduction.

ATTENDANCE **SCHOOL DAY**

The school day is from 8:00 a.m. – 3:10 p.m. except on early dismissal days. **Student drop off begins at 7:40 a.m.** The morning session of **Pawprints Preschool** begins at 8:00 a. m. and dismisses at 11:00 a. m. Afternoon session of Pawprints Preschool begins at 12:10 p.m. and dismisses at 3:00 p.m. All day Preschool and Prekindergarten sessions are dismissed at 3:00 p. m.

STUDENT DROP OFF

Families with last names A – M will use station #1. For this station, all cars enter the parking lot from 48th Street by the Bell Tower and exit going east on Grover.

Families with last names N – Z will use station #2 For this station, all cars enter the middle drive of the parking lot from 48th St. and exit from the south drive back on to 48th St. Due to the layout cars will not be able to enter from "A" Street or traveling from the south on 48th St.

Families who carpool should use the station assigned to the family that is driving.

School dismisses at 3:10 p.m. Parents are to receive their students outside of the building.

Students should not be on school grounds earlier than 7:40 a.m., unless they are enrolled in morning Extended Care or participating in Band or have a scheduled meeting with a teacher, or later than 3:25 p.m. unless they are enrolled in the afternoon Extended Care Program.

Students who are at school during these times will be sent to Extended Care and parents will be charged accordingly.

Parents are reminded that cars should never be left on the street without a driver ready to move it to keep traffic flowing during student drop off and pick up. Parents are to use the southern portion of the parking lot east of the school if they will be exiting their car to pick up students.

SAFETY TO AND FROM SCHOOL

The school's Safety Patrol has been established to help provide safe passage across the busy intersections around the school. Please help our patrols by insisting on respect for them and obedience to the rules and regulations of the school.

Remember that the Safety Patrol boys and girls are providing a service for the school and must be on duty in rain, sleet, snow and frigid weather. Please ensure that students on patrol duty are dressed appropriately.

The Safety Patrol asks students and adults to follow a few common sense rules:

1. Cross with the Safety Patrol.
2. Listen to the Safety Patrol for directions.
3. Walk while crossing the street.
4. Stand behind the Safety Patrol while waiting to cross.
5. Since the parking lot remains closed during the school days (except during funerals), please be patient and courteous.
6. Do not arrive before specified times.

Parents/guardians are urged to drive with extreme caution in the school neighborhood. Children should be let out and picked up far enough away from the patrol crossing to avoid congestion that might be hazardous to youngsters crossing with the patrols. Please assist the safety patrol by remembering that no vehicles are allowed into the parking lot for the purpose of dropping off or picking up students. In addition, make sure that the crosswalks are kept clear of any stopped vehicles at all times.

BICYCLES

Students are permitted to ride bicycles to and from school. It is the responsibility of the student to lock his/bike to the bike rack provided. A student who chooses to ride to/from school must wear a helmet and must walk his/her bicycle across any street monitored by a school safety patrol.

SKATEBOARDS, ROLLERSKATES/BLADES, SCOOTERS

For safety reasons, skateboards, roller skates/blades, or scooters are prohibited on school grounds before school, during school hours, or at dismissal time. Storage of these items would be difficult at school and riding them on crowded sidewalks on the way home would pose a danger.

ABSENCES

If your student will be absent from school, a Parent/Guardian is required to call the School office by 8:30 a.m. at 402-551-9504 each day of an absence. When the student is able to return to school, any doctor notes or special exemptions should be dropped off to the main office. **When a student will be absent from school for a planned absence, a note/pass-a-note or e-mail should be sent to the homeroom teacher and the school office Secretary, Ms. Sam. Any absence notices should be communicated prior to the absence giving the reason for the absence and the dates the student will be out of school.** A Parent/Guardian does not need to call each day of planned absences once they have submitted a note.

- If a student becomes ill during the school day a Parent/Guardian will be contacted before the student is allowed to leave school. The call will be made by a staff member. The child will never call home directly. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) should make sure at least two reliable persons are listed as emergency contacts in Sycamore in cases when a Parent/Guardian is unavailable. These should be people who can come to the school if it is necessary.
- If a student needs to be dismissed from school early, he/she must present a written note, with parent signature, to the homeroom teacher who will send it to the office. Or a Parent/Guardian should contact the office directly. All students leaving school early must check out at the school office before they will be dismissed. **Please allow 15 minutes if you need to pick up a student immediately.**

Missing work due to absences

A Parent/Guardian must notify the homeroom teacher and the school office by email or phone if they wish to have homework sent home with a sibling or another student. Homework will be available for pick up at the office after 3:30 p.m. **Homeroom teachers will not be able to make homework available during the school day.**

- When a student is absent, he/she will be expected to complete missed homework in one day's time for each day absent. Occasionally, the allotted times for homework assignments may be extended or altered by the homeroom teacher or Principal.
- Each grade will have a policy for late work not returned. Please refer to the grade level expectations for specifics.
- In the event of missing school for trips, teachers will provide as much independent work as possible prior to the absence provided the request is made in a timely manner. Parent(s)/guardian(s) should avoid taking their student(s) out of school. Students will be given additional missed homework when they return.
- Students who miss a test(s) during this time, will take the test(s) before/after school or during recess time. The time will be set up by the homeroom teacher.

According to Nebraska State law, 20 (seven or more a trimester) absences in a school year are considered excessive. State statute section 79-201 (compulsory attendance law) reads as follows: "Every person residing in a school district within the State of Nebraska who has legal or actual charge or control of any child who is not less than seven years of age and not more than sixteen years of age, or any child under the age of 7 who is currently enrolled in school...shall cause such child to attend regularly the public, private, denominational, or parochial day's schools...each day that such schools are open and in session, except when excused by school authorities..."

The school calendar is provided to all families each spring, and is available on line through Sycamore. Please use this calendar when planning vacations or other non-school related activities/events which would be considered unexcused. We also ask that you do all you can to schedule doctor/dentist appointments when school is not in session. Removing children from the learning environment is detrimental to the educational process and should be avoided if at all possible. Excused absences include those due to illness or family emergency (death of a family member, serious illness, etc.). All other absences will be considered unexcused. This would also include a child coming later in the morning or leaving early in the afternoon for appointments or other non-school related activities.

Unexcused Absence: a student who engages in unexcused absences may be considered truant under state law. Truancy also is a violation of school rules. When a student is going to be absent or tardy, a Parent/Guardian is to call the school office. This is necessary for safety reasons as well as record keeping. An answering machine is connected outside office hours to make calling more convenient for parents/guardians. When leaving a message, please give the following information: Your name, student's name, homeroom teacher, reason for absence or tardy, expected time of arrival, and, whether or not, your student(s) will order lunch for that day. If an absence occurs without a Parent/Guardian reporting it, expect a phone call from Ms. Sam or another staff member for each absence.

Excessive Absences

If a student becomes frequently absent from school, they will begin interventions with the school counselor in collaboration with their homeroom teacher, Parent/Guardian and Principal to determine an appropriate intervention to address the excessive absences. These interventions can include individual sessions with the school counselor, parent communication to determine reasons for the excessive absences and support needed from the school. Finally, a formal attendance intervention plan at school could occur to address excessive absences.

- If a student accumulates 7 absences within a trimester, the school counselor will conference with the student and a Parent/Guardian to advise the number of absences and determine any support needed from the school.
- If a student accumulates 10 absences, the school counselor will refer the student to the school Principal and he will review school interventions. He will conference with a Parent/Guardian to determine any additional support needed from the school.
- If a student accumulates 15 absences, a formal SAT will be scheduled by the SAT coordinator with the student, homeroom teacher, school Principal, school Counselor, and parent(s)/guardian(s). A formal attendance plan will be created which will be implemented by the school counselor. The formal attendance plan will require the student to meet regularly with the school counselor to review plan progress.
- The school Counselor will frequently communicate with the a Parent/Guardian, homeroom teacher, school Principal and school office throughout any intervention.
- If a child accumulates 20 absences, The Principal will send a letter of concern and an attendance report to the Douglas County Attorney's office for violation of the Nebraska compulsory attendance law. **According to the Nebraska State law, 20 (7 or more per trimester) absences in a school year are considered excessive.**
- If the student's attendance continues to be a problem, the child's status for promotion to the next grade level will be in jeopardy. This decision will be up to the principal after she consults with the child's teacher(s) and others if necessary. Other mandatory action may include:

- required summer school time and work
- working with a social worker
- public health nurse
- a petition to family court due to educational neglect
- other to be decided by principal

Tardy Policy:

A student is considered tardy if he/she is not in their homeroom classroom by 8:05 a.m.

Students are expected to get a pass from the school office before going to their classroom if they are late for school.

- The number of tardies and absences will appear on every student's report card and progress report. Any discrepancies should be addressed with Ms. Sam in the office and the homeroom teacher.
- Parents/Guardians are expected to call the office and the homeroom teacher via e-mail / pass-a-note (if possible), if their student is going to be late for school.
- If a student accumulates 10 or more tardies within a trimester, the school counselor will conference with the student and a Parent/Guardian to advise of number of tardies and determine any support needed from the school.
- An intervention plan may be implemented between a Parent/Guardian, homeroom teacher, school Counselor and school Principal due to excessive tardies.
- A student who is tardy/gone for more than two hours during the day will be counted as absent for ½ day.
- Students who are late for Mass must first check into the office, and then must be escorted into the church. We want to ensure that our students make it across the street and into the church safely.

EXCUSED ABSENCE

If a student is absent from school, teachers will follow the guidelines noted with regard to missed schoolwork.

- A parent/guardian must notify the school office by email or phone by 8:30 am if they wish to have homework sent home with a sibling or another student. The office will then notify the classroom teacher. Homework will be available at the office after dismissal. **Teachers will not be able to make homework available during the school day.**
- When a student is absent, he/she will be expected to complete missed homework in one day's time for each day absent. Occasionally, the allotted times for homework assignments may be extended or altered by the teacher or Principal.
- Each grade will have a policy for late work not returned. Please refer to the grade level expectations for specifics.
- In the event of missing school for trips, teachers will provide as much independent work as possible prior to the absence provided the request is made in a timely manner. Parents/guardians should avoid taking their child(ren) out of school. Students will be given additional missed homework when they return.
- Students who miss a test/tests during this time, will take the test/tests before/after school or during recess time. The time will be set up by the teacher.

MAKE-UP WORK

Students are responsible for making up work missed as a result of a tardy or absence.

- 1) **Planned absences** – Students are responsible for contacting all of their teachers prior to the planned absences to get any work they can make up while they are absent. All homework should be turned into teachers on the day they return. Students should also ask each teacher for any other work they may have missed and discuss when it is due.
- 2) **Unplanned absences** - Upon the day of their return, students are required to visit with each teacher to determine what effort they must make to complete missed assignments, projects, quizzes, and tests in a timely manner. Students will have the same number of days they were absent + 1 day to make up work. Students are to receive missed instruction and complete all work as soon as possible.

EARLY DISMISSAL OR SCHOOL CLOSING

If school closes during the day, we will follow the instructions you gave on your child's emergency card. For that reason, please be sure to notify us of any changes of address, phone numbers, and/or emergency contact persons. Those students enrolled in the after-school Extended Care Program will report to the Extended Care facility until someone arrives to pick them up.

WEATHER AND EMERGENCY DISMISSALS

Hot Weather: Classrooms are equipped with window air-conditioning units, so special dismissals due to heat should not be necessary.

Snow Days: In the event of snow or ice storms, St. Thomas More Catholic School will follow the Catholic Schools Office policy concerning closings. The decision to close school will be announced on most local radio and television stations before 7:00 a.m. and identified as ***Omaha Catholic Schools***.

