



Welcome to the LOWER SCHOOL

Kindergarten and New Family Orientation



ST. THOMAS AQUINAS
CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ESSENTIALS OVERVIEW

of Policies and Procedures

First Day of School

August 12th is the first day of school. Please note that all policies and procedures in this handout are subject to change due to changing COVID-19 protocols. We will send updates throughout the summer and share our reopening plan in the Back to School Guide.

School Hours:

8:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Lower School students, grades PK – 2, begin class promptly at 8:00 AM. Dismissal is at 3:00 PM through the carpool line.

**8 AM
TO
3 PM**

Early Dismissal

On early dismissal days, students are dismissed at 11:45 PM. Lunch is not served on these days.

Extended Day Service

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School offers an extended day service from dismissal until 6:00 PM. There is an extra charge for this service. For inquiries about this service, please contact the director, Sandy Cole: scole@staschool.org. Extended day is only available for students who are registered for the service and is not available as a drop-in service.

Tardies/Absences

If your child arrives after 8:00 AM, please sign him or her in at the reception desk so that your child may be admitted to class. If your child will be absent, please notify the school by using the quicklink absence form on the website, call the school office at 469-341-0911, or send an e-mail to your child's teacher AND Cheryl Neeley (cneeley@staschool.org). We worry about them when they're not here! If you need to pick up your child early for an appointment, please come



no later than 2:40 PM and ring the buzzer at the main entrance. Your child will be brought to you. Coming later than 2:40 PM disrupts the dismissal process since the teachers are concluding the day and readying their students to go home. PLEASE, PLEASE do not schedule vacations while school is in session. When making travel plans, please refer to the school calendar which identifies school holidays. Teachers will not be able to accommodate requests for work that will be missed. Thank you!

Personal Belongings

Please be sure to label all personal items with your child's complete name to avoid items being sent to the lost and found. This includes lunch boxes, jackets, sweatshirts and backpacks.



Uniforms and Shoes

Uniforms and shoes must be purchased through Risse Brothers School Uniforms. The uniform list is in the parent/student handbook and on the school web-site. Uniforms can also be ordered online. At the Lower School the students do not change clothes or shoes for PE class.

Cafeteria/Recess

Students have typically had approximately 30 minutes for lunch and a 30 minute recess, beginning at 10:30 AM. There is often an additional recess during the day for PK children. We are still in the process of finalizing what this will look like.



Lunch may be purchased from the cafeteria or brought from home. A link to the menu is on the website and in the weekly e-newsletter. Milk or water is included with purchased lunch or may be purchased separately. A prepaid account is required with Guess Who's Coming to Dinner from which all purchases will be deducted. Instructions are on the parent portal of the website.



Snacks

Each student is responsible for bringing his or her snack each day. We are sincere and serious in our request that you please send only nutritious snacks! **Please notify teachers immediately if your child has any food allergies.**

Snack Suggestions:

- cheese & whole grain crackers
- apples, bananas or other fruit
- yogurt (GoGurts can be frozen and the kids love it.)
- healthy granola bars
- carrots and ranch dressing

Curriculum

As with all Catholic schools in the Diocese of Dallas, St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School follows the curriculum objectives set by the Diocese of Dallas Catholic Schools Office. Students study religion, language arts, math, science, and social studies. Students also attend enrichment classes, (we refer to them as “specials”) each week, including PE, art, computer, drama/music, Spanish, and library. In addition, students participate in guidance sessions periodically.

Religion

Our kindergarten students participate in a weekly prayer service with one of our St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church priests on Mondays at 10:30 AM. Our first and second graders celebrate Mass weekly on Mondays at 9:30 AM. Each Mass is hosted by a different class.

