



FIRST GRADE  
PROGRAM GUIDE FOR PARENTS  
2015-2016

*St. Thomas the Apostle School*

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*St. Thomas the Apostle School*

FIRST GRADE PROGRAM GUIDE  
2015-2016

This First Grade Program Guide is a *supplement* to the  
St. Thomas the Apostle School *Parent and Student Handbook*

Both this Program Guide and the School Handbook are updated annually. The pastor and/or the principal retain the right to amend the Handbook at any time and parents will be given notification in a reasonable time if changes are made. Parents are responsible for understanding and following the content of these documents. Each family signs their name when they receive a copy of both books.

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## **St. Thomas the Apostle School**

***...where God's children in extraordinary variety are:***

### **INSPIRED**

to academic achievement through a comprehensive curriculum taught by dedicated teachers. STA students excel because they are educated in a safe, structured learning environment that expects their best efforts each and every day;

### **INSTILLED**

with the values inherent in a faith-based atmosphere that nurtures an individual's spiritual, moral, and character development. STA students are prepared to meet the challenges and opportunities of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century by having a better understanding of self;

### **INVOLVED**

members of a caring, supportive community committed to responding to the needs of others. STA students understand what it means to live their faith and use their talents as responsible citizens in stewardship to the world around them.

### **OUR MISSION**

**The mission of the St. Thomas the Apostle School community is to lead, challenge, and encourage God's children in Extraordinary Variety to grow in faith, knowledge, and commitment to service.**

### **OUR PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION**

St. Thomas the Apostle School believes that childhood is the most critical period for the development of attitudes, habits, capabilities, and skills, and that the curriculum encompasses all that a child experiences in his life at school.

The purpose of the school is to create a faith-filled learning environment. The pastor, principal, staff, teachers, parents, and other community members lay the foundation for a love of learning, instill a sense of personal worth and respect for others, and develop critical thinking skills so that the children can grow to be responsible and practicing citizens. We endeavor to develop a community of learners where respect, collaboration and excitement for learning prevail. Quality Catholic education is provided for students in preschool through eighth grade in a caring and family atmosphere.

The main components of the school's educational program are:

- Embracing a faith to be lived within a believing community.
- Developing Christian attitudes and habits as a contributing and supporting member of a diverse community.
- Acquiring essential knowledge, skills and techniques with the stimulus of practical application.
- Integrating technology skills and applications.
- Encouraging creativity and self-expression.
- Promoting each student's personal academic, artistic, and athletic gifts and talents.
- Nurturing each child to help balance the physical, intellectual, social, emotional and ethical development as a whole person.
- Promoting leadership as a service to others.

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## OUR VALUES

The entire staff and faculty of St. Thomas the Apostle School, in their efforts to achieve these objectives, hold certain convictions which underlie the learning process.

### ***We believe in:***

#### **Faith Community**

- The recognition of Jesus Christ as the meaning and purpose of our school
- The importance of modeling what we teach about Christian values and ethics

#### **Respect**

- Recognition of the dignity and worth of each person
- The importance of individual differences and potential

#### **Academic Excellence**

- The importance of responsiveness by the faculty to the interests, needs, and learning styles of individual children.
- Providing the academic rigor and challenge to meet each child's potential

#### **Responsibility**

- The shared responsibility of school, home and community for children's growth and development
- Fostering students' personal responsibility and accountability

#### **Safe and Nurturing Environment**

- The need for a warm, supportive school environment in which all children feel welcome, accepted, and safe.
- The importance of open and continuing communication between school and home.

#### **Leadership**

- The importance of teaching children ways to transfer learned skills to real world applications.
- The importance of teaching and demonstrating Catholic social teaching in daily life

## ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS

Students must meet the age requirement: There are NO exceptions. The child must be 6 years old by SEPTEMBER 1<sup>st</sup> of the current school year to enter first grade.

Students entering first grade should have their kindergarten records and recommendations reviewed by the principal.

Parents submit a Health (Physical) Form with all information completed AND signed by the health provider who dates the form. This form includes an up-to-date record of immunizations. Students must have all immunization records up to date by the first day of school. Until these records are received, the student will not be permitted to attend first grade until this requirement is met.