Emergencies: If there is an emergency during the day, which requires an early dismissal, it will be communicated with parents using Sycamore and announced on local radio stations. Students will be held at school until picked up by their parents, unless other arrangements have been indicated on the student's registration.

SNOW DAYS

In the event of bad weather, please listen to Radio Station KFAB and watch channels 3, 6, and/or 7 for closing of school, late start, or early dismissal. If school is closed or dismissed early due to inclement weather, all events or activities after school will be canceled or postponed to a later date.

In case of early dismissal, students will be sent home their usual way--walking, carpool, etc., unless the school is notified otherwise. No child will be dismissed unless proper provisions have been made. OCSC will follow the recommendations of the Catholic School Office regarding announcements made concerning dismissal because of weather. In the event of bad weather and no early closing, children can be released early only if a parent/guardian comes to school to pick them up. However, parents/guardians may not take children other than their own unless the school has oral or written permission from the parent/guardian to take their child home.

EVACUATION PLAN

An evacuation plan has been developed by each school's Safety Committee if the entire student body needs to evacuate the school buildings and reassemble at an alternate site. Depending on the situation, parents/guardians would be notified either by a phone call, Parent Reach/School Beacon, or through the media. If there should ever be an occasion to utilize this plan, please be advised that students will not be released to anyone except their parents/guardians and those listed as an Emergency Contact on the student's census card. Parents/guardians or Emergency Contact persons will need to come to the specified site, where they will be asked to sign out their child(ren).

BULLYING POLICY

OCSC strives for an environment in which our children can grow academically, behaviorally, and spiritually in a compassionate and respectful environment. In order to maintain this Catholic-Christian environment, incidents of bullying, which are contrary to these values, will NOT be tolerated. Incidents of bullying or harassment during school activities or school-sponsored activities, on or off campus, will be addressed.

Definition:

Bullying is a repeated pattern of offensive behavior in an environment of an imbalance of power which includes, but is not limited to, the following categories:

- Physical intimidation
- Assault
- Social intimidation
- Oral or written threats
- Forced isolation
- Digital/electronic harassment

Specific examples of bullying behavior may include, but are not limited to:

- offensive references, gestures, language, jokes, graffiti based on specific traits of an individual including gender, race, religion, disability, or age;
- unwelcome physical contact, verbal or written suggestions;
- name calling or taunting; and
- Language of any kind which is disparaging or demeaning.

Responsibility:

It is the responsibility every member of the OCSC community, including parents, to report suspected bullying to the appropriate authorities; the appropriate authorities include:

- Teachers; and
- Administration

It is then the responsibility of these authorities to take the appropriate steps necessary to deal with the situation, using the guidelines listed below.

Guidelines/Procedure:

Any person who has complaints of bullying should report such conduct to the Principal. If an individual feels uncomfortable bringing the matter to the Principal, then the matter should be reported to the Executive Director. When the appropriate authority receives a first complaint of bullying type behavior,

it will be promptly investigated and, if valid, discipline will be imposed. Staff members directly responsible for supervision of the students involved in the bullying complaint will be notified, as well as parents or guardian of students involved. Continued bullying behavior will be investigated by the school. Consequences for repeated bullying behavior may include, but not be limited to:

- notification of the parents or guardians of both students;
- meeting with one or more of the following people: classroom teacher, Principal, parents/guardians, or students;
- detention;
- in/out of school suspension;
- Saturday School/Extended Day;
- Expulsion; and
- contact with the police.

Final decisions for actions taken and consequences given are at the discretion of the Principal.

Confidentiality:

Reasonable efforts will be made to keep a report of bullying and the result of the investigation CONFIDENTIAL; however, student confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. All parties involved in the situation would be informed of the confidential nature of the situation and would be asked to refrain from disclosing any information about the situation to others.

Consortium schools will not tolerate retaliation against any employee or student who complains in good faith of offensive or bullying behavior or provides, in good faith information in connection with any such complaint.

CELL PHONES

Students are encouraged to leave cell phones at home. If a child brings a cell phone to school, he/she must observe the following:

Cell phones are to be turned off during school hours and must be stored in backpacks/lockers. Students are allowed to bring cellphones to school with the following stipulations:

1. The school will not be responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged cell phones.
2. The use of cell phones at any time during the school day is not permitted.
3. Cell Phones are to be on power-off mode at the start of the school day and remain that way until the end of the school day. Leaving cell phone on the vibrating mode is not permitted.

Students relinquish any reasonable expectation of privacy when they use cell phones to call or send text messages at school. If a cell phone rings, buzzes, flashes, etc., the school staff has the right to confiscate the phone and search the call log to determine who has been contacting the student. In the event the call was initiated at school, appropriate disciplinary action according to the discipline outlined below will be taken against everyone involved. Phones ringing or buzzing in backpacks/lockers will be considered in violation of school policy.

Students will be permitted to possess and use cell phones during the school day in response to a health-related emergency when a licensed physician has indicated in writing that the device is essential for the health of the student and the student has received prior permission from the school

Principal or designee to possess and use electronic devices in response to health-related emergencies.

Discipline: The device will be confiscated, taken to the school office, and held until a parent or guardian comes to pick it up. If it is determined that the device has been used for cheating, harassment, or some other inappropriate behavior, the device will be returned to the parent at the discretion of the Principal, but additional disciplinary actions may follow.

ELECTRONICS AT SCHOOL (Other than Cell Phone)

Students are **not permitted** to bring any other electronic devices (other than cell phones) to school. This includes, but is not limited to, handheld games, iPods or other audio players, etc. These items are costly, distracting, and often cause problems among peers. Any such item discovered will be confiscated by faculty will be turned over to the Principal. Devices will be released only to the student's parent/guardian. Consequences, such as detentions, will occur if this policy is continuously violated. Teachers and the Principal reserve the right to remove any item that could be distracting to students in the classroom.

TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

Purpose

Technology is a valuable and important tool to improve student learning and enhance the academic curriculum taught at the school. OCSC's objective is to provide students and employees with a wide range of information technology to support higher-level learning and instruction in and outside of the classroom. All OCSC employees and students are expected to contribute to a safe and productive learning environment while using technology and related network resources. The rules and guidelines governing the use of OCSC's technology are outlined below.

Technology and Network Resources

For purposes of this policy, the term "technology" or "network resources" refers to all aspects of OCSC's owned or leased electronic equipment (including computers, tablets, printers, scanners, cameras, etc.), email, internet services, servers, software, network files and folders and all other technology-related equipment and services. These rules apply to any use of OCSC's technology or network resources, whether this access occurs in school (live or virtual) or outside of school. Students are expected to use technology and network resources in accordance with this policy.

Access to the OCSC wireless network WILL be restricted to OCSC approved electronic devices from 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on school days. It may also be restricted entirely or at certain additional times whenever deemed necessary. The use of personal electronic devices may be allowed in the classroom (or library) at the sole discretion of faculty/staff. The use of personal electronic devices as a "hot spot" for students and others to bypass the school network is prohibited while on school premises.

Student Responsibilities and Acceptable Use

Student access to technology is a privilege, not a right. Students are expected to use technology in a responsible manner consistent with OCSC's educational and religious objectives. The following list provides some examples of student responsibilities and acceptable uses of technology:

1. All technology must be used to further the educational and religious mission of OCSC, and should be respected at all times. Students are responsible for reporting any misuse.

2. Students must use his/her real identity when using OCSC's network resources.
3. The network is to be used to store and transmit school-related data only.
4. Students may be assigned unique email and login usernames and passwords to protect the information on the network. Do not access or use other people's accounts. Do not access or use other people's computers, or folders, or any other electronic device without express permission from the owner.
5. Do not share passwords with any other person. OCSC faculty and parents should be the only exceptions. If a student believes his or her password has been compromised, the student must immediately report this concern to a faculty member.
6. Students are responsible for all actions taken under a student's username and password.
7. With the exception of an Apple ID, students should always use his/her OCSC email address or username when utilizing online resources for digital storage or collaboration.
8. Electronic communications (emails) between faculty and students **must** be made via OCSC's internal email system. Electronic communications between faculty and students through personal accounts may be deemed inappropriate and result in disciplinary action.
9. Students should obtain permission before accessing, posting, or transmitting information belonging to others.
10. Students must respect network security and should not attempt to bypass any technological blocks placed on computers to protect students and filter content that the school has classified as objectionable. Faculty may request to unblock a website if the website is appropriate and relevant to school activities.
11. There is no privacy online. Students should never provide personal information online or share any information the student does not want made available to the public.
12. Students should back up his/her work often. Do not use technology as an excuse. If your computer fails at home, you are still responsible for completing all assignments on time.
13. If applicable, students are responsible for regularly checking his/her OCSC email account and teachers' course pages to stay updated on information shared electronically by the school or his/her teachers.
14. All student files stored on the network may be deleted at the end of each school year.

Unacceptable Uses of Technology and Network Resources

The use of technology and network resources must be consistent with the educational and religious objectives of OCSC. Examples of unacceptable uses of technology include, but are not limited to, the following:

- To access, post, publish or store any defamatory, inaccurate, abusive, obscene, sexually-oriented, threatening, racially offensive or illegal materials that are inconsistent with the objectives and/or teachings of the school.
- To harass, intimidate, threaten or bully others, whether inside or outside of school.
- To steal or borrow intellectual property without permission.
- To plagiarize the work of others, or to use the work of others as your own without giving proper credit.
- To breach copyright laws by using unlicensed software or pirating audio or visual materials.
- To bypass OCSC's content filter or network security.
- To knowingly spread computer viruses or malware.
- To send out "chain" emails, mass emails, and/or surveys not approved by faculty or staff.
- To misrepresent one's own identity or the identity of others.
- To take a photo, record through video or audio any student or faculty member without his/her knowledge and consent.
- To express profanity or any other inappropriate content online, including OCSC's website, email program, social media or other internet sites.
- To share personal information or information about any student or faculty member to anyone via the Internet.
- To access another user's account or invade the privacy of others.
- To store or download unauthorized software programs, music, videos, game files or personal photos on OCSC computers.
- To play games, chat on-line, or watch videos during the school day unless associated with a class and permission from a teacher is explicitly given.
- To utilize encryption or software to hide activity that violates OCSC's Technology Acceptable Use Policy.
- To violate any federal, state, or local laws.

Social Networking (Facebook, Twitter, Texting, Blogs etc.)

Although social networking and texting normally occurs outside of the classroom, it may have a negative impact on the school community. If a student uses social networking or a personal electronic device to convey offensive or disrespectful communications inconsistent with this policy and/or the objectives of the school, OCSC reserves the right to take any disciplinary action it deems necessary to protect students and faculty. OCSC encourages parents to routinely view and monitor their student's personal networking sites and electronic devices to ensure the information and content does not place any student at risk.

Guidelines for social networking:

- Be aware of what you post online. Social media venues, including wikis, blogs, photo and video sharing sites, are very public. What you contribute leaves a digital footprint for all to see. Do not post anything you would not want friends, parents, teachers, future employers, or God to see.
- Follow OCSC's code of conduct when posting online. It is acceptable to disagree with someone else's opinions; however, do it in a respectful manner. Make sure that criticism is constructive and not hurtful. What is inappropriate in the classroom is inappropriate online.

- Be safe online. Never give out personal information, including, but not limited to, first and last names, phone numbers, addresses, exact birthdates, and pictures. Do not share your password(s) with anyone besides your teachers and parents.