Guidance

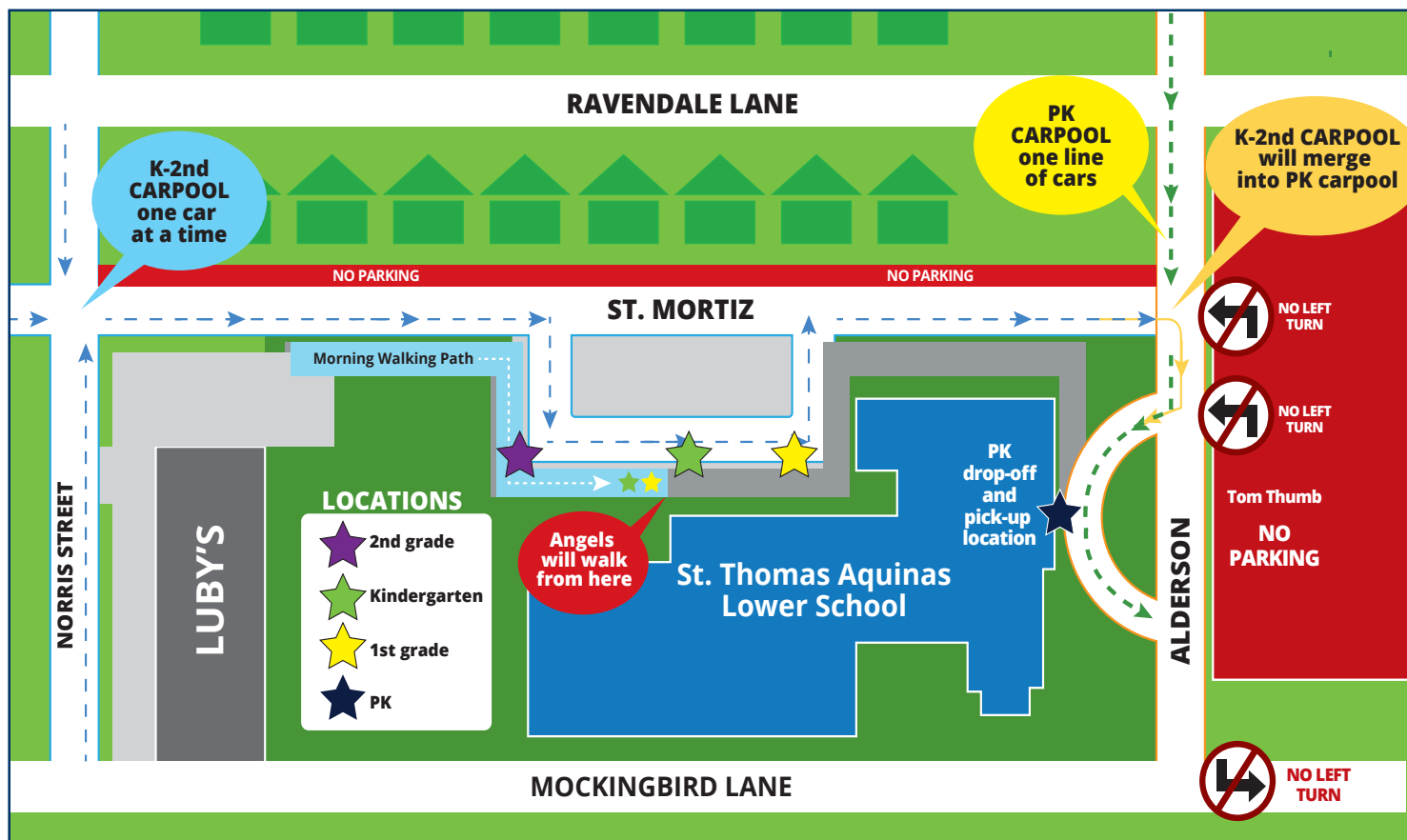
St. Thomas Aquinas Lower School is privileged to have a full time counselor on staff, Padmini Dayal. Padmini has extensive experience working with children and families as a DISD counselor prior to joining the STA staff. She meets with classes as needed, and reinforces the life skills and lifelong guidelines we teach. She will work as a liaison with parents and teachers to help ensure that we are doing everything possible to meet the needs of our students. If you have questions or concerns, Padmini can be reached by calling the Lower School or by e-mail: pdalay@staschool.org.