#### Required Immunizations include:

- 5 DPT's (DtaP's, DT's) (diphtheria-tetanus-acellular pertussis)
- 4 OPV's (Oral Polio)
- 2 doses of measles (rubella) vaccine

- 2 doses of rubella (German measles) vaccine
- 2 dose of mumps vaccine
- 3 doses of hepatitis B vaccine
- 2 doses of varicella (chickenpox)

Parents of NEW first grade children submit a dental form that is signed and dated by the dentist. This is required BEFORE the first day of school.

Please bring your child's original birth certificate and we will copy it, and for Catholic families, the baptismal certificate is required—even if your child has been baptized at St. Thomas the Apostle Parish. Other agreements are also required: financial, Parent-School contract, photographic release, medical, and emergency card—completed and signed.

### **SUMMERTIME READINESS ACTIVITIES Prior to first Grade**

Parents can help their child be ready for first grade. Learning should be fun for both you and your child. Work together when you have enough time and feel relaxed. Try your best to smile and look at your child when he/she is speaking. This encourages your child to talk and gives him/her a sense of importance and confidence.

Parents are requested to read at least 15 minutes to/with their young child daily before and during the first grade year.

The following ideas are helpful in making the transition to first grade. *It is important that the child be happily and readily anticipating the school year.*

You may help your child REMEMBER HOW TO:

- Hold a pencil correctly, with a two finger and thumb grip (not a fist or any other array).
- Print his/her full name, using capitals for the first letter only and the rest of the letters with lower case letters.
- Say his/her full name, birthday, address, and phone number, including zip code and area code. Students should also know the emergency phone number.
- Dress independently: snap, button, zip, and tie (without adult help).
- Count from 1 – 20 by 1s forward and backward.
- Identify the letters of the alphabet and their corresponding sounds (in mixed order).
- Recite the words from the Pre-primer and Primer Dolch Sight Word List. You can find the list at <http://www.dolchword.net>
- Identify the days of the week and months of the year.
- Identify color words and shape words.
- Learn major U.S. holidays and identify their meaning.
- Accept suggestions and correction; overcome temper tantrums; be willing to accept limitations.
- Use a tissue when coughing or sneezing or having a dripping nose.
- Wash hands properly and the need to wash hands after toileting, after using a tissue, and before meals.

### **SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT DURING FIRST GRADE**

Children should be able to socially interact with their peers, easily join others in play, be able to make and keep friends, and positively interact with peers during the First Grade year. Children learn important rules for relating with others in the classroom and on the playground. These rules are reinforced and posted in the classroom. Children will learn that there are consequences for their actions, whether positive or negative.

Each trimester, you will receive reports of your child's progress in academics and social development. The following skills will be noted on the reports:

1. Develops self-awareness and self-management skills to achieve school and life success
  - Manages emotions and behaviors
  - Recognizes personal strengths
  - Seeks assistance when needed
  - Strives for personal best
  - Produces legible work
  - Demonstrates organizational skills
2. Uses social awareness and interpersonal skills to establish and maintain positive relationships
  - Respects the feelings and perspectives of others based on Gospel values
  - Uses communication and social skills to interact effectively with others
  - Demonstrates an ability to prevent, manage, and resolve interpersonal conflicts in constructive ways
  - Makes relevant contributions to class discussion
3. Demonstrates decision-making skills and responsible behaviors
  - Accepts directions and follows rules
  - Applies decision-making skills responsibly with daily academic and social situations
  - Contributes to the well being of one's school and community

### **SOCIAL COMPETENCIES DEVELOPED DURING FIRST GRADE**

1. Ability to invest in relationships and learning in school.
2. Ability to care for own needs and take responsibility for one's possessions and the class environment.
3. Ability to feel a part of the group and care for each other; ability to develop mutual respect towards each other's ideas, feeling and space. Ability to participate in group time.
4. Ability to negotiate differences and work out compromises, cope with frustration, and manage transitions.
5. Ability to accept directions, routines and rules of first grade classroom.
6. Ability to make choices, take initiative in play and work, invest self in activities, develop interest in learning, and complete tasks.