No Expectation of Privacy

OCSC sets the terms and conditions of technology use. Students should have no expectation of privacy or anonymity while using technology and network resources provided by OCSC. All content created, sent, accessed or downloaded using any part of OCSC's technology or network resources is subject to the rules stated in this policy. OCSC reserves the right to monitor the network and examine or remove electronic files and/or materials whenever it deems necessary. Students should never assume that emails, files, or other content created or stored on OCSC's network will be maintained as private or confidential. Should OCSC determine there is a reasonable need to do so, it reserves the right to search students' personal electronic devices (cell phones, laptops, etc.) brought on to school grounds.

Disciplinary Action

Violations of this Technology Acceptable Use Policy may result, at minimum, in the loss of technology and network privileges as well as appropriate disciplinary action (up to and including suspension or expulsion). Any violations of federal, state, or local laws will be reported to the appropriate authorities. Students who receive or learn of any harassing, threatening, or inappropriate electronic communications or postings should immediately notify the faculty member supervising the activity or OCSC's administration.

Access to Inappropriate Materials on the Internet/Disclaimer

OCSC currently utilizes an internet content filtering system that reduces student access to offensive and pornographic materials. However, no filtering system is foolproof and OCSC cannot entirely control what students may or may not locate on the internet. While OCSC allows students to access the internet for educational purposes only, students may have the ability to access inappropriate materials. OCSC is not responsible for the content of the information or materials students may retrieve from the internet. Students who inadvertently access inappropriate materials must report the incident to the supervising faculty member or the school's administration immediately.

HARASSMENT AND OFFENSIVE STUDENT CONDUCT

Student offensive conduct or harassment based on a person's gender, sexual orientation, race, color, age, religion, national origin, marital status, or disability is prohibited. Repeated incidents of offensive conduct directed to the same person or group of persons constitutes harassment. Offensive conduct or harassment may result in suspension or expulsion.

Examples of offensive conduct which when repeated constitute harassment include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Explicit and offensive sexual references and gestures.
2. Name calling or taunting on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, race, color, religion, national origin, marital status, or disability.
3. Language of any kind, including graffiti, epithets, vulgar or profane jokes, which is disparaging or demeaning to others on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, race, color, religion, national origin, marital status, or disability.

PROCEDURES FOR REPORTS AND INVESTIGATIONS RELATIVE TO OFFENSIVE CONDUCT OR HARASSMENT

An individual who has complaints of offensive conduct or harassment will report such conduct to the Principal. If an individual feels uncomfortable with bringing the matter to the Principal, or if the Principal is thought to be involved in the offensive conduct or harassment, the individual should inform the Executive Director. Charges of offensive conduct or harassment will be promptly and thoroughly investigated and a written report will be made concerning the results of the investigation.

If it is determined that offensive conduct or harassment has occurred, appropriate relief for the individual bringing the complaint and appropriate disciplinary action against the guilty person, up to and including expulsion will follow.

The OCSC will not tolerate retaliation against any employee or student who complains in good faith of offensive conduct or harassment or provides in good faith, information in connection with any such complaint.

The OCSC will assist persons falsely accused of offensive conduct or harassment in making known to appropriate parties, the false complaint. The OCSC will take disciplinary action, which may include expulsion, if sufficient evidence substantiates the guilt of a person who falsely alleges offensive conduct or harassment. If the offensive conduct is of a sexual nature, then the directives of the Omaha Archdiocesan program, Respecting All God's People, will take effect.

SCHOOL CALENDAR

The school administrator, with the assistance of the school board and staff develops an annual calendar which:

1. Provides an optimum number of instructional days in recognition of the direct correlation between instructional time and student learning;
2. Fulfills the minimum state and applicable accrediting agency requirements; and
3. Gives priority to the number of instructional days and length of each school day.

STUDENT BIRTHDAYS

A student's birthday is a special day. Each classroom honors that child in a manner that is appropriate for his/her grade. **Invitations** for student's birthday parties **must not** be distributed at school. Please refer to the student directory and mail invitations to the addresses provided. **Birthday treats** are handled differently at each of our buildings. Please contact your student's teacher for details on treats. Please do not have **flowers or balloons** delivered to the school. These will not be delivered to the student and will remain in the office until dismissal time, when the student may pick them up.

STUDENT DESKS & LOCKERS

Lockers and desks are provided to the students by the school and are considered school property. Because they are school property, lockers and desks are subject to search by the school administration at any time.

SUPPLIES, EQUIPMENT, AND BOOKS

A school supplies list is made available to parents/guardians each spring and can be found on the school website. Textbooks and many classroom materials are provided with a percentage of their cost covered by the annual book/materials fee. Students and/or parents/guardians are expected to pay for lost or damaged books, supplies and equipment.

Students and/or parents/guardians will be held responsible to pay for willful damage to any school property.

Desks, lockers, or any other storage equipment remain the property of the school and as such can be opened, inspected, or cleaned at any time. The school is not responsible for items left in these storage spaces.

SYCAMORE EDUCATION

Sycamore Education is a program that allows parents and staff to communicate online. Each registered family will be given an access code and password. Families and students will have access to the school calendar, lunch menu, school news, teacher classroom pages, student assignments, and student grades. Parents are encouraged to check Sycamore regularly.

UNIFORM POLICY

In adherence with the mission statement, all Consortium schools adopted a uniform policy to enhance the learning environment. Personal appearance and hygiene should reflect an attitude of self-worth and school pride on the part of the student. Any teacher(s), staff member and/or principal will determine compliance with the dress code and necessary disciplinary actions will be given as deemed appropriate.

UNIFORM VENDORS

Dennis Uniform 726-740 N 109th Court 402-496-9911 www.dennisuniform.com
DiGiorgios Sportwear 14111 Q Street 402-894-5627 www.digiorgios.com

While uniform shirts, shorts, and pants do not have to be purchased at these stores, they must be of the same style. They are the only stores where the school skirts, skorts, and sweaters may be purchased. Both vendors will place a permanent school monogram of the St. Thomas More logo on any white or navy uniform polo shirt for a small fee. The school encourages students to proudly wear their school logo on their uniform shirts. In adherence to our philosophy, proper dress will enhance the learning environment. Personal appearance, cleanliness and hygiene should reflect an attitude of self-worth and school pride on the part of the student. It is the parents' responsibility to know and ensure their students follow the uniform code for students in Pre-School through the eighth grades. Students who are out of uniform will receive demerits and/or may lose privileges. This may include not being eligible for Spirit Days / dress down days.

Uniform Guidelines

- All uniforms must be consistent and color fast. Uniform items may be purchased from any vendor, but must be consistent with the St. Thomas More School dress code and must meet administrative standards. Plaids on girl's skirts must be identical with the plaid available from Dennis Uniform Company and DiGiorgio's Sportswear.
- Additional uniform restrictions will be applied by the administration in response to changing styles and fads if they become disruptive to the learning environment.

- The administration will be the final judge in the enforcement of this code.

Violations of the Dress Code Students out of uniform **will receive demerits and/or may lose privileges.** This may include not being eligible for Spirit Days / dress down days. Only the Principal may excuse students from following the uniform code. Scouting uniforms may be worn by boys and girls on days of meetings.

Please label your child's clothing, particularly boots, sweaters, and sweatshirts. The following are general guidelines.

Girls

The uniform for girls is the Campbell plaid shift (jumper) (Pre-School-3rd grade) and Campbell plaid box pleat skirt or skort (4th-8th grades.) *Must be purchased at one of our uniform vendors.* Shifts (jumper) /skirts must be no shorter than 3 inches above the knee. Girls may wear navy slacks (Pre-School-6th grade) or khaki slacks (7th & 8th grade) in place of the plaid shift, skirt or skort. (Slacks must be similar to those sold by Dennis Uniform—no cargo, corduroy, wind pants, ankle, capri, etc.). A plain dark colored belt must be worn by students in 1st – 8th Grade. If blouses are worn, they are to be long or short sleeved, tailored, and collared. Navy or white knit/polo shirts may be worn as long as they meet the same standard (no non-school logos). Shirts must be tucked in at the waist. No t-shirts with writing or designs that show through the shirts are allowed.

Boys

The uniform for boys is solid navy slacks (Pre-School – 6th grade) and khaki slacks (7th & 8th grade). (Slacks must be similar to those sold by Dennis Uniform—**no cargo, corduroy, wind pants, etc.**) A plain dark colored belt must be worn by students in 1st – 8th Grade. Shirts are to be long or short sleeved, tailored, and collared. Navy or white knit (polo) shirts may be worn as long as they meet the same standard (no non-school logos). Shirts must be tucked in at the waist. T-shirts with writing or designs that show through the shirts are not allowed.

Blouse/Shirts

Blouses, shirts, or turtlenecks with lace or ruffles may not be worn. Blouses, shirts, and turtlenecks are to be tucked in and undershirts, if worn, must be plain white with sleeves no longer than the outer shirt.

Slacks

Slacks must be of a woven fabric with no patch pockets, no flat felled seams, and no noticeable decorations. Slacks should not touch the ground. (Skinny pants, hip huggers, bell bottoms, and cargo pants are **not** considered uniform slacks.)

Shorts

Shorts must not be more than 3 inches above the knee. Oversized or baggy shorts are not allowed. Shorts may not contain cargo-type pockets. Shorts may be worn from the beginning of school through October 15th and from April 15th through the last day of school.

Belts (grades 3-8 only)

A solid color (no embellishments/decorations) navy, black, or brown belt must be worn with slacks or walking shorts that have belt loops. Students in grades K-2 may choose to wear a belt, but it is not required.

Sweatshirt/Sweater

A navy cardigan sweater with the St. Thomas More crest emblem worn with a white or navy collared shirt underneath may be purchased from Dennis Uniform or at DiGiorgio's Sportswear. A grey 1/4 zipped pullover sweatshirt with the St. Thomas More logo may also be worn. They can be purchased only from DiGiorgio's Sportswear. This also must be worn with a white or navy collared shirt underneath. We advise parents to have a sweater or sweatshirt for their student. **These are the only sweater / sweatshirts that may be worn as part of the school uniform. Students are not allowed to wear other sweatshirts, coats, or hoodies on uniform days.**

Socks/Tights/Leggings

Solid white, navy, grey or black socks, tights or leggings must be worn. Socks must be visible and worn at all times. Small logos may be visible but should not be flashy in style.

Shoes

Shoes with laces must be tied; laces may not be tucked into the shoes. Please avoid wearing dark soled shoes that leave marks on our floors. During cold and/or wet weather, appropriate boots should be worn for recess; however, no boots may be worn in the classrooms. Shoes must have a solid sole and cover the entire foot - no sandal type shoes may be worn. Shoes must have a back or a strap covering the back of the heel as well as closed toe. **Fashion boots, slides, flip flops, crocs, and Heelys are not allowed.** Snow boots may be worn to school on snowy days, but they will need to be changed before the school day begins. Athletic / tennis shoes are required for gym class and may be worn at other times. They must be neat, clean and in good condition.

Jewelry

Students are discouraged from wearing jewelry to school. Small earrings may be worn by girls, but for safety reasons, are not to hang below the student's earlobe. No hoops or dangling earrings are allowed. Very simple religious chains/crosses are acceptable. No other neckwear is allowed. Wristwatches may be worn. Bracelets are allowed to be worn on the wrist as long as they are religious in nature and not a distraction. Ankle bracelets are not allowed. Medical Alert identification products are not considered jewelry.

Hair

Hairstyles must be simple and not obstruct students' vision. Student's hair must be clean, well groomed, and have no unusual color, cut, or style. Boys should have neatly trimmed hair with at least the bottom half of the ears exposed and a length not touching the top of the collar. Hair on forehead cannot be longer than eyebrows or touching eyebrows. 'Sweeping' the hair across the forehead, to mask the length, is not acceptable. Students are not allowed to have facial hair.