Communication

Kindergarten teachers provide you with information directly to keep you informed of upcoming activities in your child's class. E-mail is the primary form of communication from the school to you, so an accurate email address is very important. Teachers also provide you with information directly to keep you informed of upcoming activities in your child's class. Please also be sure that we always have accurate phone numbers for you so that we can reach you quickly, if needed. The school uses the Parent Alert emergency contact system to notify families about urgent matters such as school closing, cancellation of important events, etc. Each week, you will receive the school's Week at a Glance (WAAG), our weekly e-newsletter as well as an email from your homeroom parent. Teachers check e-mail daily. You are always encouraged to contact your child's teacher with any questions or concerns. Feel free to leave a message for your child's teacher at any time by calling 469-341-0911. You will be able to leave a message if you are calling outside of school hours. E-mail is no substitute for a good conversation!

Face Time

Need a little face time with the Principal, Lauren Roberts? If you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions that you would like to discuss, just schedule a time with Ann Kubes (akubes@staschool.org) and Lauren would be happy to meet with you (via video conference if visitors are still restricted).



Morning Drop-Off

The guidelines for carpool drop-off/pickup are in place for the safety of the children. To ensure this safety, please read and follow all parking and carpool line rules. The carpool line begins at the west entrance of the parking lot, next to the soccer field. Form a single line in the street alongside Luby's parking lot. Please stay in the queue and please do not attempt to pass other vehicles. Please remain as close to the curb as possible to ensure traffic may pass safely. Thank you for not talking or texting on cell phones during carpool! Morning drop-off is at the main entrance to the school on St. Moritz. Beginning at 7:30 AM an adult will assist the children exiting the cars. Before 7:30 AM you are requested to bring your child to the lobby via the main entrance. Children may not be dropped off prior to 7:30 AM, as there is no supervision for them. Please leave the parking lot from the east exit.

Afternoon Pick-Up

The procedure for the afternoon carpool line is basically the same as for morning carpool. Please pull all the way forward. You will be issued a carpool sign, which must be displayed every day during pick up. This sign is what gets your child called from the classroom, and brought to the carpool line, so it is very important to have it displayed each day at dismissal time. The children remain safely in the school supervised by faculty and staff; parents are asked to please remain in their cars. The students' names are called over the PA and they are released to you. Until we get to know you, your child will not be released to anyone without the carpool tag or without showing identification. If there will be a change in carpool arrangements, please send a note or e-mail the teacher AND Cheryl Neeley (cneeley@staschool.org). We will not release a child to anyone without your permission.

**Families may walk their child to school, but the carpool line will be used for pick-up.
More details will be provided in the Back to School Guide.**

Safe Environment/ Volunteering

Currently, there is a diocesan restriction on visitors to schools. This can change at any time. In compliance with our Diocese, STA has a comprehensive Safe Environment Program in place for our volunteers. Our Parents' Association is very active and supportive of the school and provides additional funds for the school through its various fundraising activities. St. Thomas Aquinas requires volunteerism of each parishioner family; there are many other opportunities to help in the school. In order to do so you will be required to submit a Safe Environment packet and complete an interview with personnel in the Safe Environment office at the Church. You will attend a brief safety training session scheduled through the stthomasaquinas.org web site, and you will be issued a badge, which must be worn on school premises at all times. Please know that for the safety of our students, this policy is strictly enforced.

Once visitors are permitted again, any time you come to the school, please wear your badge and sign in at the reception desk. We ask that you do not disrupt the teaching/learning process by entering the classrooms or engaging the teachers in conversation without making prior arrangements with the teacher as their primary focus is on the children.



Our Most Important Plea

New school year jitters are normal. Our students typically adapt quickly to the new routine and do well socially, making new friends easily. This is not true, however, for every child as they are all so unique. Please do not take a "wait and see" approach if your child is complaining that he or she does not want to come to school. You know your child better than anyone. Please let us know if: your child's adjustment is not showing improvement, your child regularly complains about stomach aches in the mornings before school, or your child shows other signs of stress related to school. There is a LOT we can do to help, so please think of us as your partners. We want them to love coming to school!

We look forward to meeting your angels!
Thank you sincerely for entrusting them to our care.



ST. THOMAS AQUINAS
CATHOLIC SCHOOL

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www.staschool.org

All policies are subject to change due to COVID-19. Updates will be sent before school starts.