### **FIRST GRADE CURRICULUM OVERVIEW**

In first grade, we believe that all children can learn naturally in a social environment. Each individual's cognitive, physical, social and emotional growth needs to be nurtured and supported. The program is based on the premise that children construct knowledge through individual or small group work with the teacher and with peers. We provide an enriched environment for reading, writing, and math skills. Children use hands-on activities in order to learn by meaningful experiences and relevant connections to the world around them. Our role is that of facilitator whereby we help children to become responsible for their own learning and at the same time provide opportunities for children to refine their social skills. We at St. Thomas the Apostle School expect you to read to or with your child at least 20 minutes a day. Read! Read! Read!

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## ACADEMIC CURRICULUM

Basic to achieving the academic curriculum is an attitude about learning and working as a school community. To that end, St. Thomas students recite the following school pledge as we begin each day. This pledge is included in the daily morning orientation that includes announcements, prayers, and the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **St. Thomas SCHOOL PLEDGE:**

May God bless:

Our minds - to think our best thoughts.

Our words - to speak kindly to one another,

Our hearts - to feel compassion,

And our hands - to reach out to one another in service and care.

I promise to always do my best as a student and leader, and to treat everyone with respect and kindness.

I will follow the example of Jesus and Mary in all things.

Today I promise to live what St. Thomas the Apostle School teaches.

We believe that when the school and home form a partnership, our children will have the best opportunity to learn and succeed in school. We encourage parents to familiarize themselves with these objectives. If you have questions about your child's progress, please contact your child's teacher for more information.

### **ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND EVALUATION**

The following grade level standards represent the course of study for an entire year of our first grade program. These standards provide a general focus for the instructional program.

All student work is scored on a scale from 1-4:

1 = Beginning

2 = Progressing

3 = Proficient

4 = Advanced

It is natural for students to receive a 2 (Progressing) mark on concepts that are new; however, the goal is for students to demonstrate proficiency in these standards by the end of the school year. Students will receive an Advanced mark (4) if their work is *above and beyond the expectation of a second grader*.

We believe that when the school and home form a partnership, our children will have the best opportunity to learn and succeed in school. We encourage parents to familiarize themselves with these standards. If you have questions about your child's progress, please contact your child's teacher for more information.

### **RELIGION**

#### **Prayers**

Students will be encouraged to offer spontaneous prayers and to memorize the following prayers: the Sign of the Cross, Glory Be, Our Father, Hail Mary, Prayer before Meals, and Common Mass Responses. Families should teach the children to pray morning prayers and night prayers daily *and to pray before meals*. The students will learn to pray and show reverence when attending church services. All first grade students attend the weekly School Mass.

**Creed**

- Understands and applies *creed* as a statement of belief
- Explains the meaning of faith as a lived response

**Sacred Scripture**

- Explains stories of Scripture as God's self-revelation
- Differentiates Old and New Testaments
- Recounts God's revelation as related in characters and events of the Old Testament
- Identifies Gospels as stories of Jesus' life and teachings

**Prayer, Sacraments, and Liturgy**

- Describes meaning and purpose of the sacraments
- Identifies sacraments of initiation and their effects
- Participates in sacramental and liturgical rites
- Relates prayer to daily life, the liturgy, and scripture

**Catholic Church and Parish Life**

- Explains Church in relationship to Jesus' mission
- Relates parish life to life in the Church

**Christian Living, Mission, and Dialogue**

- Relates meaning of free will to right relationship
- Relates Ten Commandments and Beatitudes with Christian life
- Identifies Baptism as uniting all Christians in the Body of Christ
- Takes action to live the Church's mission

Children *should* attend Mass or the family's usual Church Services regularly with their family. They learn proper church behavior at school and are expected to follow it on the weekend with their families. They should demonstrate what they have learned at school.