Girls may wear barrettes, ribbons, and headbands as long as they are not distracting and/or dangling to keep hair out of the student's face. Headbands with ears or large poms or bows are not allowed. If a style or extreme hair coloration causes a disruption in the learning environment as determined by the principal, it is considered inappropriate. Final interpretation of compliance will be determined by the principal.

Make-up

Students may not wear makeup, except Jr. High girls who are allowed to wear non-visible foundation.

Fingernails

Finger nails are to be kept clean and cut to a reasonable length. **Girls** may wear only clear or very light undetectable nail polish. Black, dark, or bright nail polish is not allowed. Fake fingernails are not permitted. If the nail polish causes a distraction, the student will be asked to remove the polish at school. Jewels and other embellishments are not permitted.

Tatoos

Temporary or permanent tattoos on any visible body part(s) are not allowed.

Clothes for P.E.

Separate gym attire is required for students in 3rd – 8th grade. Students are to wear a **gold spirit shirt with the “Property of St. Thomas More” logo sold through the school and black shorts**, which are to be as long as their uniform shorts. Other casual attire is not acceptable. Gym shoes must be an athletic-type of shoe that does not leave a mark on the floor. Students are to change back into their uniform following P.E.

Special Activity Dress Code

On days with special activities (field trips, science fair, etc.) the teacher and the principal will determine the proper dress code. The teacher(s) and/or principal will determine compliance with the above dress code. Students not in compliance with the dress code/uniform policy will be sent to the office and their parent/guardian will be called so the situation can be rectified as soon as possible. Necessary disciplinary actions may be given as deemed appropriate by the teacher/principal.

Spirit / Jean Days / Dress-Up Days

Spirit / Jean Days / Dress-Up Days Out of uniform days will be announced and defined by the principal. Students may wear a school spirit shirt and jeans on these days. Students may not wear leggings. When Spirit Days are held during shorts season, students may wear school appropriate school uniform length non-athletic jean or dress shorts. Typically these days are held as part of a fundraiser and require students to bring an item to participate. The weekly newsletter will provide dates and additional details when these days are scheduled. If students do not follow the guidelines for appropriate dress on Spirit / Jeans / Dress up Days they will not be allowed to participate in the next one.

Dress-Up Days On dress up days students may wear dress-up (nice) clothes, but **NO** t-shirts, wind pants, jeans, shorts, sports clothes, or sweatshirts. Skirts must be the length of uniform skirts. NO flip-flops or slippers may be worn at any time. Shoulders and waists must be covered and shirts must be of sufficient length to reach the top of the waist band. All non-uniform apparel must be of a modest nature. The administration reserves the right for final clothing approval.

Acceptable Clothing:

- Jeans, capris, khakis (pants cannot be dragging on the floor);
- Athletic pants or sweatpants (no words on the seat of the pants);
- Shorts/Skort (the first six weeks of the school year and the last six weeks of the school year) **Must not be shorter than 3 inches above the middle of the kneecap; and
- Dresses/Skirts

**Must not be shorter than 3 inches above the middle of the kneecap.

Unacceptable Clothing:

- Tight fitting pants (i.e., skinny jeans), skirts, skorts, shorts, dresses;
- Leggings worn alone (may be worn under skirts);
- Low-cut pants, skirts, skorts, shorts;
- Shirts with capped sleeves, spaghetti straps, sleeveless, or tank tops;
- Low-cut tops or dresses;
- Midriffs (shirts must cover the top of the pants, skirts, skorts, or shorts);
- Clothing with inappropriate slogans/logos; logos on the seat of pants;
- Flip flops, open back shoes or sandals, Heelys;
- Baggy/sagging pants or shorts;
- Clothing with tears or holes; and
- Baseball hats or other hats.

Cold Weather Wear

In addition to a winter coat or jacket, the following clothing is required for protection from the cold in snowy weather to safeguard the health of the children: Hats/scarves, and mittens/gloves.

Boots:

Boots are NOT allowed to be worn during the school day. Any foot covering that is worn outdoors during wet or snowy weather must be taken off before entering the classroom. Boots should be labeled in order to help avoid mix-ups. If a child does not have boots, he/she should bring an extra pair of shoes for outdoor use.

SCHOOL OFFICE

VISITORS

ALL PARENT VISITORS & VOLUNTEERS MUST CHECK IN AT THE SCHOOL OFFICE. Everyone, with the exception of staff and students, who comes to the school during school hours (6:30 am to 6:00 pm) must check in at the school office and receive a visitor's pass. Parents should drop off any items at the School Office and not take them directly to classrooms. This is done to ensure the safety of all students and staff. Visitors, including parents/guardians, should come in the main entrance. All entrances to the school are locked during school hours. Parents and visitors are welcome to visit school classrooms for special presentations. **Drop-in visits, however, tend to be disruptive and are strongly discouraged.**

If you need to visit with your child's teacher outside of scheduled conferences, please contact the school office, send a message, via email, or send a note in with your child to schedule a time to visit your child's teacher before or after school hours.

One of the procedures followed is to keep all doors to the school building locked during school hours. All visitors are to check in with the school office upon entering the building. Parents should drop off any items at the School Office and not take them directly to classrooms. All visitors to classrooms during the school day need to have a visitor pass and be Safe Environment Background Checked and Certified. There will be no waiting for students in the school lobby.

Visitors will be admitted to the school office after a visual review of the person on security camera. Many cameras are located near all entrances/exits and inside the school building for added security. On occasion there may be a function at school that will require one of the main doors to be unlocked. During these times additional measures will be activated to ensure the safety of students.

STUDENT RECORDS

OCSC refers to the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act as a guideline regarding access to and dissemination of student records.

OFFICE RECORDS

Parents/Guardians are requested to notify the school in writing of any change of home telephone numbers and/or addresses, business telephone numbers, and telephone numbers of emergency contacts so that office records may be accurate, complete, and up to date.

LOST & FOUND

Lost articles, clothing or school materials may be claimed at the Lost and Found box in the school gym. Three times each year (October, February, May), unclaimed items are donated to charity. Parents are encouraged to label clothes and other items so that they can be properly identified and returned to the owner.

HEALTH AND MEDICATION

SAFETY PLAN

In the event of a school emergency, the school will initiate our Safety Plan to insure the safety and security of the students and staff. A manual has been written and updated to provide procedures for a number of possible emergency scenarios that could occur in the school building and surrounding areas. These plans specify designated people, who will be called upon to assume roles of responsibility, and designated off-site evacuation locations. The manual does not cover every possible development; therefore, it may not always be in the safety interest of the students and staff to follow every procedural step. The Plan is a guide to follow that allows for rational judgment by those who assume the roles of responsibility at the time of each emergency.

DRUG-FREE AND ALCOHOL-FREE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Tobacco: State laws and school policy strictly prohibit students from carrying and/or using tobacco products on school property or at school-sponsored activities. Students who violate this policy may be suspended. Repeated violations of this rule may result in expulsion. This may include:

- Cigarettes
- E-cigarettes and vaping devices
- Chewing tobacco

The Nebraska Clean Indoor Air Act prohibits smoking in any form in any place of employment or public building. A person in violation of the Nebraska Clean Indoor Air Act is guilty of a Class V misdemeanor for the first offense and a Class IV misdemeanor for the second and any subsequent offenses.

Alcohol: State laws and school policy strictly prohibit student possession or use of alcoholic beverages on school property or at any school-sponsored function. Students who violate this policy may be suspended, referred to legal authorities, and/or required to participate in a counseling program at the expense of the parent/guardian. Repeated violations of this rule may result in expulsion.

Drugs: State laws and school policy strictly prohibit the use, evidence of use, or possession and/or

transfer of narcotics, depressants, stimulants, hallucinogens, look alike pills of any type, or possession of drug-related paraphernalia anywhere on school property or at any school-sponsored activity. Students who violate this policy may be suspended, referred to the appropriate legal authorities, and/or required to participate in a counseling program at the expense of the parent/guardian. Repeated violations of this rule may result in expulsion.

SCHOOL NURSE

St. Thomas More Catholic School contracts with the Visiting Nurses Association (VNA) for a school nurse. The nurse is responsible for maintaining student health records, state health reporting, and staff training. The nurse is on-site a designated number of hours per year. Additionally the school contracts with Creighton University School of Nursing to conduct student health screenings.

SCHOOL COUNSELOR

St. Thomas More Catholic School has a full time counselor who works with students in their classrooms, consults with teachers, and sees students individually. A student can be referred to the counselor by a parent, teacher or Principal, or the student may initiate the contact. The counselor will contact the parent if he/she thinks that the child should be referred to an outside agency for further counseling. The counselor can provide parents information that may be helpful to their child's development, and lists of appropriate community agencies and resources. The counselor may come into classrooms to teach all students, working together with classroom teachers to deliver curriculum in the areas of academic and career planning, as well as personal and social skills development.

COUNSELOR

Additionally In partnership with Catholic Charities, each OCSC school have a licensed behavioral therapist available one day per week. The therapist will provide services to students to facilitate the emotional and social development of our school communities. The therapist will serve as a resource for family members and students on issues that are related to or impact the student's school life.

CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES

When there is reasonable cause to believe that child abuse / neglect has or will occur the state law mandates a referral to the authorities. In this case, a verbal report needs to be provided to either Child Protective Services (CPS) or to our local Law Enforcement agency. Keep in mind that if the child has physical indications/injuries or there are immediate safety issues, law enforcement (not CPS) has the authority to take immediate protective custody if necessary. The state and the Catholic School Office mandates that schools cooperate with CPS and law enforcement personnel in order to conduct their investigations.

By state statute 28-710 the child abuse mandatory reporting provisions define abuse or neglect as knowingly, intentionally, or negligently causing or permitting a minor child to be:

1. Placed in a situation that endangers his or her life or physical or mental health;
2. Cruelly confined or cruelly punished;
3. Deprived of necessary food, clothing, shelter, or care;
4. Left unattended in a motor vehicle if such minor child is six years of age or younger;
5. Sexually exploited by allowing, encouraging, or forcing such person to solicit for or

engage in prostitution, debauchery, public indecency, or obscene or pornographic photography, films or depictions.

ASTHMA PROTOCOL

Catholic schools, both accredited and approved, should be prepared to implement an emergency treatment plan, known as a protocol, anytime a student or staff member experiences a **life-threatening asthma attack or systemic allergic reaction**.

Emergency Protocol: (Implemented by designated, trained non-medical staff)

- Call 911
- Epi-Pen injection is given
- Albuterol is provided through a nebulizer

The school's Epi-Pen and Albuterol do not replace a child's own prescribed medications for asthma/allergy control and management. Parents/guardians of students with known diagnoses related to asthma and allergies are expected to ensure their children continue to have medications available. Parents must provide to the school staff for students having a known allergic condition or asthma the following:

- Written medical documentation
- Instructions
- Medications as directed by a physician

HEALTH SCREENING

School health screening is not diagnostic nor is it intended to replace regular preventive health care. The goal is to assist parents/guardians in the identification of potential health problems so they may seek appropriate medical evaluation. Annual health screenings are as follows: **First Grade:** Height, Weight, Blood Pressure, Vision, Color vision (if not done in kindergarten), Hearing and Oral Exam. **Second Grade:** Height, Weight, Blood Pressure, Vision, Hearing and Oral Exam. **Third Grade:** Height, Weight, Blood Pressure, Hearing and Oral Exam. **Fourth Grade:** Height, Weight, Blood Pressure, and Oral Exam. **Fifth Grade:** Height, Weight, Blood Pressure, Vision, and Oral Exam. **Sixth Grade:** Height, Weight, Blood Pressure, Vision, Hearing, Scoliosis (Girls only), and Oral Exam. **Eighth Grade:** Height, Weight, Blood Pressure, Vision, Scoliosis (Boys **and** Girls), and Oral Exam.

Annual hearing testing will be performed for students who exhibited abnormal hearing screening results during the previous year.

The "**Annual Student Health Update**" is sent home at the beginning of the school year with the registration materials. It is important that it be completed and returned to school as soon as possible so the school is aware of your child's health status. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to notify the school office if health changes occur. A Health Record Card is on file for each student. Please help to keep this card up-to-date by reporting to the school any booster shots, new glasses or any other pertinent health information.

HEALTH UPDATES AND MEDICATIONS

Health updates and Medication Authorization forms must be signed and on file in the school office. If **a student has a special health concern or allergies, these MUST be identified on the Health Update.**

If a student is on medication that must be administered during school hours, the medication should be brought to the school office by a parent. Do not send medication with your child in their backpack to school. Prescribed medications must be properly labeled with a legible pharmacy label. All over the counter medications must be in the original manufacturer's container. A Medication Authorization

form must be filled out and signed by the parent/guardian for all prescription and over the counter medications.

IMMUNIZATION POLICY FOR SCHOOLS OF ARCHDIOCESE OF OMAHA

In Nebraska, children cannot attend classes in public or private school until the school has written proof of their immunization status.

Parents are required to ensure that their student complies with the Nebraska School Immunization Rules and Regulations before they can be allowed to attend classes. Exception to the immunization requirement is made only if a medical reason is documented by a physician assistant or nurse practitioner or for valid religious objections as determined by the principal. Before attending classes or at registration, the school must obtain the student's birth date, social security number, and immunization history. Students who are not in compliance with the immunization requirement or have not provided a qualified waiver, may not attend St. Thomas More School until they have complied with the immunization policy.

The 2022 - 2023 Nebraska School Immunization Rules and Regulations require students to have the following immunizations before attending classes.

To attend school, children in Nebraska are required to be immunized against the following diseases:

- Diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis (DTaP, DTP or Td vaccine)
- Polio
- Measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR or MMRV)
- Chicken Pox (MMRV or Varicella)
- Tdap (7th grade)

Preschool

- 4 doses of DTaP, DTP, or DT vaccine
- 3 doses of Polio vaccine
- 3 doses of Hib vaccine or 1 dose of Hib given at or after 15 month of age
- 3 doses of pediatric Hepatitis B vaccine
- 1 dose of MMR or MMRV given on or after 12 months of age
- 1 dose of varicella (chickenpox) or MMRV given on or after 12 months of age. Written documentation(including year) of varicella disease from parent, guardian, or health care provider will be accepted.

DT vaccine,

- 4 doses of pneumococcal or 1 dose of pneumococcal given on or after 15 months of age

Kindergarten, 7 th grade, and out-of-state transfer students:

- 3 doses of DTaP, DTP, DT, or Td vaccine, one given on or after the 4th birthday,
- 3 doses of Polio vaccine,
- 3 doses of pediatric Hepatitis B vaccine or 2 doses of adolescent vaccine if student is 11-15 years of age.
- 2 doses of MMR or MMRV vaccine, given on or after 12 months of age and separated by at least one month,
- 2 doses of varicella (chickenpox) or MMRV given on or after 12 months of age. Written documentation (including year) of varicella disease from parent, guardian, or health care provider will be accepted. If the child has

had varicella disease, they do not need any varicella shots.

Additionally for 7 th grade only

- 1 dose of Tdap (must contain Pertussis booster).

Each school in Nebraska is required to keep the immunization history of the students enrolled on file. In addition, schools are required to report information on student's immunization status annually to the Nebraska Immunization Program. School reporting is conducted on-line via survey, and the deadline is November 15 of each year.

These statutes of the State of Nebraska, because of the religious exemptions provided and their intent to safeguard individuals and the public from harm, conform to the Church's teaching regarding the common good. The Consortium Schools will follow these state requirements.

Exemptions

Nebraska does allow for two types of exemptions: Medical and Religious.

The Medical Exemption requires "a statement signed by physician, physician assistant, or an advanced practice registered nurse stating that, in the health care provider's opinion, the required immunization would be injurious to the health and well-being of the student or any member of the student's family or household." Forms signed by a health care provider which simply state the parents do not feel it is in the best interests of the child are not sufficient to satisfy the medical exemption. The health care provider must indicate on the form used that the vaccine(s) in question are "Injurious to the health and well-being of the student or any member of the student's family or household." The term "physician" means an individual licensed under the Nebraska Medicine and Surgery Practices Act to practice medicine and surgery or osteopathic medicine and surgery; the term "physician" does not include a chiropractor.

The Religious Exemption requires "an affidavit signed by the student, or if he or she is a minor, a legally authorized representative of the student stating that the immunization conflicts with the tenets and practice of a recognized religious denomination of which the student is an adherent or member or that the immunization conflicts with the personal and sincerely followed religious beliefs of the student." For those who seek a religious exemption, the Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Omaha will require that the parents indicate the religious denomination of the student in question.

Immunizations do not conflict with the "tenets and practice recognized" by the Catholic Church. Catholics are however obliged to avoid vaccines derived from cell lines from aborted fetuses when there are alternatives available to them. Alternatives to such vaccines are available in the United States for diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio and hepatitis b. A list with the names of those alternative vaccinations is available on the school website or can be obtained from the school office.

Unfortunately, there are no alternatives currently available in the United States for the Rubella and chickenpox which have been derived from cell lines from aborted fetuses. Because of the grave harm that can be caused by these diseases and because of the lack of alternatives, it is morally licit for a Catholic to use these vaccines, and it is recommended by the Archdiocese of Omaha that students submit to these vaccinations for the sake of the common good. A statement explaining the Church's teaching regarding the common good and vaccines can be found on the school website or can be obtained from the school office.

Nevertheless, though morally licit and despite the potential harm to the common good, a Catholic may, in good conscience, submit a religious exemption for those vaccines which contain the rubella and the chickenpox vaccines (MMR, MMRV and varicella) and the Catholic Schools will honor that limited exemption request. Catholics may not submit a religious exemption for any other vaccines. A model affidavit for this exemption request is found on the school website or can be obtained from the school office.

The Archdiocese of Omaha interprets the phrase “the personal and sincerely followed religious beliefs” to refer to conscientious objections founded on religious belief. For Catholics, religious belief comes from the teachings of the Church as transmitted and interpreted by the magisterium. Therefore, while those who object to vaccines based on medical opinion may have deeply held conscientious objections, theirs is not a “religious belief.” For this reason, they may seek a medical exemption, as indicated above, if the vaccines cause harm, but they do not qualify for a religious exemption.

Students who have been granted an exemption may need to be excluded from school if there is an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease. The school is not required to modify services for a student who has been excluded due to an outbreak. The period of exclusion shall be no less than the minimum isolation period for that disease and when all signs or symptoms of acute illness have disappeared. The period of exclusion should extend throughout the period when acute signs of illness are present, or until the student is fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication. Minimum isolation periods can be found on the school website or be obtained from the school office. If a student cannot provide a proper medical or religious exemption, the student may not attend any of the Catholic Schools of the Archdiocese of Omaha without proof of the required immunization.

All Catholics are encouraged to formally object to the way the unethical vaccines are created and to the lack of alternatives. A model objection form which is to be mailed to the producer of these vaccines can be found on the school website or be obtained from the school office. Catholics may never choose a vaccine derived from aborted fetal cells if there is an alternative available.

SCHOOL MEDICATION POLICY

Sick children should not be sent to school. A child will never be sent home unless a school official contacts a parent/guardian. Please notify the school if your child has an exceptional health problem which may affect his/her daily school routine. General screening programs for vision, hearing, dental, and scoliosis will be arranged. Necessary follow-up will be done, and the parent/guardian will be notified.

In accordance with recommendations by the Douglas County Health Department, the following policy regarding prescription and non-prescription medications is effective immediately:

1. A physician must provide written orders with the name of the drug, dose, time interval when the medication is to be taken, and diagnosis or reason the medicine is needed.
2. The parent/guardian must provide a written request that the school comply with the physician's order.
3. Medication must be brought to the school office in the original container appropriately labeled by the pharmacist and/or physician.
4. Non-prescription medications including aspirin, Tylenol, cough drops, or cough syrup will not be administered without the written permission of the parent/guardian. No child will take any

medication without supervision of the administrative assistant, principal or other trained personnel.

SELF-ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION

Should a parent request that a student self-manage his/her asthma, anaphylaxis, or diabetic conditions while at school, the school will adhere to the following steps:

1. OCSC will require a written request from the parent/guardian that the student self-manage his/her condition.
2. OCSC will develop, with the help of the parent/guardian and physician, a medical management plan for the current school year. This plan must:
 - a. Identify the health care services the student may receive at school relating to such condition;
 - b. Evaluate the student's understanding of, and ability to, self-manage;
 - c. Permit regular monitoring of the student's self-management by a credentialed health care professional;
 - d. Include the name, purpose, and dosage of the prescription prescribed;
 - e. Include the procedures for storage and access to backup supplies of such prescription medication; and
 - f. Be signed by the parent or guardian and the physician responsible for treatment of the student's condition.
3. The medical management plan must be kept on file at the school.
4. The student's parent/guardian must sign the Release and Indemnification form on file in the school office before the student is allowed to self-administer medication.
5. Once the medical management plan is in place, the student shall notify the school office when he/she has self-administered medication to be used according to the plan.
6. Once the medical management plan is in place, the student shall be allowed to self-administer medication on school grounds, during any school-related activity, or in any private location to be specified according to the plan.

SCHOOL PHYSICAL AND VISION EXAMS

Nebraska Law requires all students entering the kindergarten, seventh grade, or transferring from an out-of-state school have a physical examination by a physician, physician assistant, or advanced practice registered nurse within six (6) months prior to school entrance. A dental examination is recommended at this time. State law also requires students entering kindergarten or transferring from an out-of-state school provide proof of a visual evaluation within six (6) months prior to school entrance. The visual evaluation performed by a physician, physician assistant, advanced practice registered nurse, or optometrist shall include testing for amblyopia (lazy eye), strabismus (cross eye), internal and external eye health, and visual acuity.

Exceptions to the physical examination or visual evaluation requirement may be made if the parent/guardian submits a written statement refusing a physical examination or visual evaluation.

SICK CHILDREN

When a child becomes sick at school, the school office will call the parents. If a student is too ill to return to class, he/she must be picked up by a parent/guardian or an emergency contact. **Sick children will NOT be kept at school.**

- If a child has a temperature of 100 degrees or more or flu like symptoms, he/she should not be in school. Flu symptoms include acute respiratory illness, such as fever, chills, plus cough or sore throat. Other possible flu symptoms are runny nose, feeling very lethargic/fatigue, body aches, headache, loss of appetite and in some cases, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. A child should not return to school unless they have been fever-free and/or free of flu like symptoms for 24 hours.
- Students recovering from pink eye (conjunctivitis) must be on medication to treat the infection for at least 24 hours before returning to school.
- All rashes are considered contagious unless otherwise diagnosed by a physician and parents/guardians will be contacted. Child may return to school with documentation that the rash is not contagious, or the rash is resolved.
- If a child vomits or has other flu like symptoms at school, he/she must be picked up by a parent/guardian or emergency contact.
- Parents are required to notify the school office of communicable diseases such as COVID-19, influenza, pink eye, or head lice.
- If a child is diagnosed with COVID-19, the school may disclose the child's name to local and state health officials and, if necessary, to staff members, other students, or other students' parents/guardians in order to help track and contain the spread of COVID-19.