**LITERACY****Reading Literature and Informational Text**

- Asks and answers questions about key details in a text
- Retells stories, including key details, and identifies central message
- Identifies the main topic and retells key details of a text
- Describes characters, setting, and major events in a story
- Describes the connection between two individuals, events, ideas, or pieces of information
- Identifies words or phrases in poems or stories that suggest feelings or appeal to the senses
- Determines the meaning of words through different strategies
- Knows and uses various text features to locate key facts
- Explains major differences between books that tell stories and books that give information
- Identifies who is telling the story
- Distinguishes and uses information provided by the illustrations and the words
- Compares and contrasts the adventures and experiences of characters in stories
- Identifies the reasons an author gives to support points in a text
- Identifies similarities and differences between two texts on the same topic
- Reads text appropriately complex for grade 1

**Foundational Skills**

- **Print Concepts**
  - Recognizes the distinguishing features of a sentence

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- **Phonological Awareness**
    - Demonstrates understanding of spoken words, syllables, and sounds
  - **Phonics and Word Recognition**
    - Decodes regularly spelled one syllable words and two syllable words that follow basic patterns
    - Recognizes and reads grade-appropriate sight words
  - **Fluency**
    - Reads grade level text with purpose and understanding
    - Reads grade level text orally with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression on successive readings
    - Uses context to confirm or self-correct

### **Listening and Speaking**

- Participates in collaborative conversations with diverse partners in small and larger groups
- Asks and answers questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally
- Asks and answers questions about what a speaker says
- Describes people, places, things, and events with relevant details clearly
- Adds drawings to descriptions when appropriate to clarify details
- Produces complete sentences when appropriate to task and situation

### **Composition Skills**

- Writes opinion pieces with a strong topic, opinion, reasons, and conclusion
- Writes informative texts with a topic, facts, and conclusion
- Writes narratives with sequenced events, details, temporal words, and conclusion
- Focuses on a topic and strengthens writing with guidance
- Uses digital tools to produce and publish writing with guidance
- Participates in shared research and writing projects
- With guidance recalls information from experiences or gathers information from provided sources to answer a question

### **Language**

- **Conventions of Standard English**
  - Demonstrates command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking
  - Produces and expands complete simple and compound sentences in response to prompts
  
  - Demonstrates command of the conventions of standard English capitalization and punctuation when writing
  - Uses conventional spelling for words with common spelling patterns and sight words
- **Vocabulary**
  - Determines the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on reading and content using an array of strategies
  - With guidance, demonstrates understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings
  - Uses words and phrases acquired through conversations, reading and being read to, and responding to texts

### **Handwriting**

- Forms upper and lower case letters appropriately
- Uses appropriate spacing for letters, words, and sentences
- Uses appropriate grip and body position when writing

**MATH****Operations and Algebraic Thinking**

- Uses addition and subtraction within 20 to solve word problems
- Solves word problems with three whole numbers with a sum less than or equal to 20
- Applies properties of operations as strategies to add and subtract
- Understands subtraction as an unknown-addend problem
- Relates counting to addition and subtraction
- Fluently adds and subtracts within 10
- Adds and subtracts within 20
- Understands the meaning of the equal sign and determines if the equations involving addition and subtraction are true or false
- Determines the unknown whole number in an addition or subtraction equation relating three whole numbers

**Numbers and Operations**

- Counts to 120 starting at any number less than 120
- Reads, writes, and represents a number of objects with a written numeral up to 120
- Understands places value up to the tens place
- Compares two two-digit numbers and records the results using the symbols  $>$ ,  $=$ , and  $<$
- Adds two-digit numbers to one-digit numbers using a variety of strategies
- Adds two-digit numbers to multiples of ten using a variety of strategies
- Explains reasoning for addition and subtraction strategies
- Shows readiness for double digit addition
- Given a two-digit number, mentally finds ten more or ten less and explain reasoning
- Subtracts multiples of 10 in the range 10-90 from multiples of 10 in the range 10-90 using and explaining a variety of strategies

**Measurement and Data**

- Orders three objects by length
- Compares lengths of two objects using a third object
- Uses tools to measure length accurately
- Tells and writes time in hours and in half-hours using analog and digital clocks
- Organizes and represents data for up to three categories
- Asks and answers questions about data

**Geometry**

- Distinguishes between defining attributes and non-defining attributes of shapes
- Builds and draws shapes to possess defining attributes
- Composes new 2-D and 3-D shapes from two or more 2-D or 3-D shapes
- Partitions circles and rectangles into two or four equal shares
- Uses fractional language to describe equal shares