STUDENTS WITH NUT ALLERGIES

It will be the policy of OCSC to do its best to minimize the risk of exposure to nuts for our students and to have a plan in place to respond to an emergency. A parent or guardian should inform the school of any peanut or tree nut allergies of their child. Communication between the school and home is important to ensure the continued safety and welfare for all of our students. Ultimately, all students with dangerous allergies must be educated in how to protect themselves.

To minimize the risk of exposure to nuts for our students, OCSC may:

1. Direct the school lunch program to not offer peanut butter products and items containing other nuts.
2. Discourage students and parents from bringing treats to school that contain nuts or were processed and packaged in places where other nut products are prepared. The school encourages students who have nut allergies to bring their own supply of snacks to school to lessen the risk of exposure.
3. Promote the implementation of guidelines from the www.attackonasthma.org site which directs the response to severe asthma or anaphylaxis (severe allergies) and requires any parent who has a student with severe asthma or anaphylaxis to have an Action Plan on file with the school. This plan will contain Action Plan forms completed by the physician or school nurse and by the parent or guardian.
4. If requested by a parent or guardian, provide an allergy-free computer (or more, if necessary) for use by students with nut or other life-threatening allergies.
5. In classrooms of students with life-threatening allergies, educate the other students and their parents about the allergy and ways to minimize exposure of nuts or other life-threatening foods to affected students. For example: Discourage the use of candies and other products that were processed and packaged in places where other nut products are prepared in projects or activities in school and communicate to parents that items brought for the completion of projects should be checked that they do not contain nuts and were not processed in a factory that manufactures nuts.

WELLNESS POLICY

In order to comply with the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, OCSC has created a Wellness Policy to address the areas of nutrition, physical activity, and health. This policy was enacted with the foundational belief that the guidelines for good nutrition, physical activities/education, and health/nutrition education is essential for our students and staff. Research shows that children who begin each day as healthy individuals are better learners. The complete policy and resource links can be found on Sycamore.

Physical Education (PE)

All students in grades TK-8 will receive physical education class for 30 - 40 minutes per week for the entire school year. All physical education students will be taught by a certified physical education teacher. Students will spend at least 50 percent of physical education class time participating in moderate to vigorous physical activity.

Daily Recess

OCSC students will have at least 20 minutes a day of supervised recess, preferably outdoors, during which schools should encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity verbally and through the provision of space and equipment.

Physical Activity Opportunities Before and After School

In an effort to promote a healthy lifestyle, OCSC students are encouraged to walk each morning before school starts (weather pending). Parents and staff are encouraged and invited to attend as well. After-school Extended Care will provide and encourage – verbally and through the provision of space, equipment, and activities – daily periods of moderate to vigorous physical activity for all participants.

Integrating Physical Activity into the Classroom Setting

For students to receive the nationally recommended amount of daily physical activity (*i.e.*, at least 60 minutes per day) and for students to fully embrace regular physical activity as a personal behavior, students need opportunities for physical activity beyond physical education class. Toward that end:

- classroom health education will complement physical education by reinforcing the knowledge and self-management skills needed to maintain a physically active lifestyle and to reduce time spent on sedentary activities, such as watching television;
- opportunities for physical activity will be incorporated into other subject lessons; and
- classroom teachers may provide short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes, as appropriate.

DISCIPLINE

St. Thomas More Catholic School has a school wide discipline system based on Love and Logic designed to maintain our mission and goals. This system provides an age appropriate, respectful, self-discipline system based on a Christian philosophy on a continuum from grades Kindergarten through 8th. Our discipline policy allows consistency and continuity that will enable the students to have opportunities to accept personal responsibility necessary for growth socially, academically, spiritually and physically. To preserve privacy, parents will only be notified about the behavior and corrective measures of their own student(s). Please note: **Students can be held accountable for conduct inside or outside of school that is detrimental to the school, environment, the school image, staff, or goes against our Catholic Christian beliefs.** Positive discipline will be used and encouraged. Appropriate consequences for specific misbehaviors will be determined by the Teachers, Principal, and the Executive Director. Each issue will be dealt with on an individual basis. Legal authorities will be contacted when a violation of local, state or federal law occurs.

Levels of Consequences Consequences for disrespectful and irresponsible behavior include, but are not limited to, the following:

Behavioral Conference A behavioral conference is a meeting between school personnel and the parent/guardian of the student who is experiencing behavior problems. Failure of a parent/guardian to attend a scheduled conference without an acceptable excuse may result in re-evaluating whether St. Thomas More is your student's best school choice.

Disciplinary Written Assignment The Disciplinary Written Assignment will be assigned by the teacher or principal to the student to assist them in accepting responsibility for their actions and developing a plan for appropriate behavior. Sincerity, spelling, grammar, and age-appropriate quality of work will be evaluated; insufficient work will be returned to the student for revision.

SAT Team A conference with a team of teachers can be convened in a case when a student repeatedly shows disregard for the rules of St. Thomas More Catholic School, despite disciplinary action. The team will be made up of teachers, the Principal, the parent, and possibly the Pastor and Executive Director. Creation of a Behavior Contract may be implemented at this time.

Behavior Contract Once the student and parents meet with the Principal and or / Intervention Team, he/she will enter into a Behavior Contract with the school. The Behavior Contract will detail the acceptable behaviors for the student and the outcomes expected of him/her. Students who breach the Behavior Contract will be reviewed by the Principal and or SAT Team for possible expulsion or withdrawal of the student from St. Thomas More Catholic School.

Cheating

Cheating is defined as representing another's work as your own, manipulation of information to gain an unfair advantage, and enabling others to use your work as their own. This includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Providing or obtaining answers to test/quiz questions or class assignments from sources other than those allowed by the instructor.
- Appear to be providing or obtaining answers to test/quiz questions or class assignments from sources other than those allowed by the instructor.
- Plagiarizing any portion of reports, essays, papers and other assignments/projects.
- Submitting information from the Internet without proper documentation.

In cases when cheating has been determined, the student may receive a zero for the test, quiz, assignment or project. The parent/guardian will be notified by the teacher or the Principal and additional disciplinary action may be taken.

Suspension

Suspension/Expulsion Policy

On occasion, students can be suspended and/or expelled, not only for their well-being, but for the well-being of all the other students and staff at a Consortium school. Any serious behavior infractions regarding a student, on or off school grounds, during school or a school sponsored activity, will be grounds for suspension or expulsion. Also, serious behavioral infractions outside of school or off of school grounds may be investigated by the Principal, and if deemed as a situation that may harm any portion of the school community, then serious disciplinary action, including suspension or expulsion may or will follow. This decision, and all disciplinary actions, will rest with the Principal.

When a student is suspended, the parents/guardians will be notified. A meeting with the parents/guardians and the Principal may be scheduled in order to discuss the student's academic future at the school. Documentation will be sent to the Executive Director, and one copy is placed in the student's discipline file. This copy does not leave the school; it is for our documentation alone, and it does not follow the student when he/she leaves or graduates from eighth grade.

Suspension is a temporary exclusion of a student from school and school activities. A suspension may be for a few hours during the day or up to several days. When a student is suspended, he/she will do homework to be determined by the classroom teacher/Principal. School personnel strive to resolve discipline problems in a Christian manner with parent/guardian and student involvement and cooperation. However, in serious situations, it may become necessary to discipline a student with an in or out of school suspension. The decision to suspend a student rests with the Principal.

Expulsion is the permanent exclusion of a student from school and school activities. Consortium schools will use expulsion when the student's behavior is a hindrance to the welfare, learning, and progress of the school community and/or there is evidence of repeated disregard for the philosophy, policies, rules, and regulations of the school. In instances of expulsion:

- The Principal will investigate the behavior problem by talking to person(s) involved and the student involved.
- Parents/guardians will be involved in the expulsion process, and be given an opportunity to provide input.
- The decision to expel a student rests with the principal and the Executive Director is informed.
- The Principal will notify the Archdiocesan Superintendent of Schools and, upon request, provide record of the evidence justifying expulsion of the student.
- The Principal will also notify the public-school authorities.

The following procedures may be followed for suspension:

1. The student will be removed from the situation and taken to the Principal.
2. The Principal will investigate by discussing the circumstances and situation with person(s) making the complaint of misbehavior and the student accused of the misbehavior.
3. If suspension is necessary, the parent/guardian will be notified by the Principal to the reason(s) for the suspension, the length of the suspension and the conditions for returning to class. The student will be expected to complete all missed schoolwork and may be responsible for writing a Disciplinary Written Assignment.
4. The decision to suspend a student, in-school or out-of-school, is the sole responsibility of the Principal. Notification of the Executive Director may be provided.
5. While in school suspension students may not be allowed to participate from all school-related activities and parish team activities.

In-School Suspension (I.S.S.) Students in I.S.S. will report to the school office, and will not be allowed to participate in class activities, most often completing school work in the office. While in I.S.S. the student will be responsible for all class work missed, and may need to write a Disciplinary Action Assignment. While in I.S.S., the student may lose their privilege to participate in school-sponsored extracurricular activities.

Out-of-School Suspension (OSS) Students in O.S.S. are not allowed to attend school or any school related activities during the time they are in suspension. He/She is still expected to complete all assigned classwork which must be turned in when they return to school.

Expulsion Expulsion is the permanent exclusion of a student from the school and school activities. The decision to expel a student rests with the Principal and Executive Director. In many circumstances, documentation of preliminary attempts to help a student redirect inappropriate behavior will be on file, and the parent will have been notified of the disciplinary actions that might result, although this is not mandatory. The decision to expel a student should not come as a surprise to anyone involved, unless the actions were so severe that the student received immediate expulsion. (Possession of drugs or weapons, committing or threatening a criminal act, extreme disrespect, etc).

1. Upon expulsion, the student's parent/guardian will be notified in writing of the measure being taken, the reasons for the expulsion, and their right to appeal.
2. The expulsion may be reconsidered by the Principal and Executive Director when an appeal for a special hearing is made by the parent. Any appeal must be submitted in writing to the principal within 72 hours of notification of the expulsion. Appeals are to be heard by the Principal and Executive Director.

Discipline Response by Grade Level

Primary: Kindergarten - 2nd Grade

Offenses are but not limited to hitting, disrespect, inappropriate language, and disobedience of school and general safety rules. Student behavior is communicated to parents and administration via Sycamore and conversations and meetings. Teachers will notify parents prior to any student staying after school to serve a detention. Short-term detentions are served for 15 minutes after school (3:10 – 3:25 p.m.) on the day after the infraction occurs. Long-term detentions for primary students are served for 30-minutes after school (3:10 – 3:40 p.m.) on the day after the infraction occurs.

Intermediate: 3rd - 5th Grade

Each student is provided a **Demerit Card** the first day of each trimester. These cards are carried by the students when they attend all of their classes. Offenses that may earn a demerit include but are not limited to:

1. Dress code infraction, twice in one week
2. Tardy to class (3 times in 1 week)
3. Disturbance in hall
4. Misbehavior in cafeteria/on playground
5. Not having card
6. Not prepared for class, missing supplies
7. Missing or incomplete assignments (3 times in one week)
8. Disruption in class
9. Not following directions
10. Papers or forms lacking an adult signature
11. Disobedience (not following directions or school rules)
12. Assignment book not signed 2 days in a row.

Students are provided new clean Behavior Cards at the beginning of each trimester. Detentions for demerits will be assigned as follows:

- After a student receives 3 demerits or marks on the Demerit Card, that student will receive a 30-minute detention.
- After 4 marks, an hour detention (or 30-minutes for two days)
- After 5 marks, a parent will be called for a conference and/or a meeting will be held with the Principal. Further consequences to be determined.
- Excessive demerits or severe violations of the rules may require a visit with the principal.
- Homework Room will also be implemented when a student fails to come to school with completed homework.

Junior High: 6th - 8th Grade

Merit / Demerit Cards – Rules and Regulations

Positive Points

Positive Points are a way of acknowledging students for engaging in positive helpful behavior. They can be awarded for a variety of reasons. One positive point will be awarded weekly for each of the following:

- Prepared for class all week (books, materials, pens, pencils, etc.)
- All assignments have been turned in on time and done correctly (this includes any paper needing a parent signature)
- Wearing proper dress / following uniform code each day

Students who have earned negative points may have the opportunity to earn a positive point back by correcting the infraction.

Positive Points may be redeemed for the following:

- Erase negative points (1 positive = 1 negative)
- Extra privileges such as homework passes, extra recess, Spirit Days, etc.

Negative Points

Two negative points will be earned for the following infractions:

- Not prepared for class
- Missing assignment, assignment not done correctly, no signature
- Dress code violation (Please review the handbook for the proper dress code)

*If any of the above items become a repetitive behavior the teacher may assign more than two negative points.

6 Negative points = 1 Demerit. Within each trimester points may be carried over to the following week. At the end of the trimester all students will receive a new demerit card and will start fresh.

Demerit Process

1. For each demerit assigned a parent signature will be required on the student's card. Clean-up detail may also be required if the demerit was issued for damage to school property.
2. When a student accumulates 4 demerits in one trimester, the student will have a 30 – minute detention to serve and the parent will be notified.
3. When a student accumulates 5 demerits in one trimester, the student will have a one-hour detention to be served in one afternoon unless otherwise arranged and the parent will be notified.
4. When a student accumulates 6 demerits in one trimester, a meeting with parent, teacher, and principal will take place to establish a Behavior Modification Process.

Specific Behaviors That Are Not Allowed and Possible Consequences The following list is not all-encompassing and the school reserves the right to enforce and amend it as necessary. At any time when the seriousness of the infraction warrants, the principal may directly assign a more severe consequence depending on the circumstances. Parents will be notified in such circumstances.
Severity or frequency of infraction may lead to immediate suspension or expulsion.

Violations Against Persons and Property:

Teacher or Staff Assault – Causing or intending to cause personal injury of an **adult associated with the school**. Student’s intent may be inferred from the words and acts of the student. Personal injury includes the infliction of pain for which first aid or medical attention may need to be sought.

- 1st Offense – 1-2 day suspension and possible expulsion
- 2nd Offense – 3-5 day suspension and possible expulsion
- 3rd Offense - Expulsion

Student Assault – Causing or intending to cause personal injury of **another student**. Student’s intent may be inferred from the words and acts of the student. Personal injury includes the infliction of pain for which first aid or medical attention is sought.

- 1st Offense – 1-2 demerits and possible detention, suspension, or expulsion
- 2nd Offense – 1-2 day suspension or expulsion
- 3rd Offense – 3-5 day suspension or possible expulsion

Fighting – Mutual physical contact with repetitive blows. More serious fights involve serious injury to a student or results in disruption of a large number of students.

- 1st Offense – 1-2 day suspension or possible expulsion
- 2nd Offense – 3-5 day suspension or possible expulsion
- 3rd Offense – expulsion

Minor scuffles that do not result in serious injury or any disruption of the school.

- 1st Offense – 1-2 demerits and possible detention or suspension
- 2nd Offense – 1-2 day suspension
- 3rd Offense – 3-5 day suspension

Written, Verbal or Non-verbal Abuse of a Student or Adult Associated with the School

Threatening – indicates an intention to do harm

- 1st Offense – 1-2 day suspension
- 2nd Offense – 3-5 day suspension or possible expulsion
- 3rd Offense – expulsion

Non-threatening – abuse that is disrespectful

- 1st Offense – 1-2 demerits and possible detention
- 2nd Offense – 1-2 day suspension
- 3rd Offense – 3-5 day suspension

Vandalism

Our school and school equipment is OCSC property. Willfully damaging or destroying this property is vandalism and is cause for immediate suspension and possible expulsion.

In addition, it is the student and/or parent/guardian’s responsibility to repair or replace any damaged property. If a student accidentally causes damage, it should be reported to a teacher immediately so that the damage is not misconstrued as vandalism. No student is to forcibly open or “jimmy” a locked door on school or church property at any time. Doors are locked for a reason. To break into a room through a locked door is considered breaking and entering and is punishable by law.

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

In lieu of other forms of discipline, OCSC schools may use restorative practices, a research-based practice for building healthy communities. This is a tiered system of communication for both proactive and restorative building of relationships. Three specific restorative practices that will be used include restorative circles, listening circles and restorative conferencing.

Restorative Circles are proactive opportunities to learn about one another. In circles students build relationships, foster empathy and learn in a more meaningful way about all those in their community. Listening circles are also proactive, students are given the opportunity to share their voice on any topic that is relevant to them, and they learn to listen attentively to others, even those they may disagree with.

Restorative conversations or conferences are reactive and are held when a disagreement or harm has taken place. Restorative conversations are structured conversations led by a trained restorative facilitator to bring about resolution.

Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS)

PBIS works in coordination with Restorative Practices, and is an evidence-based, data-driven framework proven to reduce disciplinary incidents, increase a school's sense of safety and support improved academic outcomes. The premise of PBIS is that continual teaching, combined with acknowledgement or feedback of positive student behavior will reduce unnecessary discipline and promote a climate of greater productivity, safety and learning. PBIS schools apply a multi-tiered approach to prevention, using disciplinary data and principles of behavior analysis to develop school-wide, targeted and individualized interventions and supports to improve school climate for all students. (OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports).

The foundation of PBIS happens in Tier 1, which supports ALL students. The core principles guiding Tier 1 PBIS include:

- Effectively teaching appropriate behavior to all children
- Early intervention before unwanted behaviors escalate
- The use of research-based interventions whenever possible
- The monitoring of student progress
- The use of data to make decisions

Tier 2 practices provide targeted support for students who are not successful with Tier 1 supports alone. This may include social skills groups, self-management, and academic supports. At times, there are students who need tier 3 supports; these students will be identified through the use of our Student Assistance Teams and parents will be an integral part of this process.

Weapons

Students are forbidden to possess, handle, transmit or use any instrument in school, on school grounds, or at school events that is ordinarily or generally considered a weapon.

Any object which could be used to injure another person, and which has no school-related purpose will be considered a weapon for purposes of this code.

The following are examples of instruments ordinarily or generally considered weapons: knives of all types, guns, lead pipes, chains, chuck-sticks, throwing stars, darts, metal knuckles, blackjacks, unauthorized tools, fireworks, lighters, matches, explosives or other chemicals.

Police will be contacted when there is a suspected violation of criminal laws concerning weapons.

A first offense in violation of the weapons policy will result in immediate suspension and may result in expulsion.

A second offense in violation of the weapons policy will result in immediate expulsion.

STUDENTS CHARGED WITH CRIMINAL OFFENSES

In the event criminal charges are filed against a student, the Principal will take actions in the best interest of the school. Such actions may include suspension or expulsion of the student.

USE OF PHYSICAL RESTRAINT AND SECLUSION

Physical restraint and seclusion of students for behavior management shall be used in circumstances and under conditions that are in the best interests of students.

Physical restraint is appropriate when a student is displaying physical behavior which presents substantial imminent risk of injury to the student or others, and the student is demonstrating the intent and the ability to cause injury within a matter of seconds or minutes. The degree of physical restriction employed should be in proportion to the circumstances of the incident, the size and condition of the student, and the potential risks for injury to the student or others. Physical restraint does not include: (a) taking away a weapon; or (b) breaking up a fight.

Seclusion is appropriate when a student is displaying physical behavior that presents substantial imminent risk of injury to the student or others, and the threat could be diminished if the student were placed in a safe environment away from other students and staff. Seclusion should only be used as long as necessary and should be discontinued when the student is no longer a threat to himself/herself or others. Time out procedures which do not constitute seclusion are permitted in school.

Immediately after the student has restored emotional and behavioral control following the use of physical restraint and/or seclusion, a staff member not involved with the incident shall examine the student to ascertain if the student has sustained any injury. The Principal will verbally notify the parent/guardian as soon as possible (no later than the end of the school day in which the physical restraint or seclusion occurs).

All use of physical restraint or seclusion must be documented in a memorandum within one school day of the incident. The principal will send a copy of the memorandum to the parent or guardian within two school days following the use of the restraint or seclusion.

FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

TUITION POLICY

Adopted by the OCSC Board of Directors, November 19, 2013

Registration Fees

All families are required to pay a **non-refundable** registration fee per child each year. This fee is expected even if students enroll during the school year. It will secure a position in the desired OCSC school.

Tuition/Student Fees

The annual rate of tuition and fees of a future academic year for the schools of the Omaha Catholic Schools Consortium is determined by the Board of Directors in January for the upcoming year and communicated to school families and others in preparation for registration procedures in February and March. Tuition is to be paid either annually (due June 30), or using one of the payment options available in FACTS, unless a separate arrangement has been made with the business office of the Consortium.

Financial Aid

Financial aid is available through the following sources:

- Children's Scholarship Fund
- Latino Scholarship Fund
- Parish-based Financial Aid
- Consortium-based Financial Aid

The first step in applying for financial aid is to complete the form of the Children's Scholarship Fund. Data from this form will be used to determine aid from the other sources. The award decision by the Children's Scholarship will precede any decision for the awarding of financial aid from the other sources.

Financial aid decisions from the Children's Scholarship Fund will be made by the officers of the Fund.

Financial aid decisions from Parish-based Financial Aid will be made by the Pastor or other designated individual from the particular parish.

Financial aid decisions from Consortium-based Financial Aid will be made by the Executive Director of the Omaha Catholic School Consortium.

Regular tuition payments will be processed through FACTS. In specific circumstances, payments may also be processed through the Consortium business office.

Tuition Assistance Program (T.A.P.) T.A.P. makes it possible for families to receive tuition assistance from the parish by completing the necessary application process. All families who receive tuition assistance also incur an obligation to work as part of a stated event or fundraiser. Funds earned through this program will be contributed to TAP so that future tuition assistance awards can be offered to families. **Important to remember:** It is the family's responsibility to contact the TAP committee through the parish office at 402-556-1456 when tuition assistance is needed. To provide objective, comprehensive, and affordable financial need analysis of each applicant that applies for tuition assistance, an independent company known as **Financial Aid Independent Review, Inc. or FAIR** is employed. Families who successfully complete the application process and qualify for assistance will be notified by the TAP Committee before school starts.

Other Information:

Contributions designated to Tuition Assistance are accepted at any time from corporations, groups and individuals; these are legally tax deductible. Donations made which benefit a family directly without going through the above-described process are considered "tuition paid" and therefore, not tax deductible.

FACTS

The Omaha Catholic School Consortium partners with FACTS Management Company to help us manage our tuition payment program. Monthly payments are to be scheduled. Automatic payments can be made from a checking or savings account or from a credit card (Master Card, American Express, and Discover are accepted and will cost you a convenience fee of 2.5%)

Enrolling in FACTS: You will receive an invite from FACTS with information necessary to enroll. Included in the invite will be the website you will need to access.

Convenience & Security: Along with multiple payment plan options, your payments are processed securely through a bank to bank transaction. You may check your personal account or make payments online from the convenience of your home or office anytime. Automatic payment reminders will be sent.

Even with FACTS, OCSC maintains decision-making control. As always, we will continue to work with families should special circumstances or “hardship” cases arise during the school year. If questions or concerns arise, you are asked to contact the OCSC business office.