**Mathematical Practices**

- Makes sense of problems and perseveres in solving them
- Reasons abstractly and quantitatively
- Constructs viable arguments and critiques the reasoning of others
- Models with mathematics
- Uses appropriate tools strategically
- Attends to precision
- Looks for and makes use of structure
- Looks for and expresses regularity in repeated reasoning

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**SCIENCE****Science Practices**

- Records observations, organizes, and collects data in patterns
- Formulates questions based on text and experiments
- Interprets charts and other graphic information
- Uses mathematical and computational thinking
- Identifies and uses basic scientific tools and equipment
- Uses scientific vocabulary appropriately
- Follows basic safety procedures

**Life Science**

- Explains and describes basic structure and function of plants and animals related to their growth and survival
- Understands, identifies, and categorizes components of living things

**Physical Science**

- Identifies observable properties of objects using the senses or simple tools
- Identifies observable forces in nature and explains how they modify nature

**Earth and Space Science**

- Identifies basic characteristics of the earth, moon, and sun
- Understands basic weather patterns and changes

**SOCIAL STUDIES****History and Culture**

- Identifies meanings of major holidays and symbols
- Understands city, state, and national structures and important events in US history

**Geography**

- Uses maps and globes accurately

**Civics and Government**

- Identifies major elements of citizenship
- Identifies major components of US government

**PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND HEALTH**

- Demonstrates an understanding of the concepts of healthy living
- Participates positively during health instruction
- Acquires movement skills and understands concepts needed to engage in health-enhancing physical activity
- Achieves and maintains a health-enhancing level of physical fitness
- Develops team-building skills by working with others through physical activity

**COMPUTER SKILLS**

- Demonstrates understanding of basic computer technology
- Applies technology skills to produce quality work

**MUSIC**

- Sings or plays on instruments in a variety of music representing diverse cultures and styles
- Identifies how music contributes to communication, celebrations, occupations, and recreation.

**VISUAL ART**

- Identifies the elements of lines, shape, space, color and texture
- Identifies the principles of repetition and pattern
- Identifies the expressive qualities of mood, emotion, and pictorial representation
- Identifies similarities in and among the arts
- Identifies media, tools, and how to use them when painting, drawing, and constructing

**LIBRARY**

- Understands circulation procedures.
- Recognizes parts of a book.
- Differentiates fiction and non-fictional books.
- Recognizes how to select and evaluate books.

**SPANISH**

- Engages in conversations, provides and obtains information, expresses feelings and emotions, and exchanges opinions in the language
- Demonstrates an understanding of the relationship between practices, products, and perspectives of the culture.

**SUPPLEMENTAL LEARNING PROGRAMS**

***Accelerated Reader:*** To strengthen reading comprehension, the first grade students track their reading skills in comprehension by taking Accelerated Reader quizzes online after reading each book of their choice. Once they have read a book, they are ready to take a quiz on the AR website. The quizzes provide immediate feedback on how well the student could comprehend the book they read. For each successful quiz, the student will earn specific points. The students set goals for themselves at the beginning of each trimester for how many points they plan to earn. Students are acknowledged for meeting personal goals and doing their personal best.

***Mathletics:*** To strengthen math computation skills, the students will use the Mathletics website in school or at home. It is a web-based learning program. The first grade students complete assignments and tests in the various math subtopics studied in first grade. They can also compete against other first graders throughout the country through *Live Mathletics!*

**ACADEMIC PORTFOLIOS**

Throughout first grade, the students will compile the many different projects, tests, and class assignments into their Portfolio Binder. They receive the Portfolios on the last day of 1<sup>st</sup> grade! It's an excellent way for the students to see the growth they have made during the school year.

**HIGHLIGHTS OF THE FIRST GRADE CURRICULUM**

- Field trip to the Farm
- Kite-making to learn about the wind
- Publishing their personal narratives
- "ABC's" of the First Thanksgiving" Reader's Theater performance
- Publishing "How-To" Booklets
- Celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> Day of School!
- Solving and Writing their own number stories
- "Ruby Bridges" Reader's Theater performance
- Planting and *Mowing* mini lawns
- Publishing Poems / Poetry booklets
- Giving one public speech each trimester!