Delinquent tuition accounts will be handled as follows:

- FACTS will mail an invoice to families and request payment of the delinquent amount.
- Families may then contact the Consortium Business Office to make special arrangements for addressing the delinquent amount and future payments.
- If no response is forthcoming from the mailing of the FACTS invoice after 20 working days, contact will be made by letter, email, telephone, or person to person.
- If no response is forthcoming from the above contacts, the tuition account will be referred to the Executive Director.
- Unless an exception is made by the Executive Director no student will be allowed to re-enroll in a subsequent semester if tuition is not current.

END OF SCHOOL YEAR FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

OCSC expects that each family has all school related financial obligations paid before the last day of school. These obligations include the following: current year registration fees, tuition, Extended Care charges, outstanding lunch balance, PSP Hours/fee, library lost book replacement charges and any other fees that are left unpaid that are not noted here.

SAFETY

ARCHDIOCESE OF OMAHA’S SAFE ENVIRONMENT POLICY

The Archdiocese has adopted a specific safe environment policy and guidelines to protect children. Please refer to www.archomaha.org/safe-environment. All OCSC administrators and staff are familiar with this policy.

Cooperation with Law Enforcement and Other Governmental Agencies Requesting Access to Students

In all cases where Law Enforcement Personnel enter a school building to interview or apprehend a student, the school shall follow the procedures set forth below. Law Enforcement Personnel shall include police officers, fire officials, and employees of the Nebraska Health and Human Services

Department.

- Arrival of Law Enforcement Personnel. Law Enforcement Personnel desiring to interview or apprehend a student shall inform the Principal of the school and state the nature of the inquiry or investigation.
- Student Interviews. In cases where Law Enforcement Personnel wish to interview a student, the Principal shall make the student available and provide the Interviewing Officer a room where the student may be interviewed. The student's parent or legal guardian shall be contacted and present during the interview unless otherwise directed by the Interviewing Officer. In instances where the parent or legal guardian is not notified, or is unavailable, the Principal shall remain present during the interview unless otherwise directed by the Interviewing Officer.

Notification.

- Parental Notification. In all cases where a student is interviewed by Law Enforcement Personnel without the knowledge of the student's parent or legal guardian, the Principal shall immediately contact the student's parent or legal guardian and advise him or her of the interview unless otherwise directed by the Interviewing Officer.
- In all cases where a student is taken into custody and removed from school premises, the Principal shall promptly notify the student's parent or legal guardian.

Superintendent of Catholic Schools Notification. In all cases where a student is interviewed or apprehended, the Principal shall notify the Executive Director and Superintendent of Catholic Schools of the incident and the procedures followed by the school.

Documentation. In all cases where Law Enforcement Personnel have interviewed a student or taken a student into custody, the Principal shall document the date and time of the incident, the identity of the Law Enforcement Personnel (including badge number, if applicable), and the procedures followed by the school.

Reporting Of Suspected Child Abuse/Neglect

State law requires that any OCSC employee is required to notify Child Protective Services of the Nebraska Department of Social Services or law enforcement officials if they believe a child has been subject to abuse or neglect. OCSC cooperates in the investigation of such cases.

VISITORS

Everyone, with the exception of staff and students, who comes to the school during school hours (6:45 am to 6:00 pm) must check in at the school office and receive a visitor's pass. This is done to ensure the safety of all students and staff. Visitors, including parents/guardians, should come in the main entrance. Other entrances will be locked during school hours.

EMERGENCY DRILLS

The school regularly conducts emergency drills. Detailed escape plans and shelter areas are posted inside the door of each classroom. The purpose of these drills is to practice the safe and swift removal of all students and staff to safe areas.

Fire Drills

Consortium schools will conduct a monthly fire drill to prepare our students in case of an emergency and to be in compliance with the State Fire Marshall.

Tornado Drills

Tornado or severe thunderstorm drills are held regularly throughout the tornado season.

Emergency Crisis Drills

Each Consortium school has a crisis management plan for emergencies. The purpose of the crisis plan is to ensure that any crisis that may affect members of our school community will be handled in an appropriate manner.

POLICY FOR REPORTING DANGER TO SELF OR OTHERS

If a student knows of an abusive situation (sexual or physical), hears threatening statements of violence made, hears rumors or guns, drugs, or any other type of violence, they should immediately:

1. Tell their homeroom teacher, or any teacher present, when the situation occurs. If the student is not comfortable doing this, he/she should proceed to step 2.
2. Request to see the Principal and report the information to the Principal.
3. If the student is not comfortable with either of the above options, he/she may write a note to the teacher explaining in detail the information they have, including the name of the person in danger and the person causing alarm. The student may place the letter in the place designated by the teacher or deliver it to the school office.

Upon receiving the information, the Principal will investigate the situation. If the Principal is unable to obtain enough information to take action, the teacher and Principal will closely monitor the situation. Please remember that intentionally reporting false information is as severe as making a threat yourself. If it is determined that misconduct has occurred, appropriate relief for the individual bringing the complaint, and appropriate disciplinary action against the person(s) engaging in such conduct, up to and including expulsion/ termination, will follow.

VOLUNTEERING / PARENT PARTICIPATION PROGRAM (PPP)

YOU, THE VOLUNTEER, CAN AND DO MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE! You, the volunteer, can and do make a big difference! Thank you for volunteering your time at a Consortium school. In today's world, with budget constraints and working parents, the volunteer is becoming an ever-increasing important commodity. Your involvement as a parent and the work of our Home and School Association will have a tremendous positive impact on our educational program for our children.

The success of St. Thomas More Catholic School depends on a spirit of cooperation and shared sacrifice of time and talent among parents and school staff for the good of students. There are many opportunities for parent volunteer service to the school or parish, such as room parents, volunteering in the lunchroom, helping with class field trips or celebrations, baking for teacher appreciation days, working concessions, coaching teams for the sports club, or working at the Parish Festival.

All volunteers at the school must have successfully completed Safe Environment training and background check. Go to <https://omaha.cmgconnect.org> to log into their account to see if your Safe Environment certification is current. If not register for a class and complete a background check.

- **Dual parent families are required to contribute a minimum of 40 hours of volunteer service per year at school.**
- **Single parent families are expected to contribute a minimum of 20 hours of volunteer service per year at school**

Parent Participation Hours are tracked on Sycamore by following these directions:

- Go to Service Manager
- Go to Daily Logs
- Click on New Log to log hours
- A New Log sheet is needed for each service
- List the service in the notes
- Log the hours served

Unfulfilled Service Hours. For each hour not completed by the end of the school year a charge of \$5.00 per hour will be assessed, payable by the last day of school. If a family cannot commit to this call to stewardship, a payment of **\$200.00** for dual parent or **\$100.00** for a single parent family will be due. This fee is payable on the first day of school for families who will not be able to commit to volunteering or by the last day of school for any unfulfilled hours.

CODE OF ETHICS

Volunteers play a critical role in the operation of our schools and their activities. Through their responsibilities the volunteer receives rewards such as personal development, recognition, feedback and the personal satisfaction of helping others. In return, the volunteer must be expected to conduct their efforts in a manner that will allow the values, goals and mission of our school to be achieved.

The purpose for the Code of Conduct is to provide a benchmark for the personal and professional behavior of the volunteers of Consortium schools whenever they are identifiable as members. Failure to adhere to this code will represent unacceptable behavior and will undoubtedly damage the school; therefore, the volunteer may be dismissed from their volunteering opportunities.

In signing up as a volunteer at your school, you agree to the following:

Charter for the Protection of Children & Young People: This Charter includes the Safe Environment Training program and background checks as established by the Ad Hoc Committee on Sexual Abuse of the United States Conference carried out by the Archdiocese of Omaha. As a volunteer who has regular contact with the youth of the parish, I agree to abide and adhere to this Charter.

Your status as a Volunteer: In performing services in connection a Consortium school, you shall operate as, and have the status of, volunteer. You shall not act as or be an employee of the school. All of your activities will be at your own expense. As a volunteer, you shall refrain from using your position to secure special privilege, gain or benefit.

Treatment of Confidential Information: In reference to private information, you agree not to disclose, divulge, copy or reproduce any of the proprietary or confidential information/materials regarding students, staff or curriculum unless authorized to do so by the school principal.

Representation: As a volunteer, you do not represent the school on matters of policy, procedure, programs and personnel. When approached with concerns, you agree to refer parents to the principal and/or appropriate personnel. Volunteers should represent the school in a helpful, friendly and

professional manner at all times. Our existence and effectiveness is dependent upon the goodwill of the parish/school community. The image people form of the organization may be based on their contact with volunteers. For this reason, it is important for volunteers to always represent the school in a positive manner and promote the beliefs and practices of the organization.

Media Contact: As a volunteer, you do not represent the school on inquiries and matters of the Media. You agree to refer all media contacts to the principal.

Attendance and Commitment: For most of the volunteer programs, volunteers are assigned a schedule and are expected to follow that schedule. Volunteers who are unable to make a scheduled shift are expected to contact their program leader or manager as soon as possible. Volunteers should inform their program leader or manager if they need to resign their position.

Professional Behavior: In the performance of duty, volunteers should:

- Be polite at all times when dealing with students, staff and visitors
- Treat other volunteers, students, staff with courtesy and sensitivity to their rights and responsibilities
- Take the personal initiative to learn, respect, communicate and adhere to the rules of the school
- Agree to a time/task commitment and fulfill that commitment in a timely manner, or else inform the program leader or manager
- Follow reasonable directions from their program leader or manager and those of the organization who have appropriate authority

Personal Behavior: As a volunteer, to the best of my ability, I agree to:

- Treat everyone fairly within the context of their activity, regardless of gender, place of origin, color, religion, political belief, or economic status
- Consistently display high personal standards and project a favorable image of the school
- Strive to achieve the highest quality, effectiveness and dignity in the process of volunteer work without promoting self-interests
- Refrain from public criticism of fellow volunteers, students and staff
- Be honest and trustworthy
- Respect the privacy of others
- Regularly seek ways of increasing professional development of self-awareness
- Be passionate about what you are performing and be an advocate in the parish/school community
- Respect the dignity of others; verbal or physical behaviors that constitute harassment or abuse are unacceptable

Classroom Volunteer Duties

There are a number of duties and activities that might be performed by the volunteers. It is difficult to identify all of them, however, some common duties might be:

- Assist the teacher while he/she is teaching in all subject areas.
- Read and tell stories to our children when directed by the teacher.
- Assist children in performing activities that have been initiated by the teacher.

- Assist with supplementary work for advanced and/or enrichment activities.
- Help tutor students in all subject areas.
- Work with and teach students in small group settings.
- Provide special help, such as drilling with flash cards, spelling, and play activities.
- Work on the computer as directed by the teacher or office staff.
- Assist students on the computer when needed.
- Help maintain bulletin board displays.
- Maintain individual classroom folders of the student's work.
- Assemble materials and equipment needed by teachers.

Volunteer Office Duties

Often there is additional work needed to be completed in the school office. This position will prove to be very rewarding for those individuals who love to interact with both adults and children. Additional office assistance can include filing, making copies, proofreading, typing on the computer, and many more clerical related activities. All volunteers in these areas as well as all areas of the school should keep in mind the importance of confidentiality of all student records or actions.

Volunteering While at Home

Our teachers and the office have extra work that can be accomplished at home. These things may include typing, making flash cards, and many other clerical duties. Contact your child's teacher and/or contact the school office for more information.

PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE PAGE

I have read the 2022 - 2023 OCSC Family Handbook and agree, on behalf of myself and my child(ren), to follow the policies and procedures contained in the Handbook.

Parent or Guardian Name (printed)

Parent or Guardian Signature