- The "Week of the Young Child"
- Leadership roles in weekday Masses and in one Sunday Family Mass

## HOMEWORK

All First Grade children at St. Thomas the Apostle School will have some homework at least four nights a week in order to reinforce what they have learned in the classroom. The goal of homework is to promote your child's success in school. Parents should never personally complete their child's work. The following activities are important and can comprise homework for your child in first grade.

1. Read to your child or have your child read to you at least 15 minutes a day.
2. A math worksheet will be assigned almost daily to review that day's lesson. Guide your first grader if he or she is stuck. Be sure to read directions and save the Unit Preview papers the teacher distributes at the beginning of each unit as a reference.
3. Check over written homework to note whether they have printed their own name and date on the paper and that their work is neatly completed.
4. Students will have weekly spelling words to learn based on their spelling level. Please study these words with your child. Making flashcards for the words is often most helpful. They will have spelling assignments each week to help them learn the words.
5. Students may have family projects, such as class books to be shared with parents and writing activities given by the teacher.

## FIRST GRADE DAILY SCHEDULE

*This schedule may be adjusted periodically.*

7:45- 8:00	Grammar Activity
8:00- 8:30	Prayer, Pledge, Morning Meeting Time, Washroom Break
8:30- 9:00	Religion
9:00- 11:00	"Daily 5" Literacy Block This block of time includes Guided Reading, Independent Reading, Word Study, Read Aloud, and Phonemic Awareness Instruction
11:05-11:25	Recess
11:25 - 12:00	Washroom Break/Lunch
12:00 - 3:15	Math, Science, Writer's Workshop and Social Studies
<u>The afternoon schedule varies depending on the special class for the day.</u>	
	Mondays: Computers or Art
	Tuesdays: Spanish and Music
	Thursdays: Physical Education
	Fridays: Library
3:15 - 3:30	Afternoon Class Meeting / Preparation for Dismissal
3:30	Dismissal On Wednesdays, dismissal is at 2:30 PM

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**GENERAL SCHOOL INFORMATION****ATTENDANCE/ABSENCE/TARDY**

A student who is not present *inside the classroom* by 8:00 a.m. is marked absent. Call the school each day that your child is absent. If the child arrives later, then the child attendance is changed to "tardy."

Children will be **tardy** if the parent does not bring his/her 1<sup>st</sup> grader to the school in time to be seated in the classroom ready to learn at 8 a.m. When students arrive at or around 7:45 AM, there is sufficient time to store items in the locker, greet one another, and to get settled with materials in the classroom. Students who arrive late lose out on morning rituals and activities and sometimes even class work. This has a negative impact on the child's success. Late arrivals can happen occasionally but should not become a regular occurrence. Children learn habits from home. Support your child with regular and timely arrival at school for the start of each and every day.

First graders should walk to the classroom alone. **By the second week of school, all children are expected to enter the classroom by themselves.** *Most children will be ready to do this by the second day!* The first few minutes set the tone for the day and the teacher needs to be involved with the students, not with parents. If you need to meet with the teacher, you must e-mail her to set up an appointment. Parents are asked to assist their child by NOT escorting him/her to the door and not lingering at the door.

On the day of the child's **absence**, the parent must call the school office by 9:00 a.m. or leave a message on the night answering machine. The answering machine is on during the time school is not in session. Upon the child's return to school, a written note stating the number of days absent and the reason for the absence must be sent to the homeroom teacher.

School ends daily at 3:30 PM. (On Wednesdays, school ends at 2:30 PM) Do not retrieve your child from the classroom or the hallway near the classroom. Meet your child OUTDOORS. The entire class will be brought outside for dismissal. Do not pull your child from the line. This is very disruptive to the entire class. Please keep early dismissals to emergencies only. When you must take your child out before the regular time of dismissal, you need to complete a form in the office with the explanation for the early dismissal. The school secretary will call for the student to be brought to the office. Parents do not go directly to the classroom.

Daily attendance in first grade is important to student success. It is St. Thomas's policy the first grade students who are absent 25 days or more are required to attend a minimum of 25 hours of tutoring in the summer and will pass *conditionally* to the second grade.

**EXTENDED CARE: Before and After School Care Program**

This is a program for before and after school care. The Before-Care Program is located in the Pre-K classroom. The After Care Program is located in the Cafeteria/Lunch Room on the second floor of school. Hours are from 7:00 AM to 7:45 AM before school, and from 3:45 p.m. to 6:00 PM after school. The cost is \$1.50 per (any part of) 15 minutes of care. Further information about registering your child for the Extended Day program and about fees is available in the office. Extended Care handbooks are available from the school office.

**UNIFORMS AND DRESS CODE**

First Grade students will follow the uniform policy that is found in the school handbook. Uniforms are worn daily. Students wear solid white or solid black gym shoes or dress shoes with the uniform. The school sweatshirt features the St. Thomas emblem and name. Only these sweatshirts are permitted when students wear their uniforms on regular school days for gym. Students have many options for their uniform wear. Parents must be acquainted with

the Dress Code as outlined in the school handbook. Teachers will notify you of any infractions to the rule and students must quickly come to compliance.

### **SCHOOL SPIRIT DAYS**

School Spirit Days are scheduled monthly and on some special occasions. Reminders of these non-uniform days are posted in the school newsletter. On these days, the children wear school colors: green and white. Spirit wear shirts may be worn on gym days with gym shorts or gym sweatpants also. *School Spirit Wear* t-shirts, sweatshirts, etc., may be ordered at the school office periodically during the year. If you are sending your 1<sup>st</sup> grader to school with money on Spirit Day, then please send it in a sealed container (envelope/baggie) with your 1<sup>st</sup> grader's name on it. Students should keep their money in their backpacks until it is time for snack.

### **PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

All children are expected to be able to dress themselves, buckle, snap, and zip their clothes and shoes.

Plan to bring your child to the main floor and your child will either attend Before Care in the Pre-K classroom if he/she arrives very early or will go directly to his/her classroom with peers after the 7:45 AM bell rings. Remind any grandparents or caregivers of the fact that first graders are *not escorted* to the classroom. S.T.A. students demonstrate a family spirit and will help the younger children find their way to the classroom until they have the confidence to do so independently.

***By the second week of school, all children are expected to leave the building with classmates in a class line. Do NOT take your child from the line indoors. Wait outdoors for the class to arrive at the designated place of pick up after school.***

### **SCHOOL LIBRARY**

First Grade visits the school library at least once a week for story time and book selection. The children select one book to take home to read with their families. As the year unfolds, first grade children begin to read independently. First grade students will also participate in the Accelerated Reader program throughout the year. Parents will receive information on how to log in to a website follow their individual child's progress in reading through the Accelerated Reader Program.

### **SHARING TIME**

***Sharing Time*** will take place during the morning meeting each day. Each week the children will be able to spend some time sharing with their classmates during the morning meeting. This is an opportunity for the first graders to learn about one another and for the first graders to practice speaking with a group. This is not show-and-tell.

### **LUNCH**

Students have a choice of bringing a lunch or buying a hot lunch at school. Milk may be ordered separately as a choice. Students should bring lunches when they arrive in the morning. Lunches should provide nutritious food for children and not consist of "junk" food. Occasionally children will forget to bring a lunch and we will call home to remind you. Our school nutrition policy requires that we avoid high-sugar foods and drinks.

The hot lunch program follows federally approved guidelines. Each month a menu is published by the Food Service Program and sent home with the students. The deadline for ordering is closely followed. The lunches are ordered *a month in advance*. They must be ordered in the timeframe given. Be aware of this requirement. There are no "extra lunches" available to be bought on a daily basis through the hot lunch program.

Free and Reduced Lunch forms are available to all. You can inquire about the hot lunch program from the Lunch Supervisor who is in the school office or in the lunchroom 9 a.m. until 2 p.m. daily.

### **BIRTHDAY TREATS**

Children may bring in a *healthy* birthday treat to school. Our school nutrition policy requires that we aim to avoid high-sugar foods and drinks. Please check with the teacher before the day you plan to bring treats to school. Drop off treats in the school office or send them to the classroom with your 1<sup>st</sup> grader. Please do not bring peanuts or any nuts for a treat.

### **HOME-SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS**

The first grade teacher will communicate with parents through various media. Most of the communications will be through the **Fast Direct** online communications program. You will receive a weekly classroom newsletter that indicates many activities that your child is participating in during class. The teacher will include reminders of upcoming school activities. Assessments are posted on a regular basis and families may send messages back and forth to the teacher. Personal visits are always helpful for matters that take more time and explanation. These meetings should be set up in advance in coordination with the teacher.

The teacher may also periodically send notes home in hard copy or phone parents to discuss arising matters. The teacher will answer emails and phone calls from parents within 24 hours of a call or as soon as possible. Weekly the school principal sends home general information about upcoming activities at school (**S.T.A. News Briefs**) through the **School Reach** email, text message, and phone communications system. Emergency or arising matters will prompt more frequent communications. Families are responsible for opening these messages.

### **PROGRESS REPORTS AND REPORT CARDS**

Report cards are issued three times per year in the trimester format at St. Thomas School. All grades and report cards are online through the *Fast Direct* Information program. These reports will document your child's progress in learning. A progress report is available simply by reviewing the *Fast Direct* student reports online. Parents will receive a password to their child's account at the start of the year. Everyone must log in and set up their personal password within the first week of school.

Report Cards indicate growth in achievement of learning standards.

### **STANDARDS-BASED SCALE FOR KINDERGARTEN, GRADES 1-2-3**

- 4** = Advanced. Student independently and consistently exceeds expectations
- 3** = Proficient. Student frequently meets expectations
- 2** = Progressing. Student occasionally meets expectations
- 1** = Beginning. Student rarely meets expectations
- >** = Evaluate later. Learning goal was not a focus during this trimester
- \*** = Not evaluated, will be evaluated when developmentally appropriate.

Formal parent-teacher conferences are scheduled for November and again in March. The teacher or the parent may request a parent-teacher conference at other times of the year.

### **FIRST GRADE SCHOOL SUPPLY LIST**

*Many supplies will be shared in general with classmates. These include: index cards, crayons, pencils, pencil top erasers, watercolors, dry erase markers, scissors, glue sticks, tissues, disinfectant wipes, and paper towels.*

#### **Student Supply List**

- 1 book bag (backpack style, durable, waterproof)
- 1 binder (1½" width, clear view cover)
- 3 wide ruled composition notebooks

- 1 ream of paper (500 sheets)
- 1 pack of index cards (white, unlined)
- 1 box of 24 Crayola crayons (no washable)
- 24 standard pencils (with erasers)
- 12 pink pencil top erasers
- 1 set of 8 Crayola markers (non-permanent)
- 1 set of 8 Crayola washable watercolors
- 1 set of 4 dry erase markers (red, blue, green, black)
- 1 set of scissors (4" to 6" with sharp points)
- 3 Elmer's glue sticks
- 2 large boxes of tissues
- 2 containers of disinfectant wipes
- 2 rolls of paper towels

### **Parent Involvement in School**

Parents are urged to become involved in your child's education by keeping in contact with your child's teacher through the various means outlined for you. Besides helping your child with homework, stay current by reading the teacher newsletter and the school News Briefs online. Follow the information posted on Fast Direct, on the website, and even on the school Face Book page. Attend school and Home and School events.

You are encouraged to volunteer to help with classroom activities. You can volunteer to become a Room Parent to plan or coordinate events. All families are encouraged to participate in classroom activities and to offer your suggestions and ideas. At St. Thomas, all families must complete a minimum of 20 Service Hours a year. This is easily achieved and requests for school involvement for service will be announced on a weekly basis.

If the teacher has a special project and needs extra help from the parents, she will notify the parents in writing. Parents may be able to earn service hours for their time spent on classroom activities as well as school events. Opportunities for service hours begin in July and must be achieved prior to the close of school.

During the school year, parents will be called upon to help with field trips, parties, and special events. All parents must be *Virtus* trained and up to date with training bulletins if they are involved with direct student activity. *Virtus* is primarily a program about child safety. Information about *Virtus* training will be distributed to all parents at the Back-to-School Night. Please review the School Handbook for a greater explanation of *Virtus*, also known as "Protecting God's Children." It is located in the section titled, "Safe Environment Program."

**See the Parent Handbook for additional information about  
St. Thomas the Apostle School.**

**NOTES**