

Hello Saint Thomas Family,

Over the last year, we focused on what we can do – “Do small things with great love.” This year, we shift our focus from what we can do to what God can do — **“Trust in the Lord with all your heart.”**

This year’s theme challenges us to do three things. Saint Padre Pio teaches us to “pray, hope, and don’t worry.” This is the recipe for how we can trust. Through prayer, we receive strength from our relationship with God. Through hope, we look to the future with peace knowing good can come from all things. Through trust (not worrying), we use our free will to choose the truth, goodness, and beauty all around us. When we do these three things, we put into practice our theme for this year. Is it easy? No. But it is what gives us the peace, hope, and love our hearts long for.

We are profoundly blessed at Saint Thomas. We are immersed in a culture of joy, compassion, community, and Christ’s presence. Let’s not keep these beautiful gifts to ourselves, but share them with those who need them most. We are blessed by many new families this year. These families are joining us because they believe in the work being done here. Please give them a warm Saint Thomas welcome when you meet them and make them feel at home. I can’t wait to get this year started and see the wonders God will do!

Ryan Corcoran,
Principal



Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School 2023-24 • You belong here!

Important Dates in August/September..

Date	Event	Time	Location
August 21	School Open House	4-6pm	All classrooms
August 23	First Day of school Grs 1-8 Home & School meeting, coffee/donuts K and P4 Meet & Greet	8am/3:30pm 8:15am Assigned times	Blacktop PreK/K classrooms
August 24	P3 Meet & Greet First Day of Kindergarten & Kindergarten Enrichment	Assigned times 8-11am/8-3:30pm	Preschool Classroom/MC Kindergarten Classroom
August 28	First day of P4	8-11 am/ 12:15-3:30pm	Preschool Classroom
August 29	First Day of P3 and P4 Enrichment Uniform holiday	8-11 am/ 12:15-3:30pm	Preschool Classroom/MC
August 30	First day of P3 Enrichment	8-11am	Preschool Classroom/MC
Sept. 1-4	No School - Labor Day Holiday		
September 5	Middle School Orientation	6-7:30pm	Ministry Center
September 20	New Family Parent Meeting	6-7:30pm	Ministry Center
September 20/21	School Pictures (Non-uniform day)		Library

Check our online [2023-24 School Calendar](#) and our [Events Calendar](#) for more!

Back to school information..

School office phone number

(616) 458-4228

Sign up for Remind.com

We use a text/email system to notify parents of school closings and other important Saint Thomas information.

If you are new to Saint Thomas or have not signed up, you can sign up by texting the number 81010 with the message **@stafam4gr**. You may remove yourself from getting these notifications at any time by following the directions that come in the email or by responding to the text with the word "stop."

School communication

The Buzz Newsletter – a bulleted look at the week ahead, emailed out weekly during the school year. It is only available electronically.

Remind 101 – urgent text messages sent directly to your phone.

Facebook – www.facebook.com/saintthomasgr

Twitter feed – @SaintThomasGR

Instagram – SaintThomasGR

YouTube – Saint Thomas the Apostle GR


Teachers' newsletters – emailed weekly.

Teachers, staff and new families...

2023-2024 Teachers and Staff

Mrs. Veronica Perdue	PS3/Preschool & Aftercare Director
Mrs. Sue Hieshetter	PS4/Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Teacher
Ms. Samantha Mason	P4 Enrichment
Ms. Emily Hunter	Preschool Aide/ESS
Mrs. Mary Ann Bridge	Kindergarten/PM Enrichment
Mr. Jeremiah Sluggett	Kindergarten/PM Enrichment
Mrs. Bonnie Burke	Preschool Classroom Aide
Mrs. Katie Morrow	Kindergarten Classroom Aide
Mrs. Kate Casey	Grade 1
Mrs. Brenda Tietema	Grade 2
Mrs. Kelly Donohue	1/2 Multi-Age Class
Mrs. Molly Mester	Grade 3
Mrs. Abby VanDyke	Grade 3
Mrs. Kailey Malonek	Grade 4
Mrs. Amy Zakrajsek	4/5 Multi-Age Class
Mr. Mike Mester	Grade 5
Mr. Ed Carr	Teacher Emeritus
Ms. Rachel Eggenberger	Middle School Language Arts
Mrs. Nicole Hoedeman	Middle School Math
Mr. Adam Baxter	Middle School Theology
Mrs. Jen Bendon	Middle School Science
Mr. Evan Walsh	Middle School Social Studies
Mr. Don Dalquist	Director of Educational Support
Mrs. Cathy Buehler	ESS Teacher
Mrs. Cheryl Coderre	ESS Teacher
Mrs. Sarah Faber	ESS Teacher
Mrs. Shawn Schuring	ESS Teacher
Mrs. Samantha Linn	ESS Teacher
Mrs. Meg Sullivan	ESS Teacher
Mrs. Hilary Wilson	ESS Teacher
Mrs. Jeanne Walch	Enrichment Teacher
Mrs. Sue Edgerly	Librarian
Mrs. Karen Willams	BAS Shared-Time Art
Mrs. Ashley Emmerson	BAS Shared-Time Physical Ed
Mrs. Becky Keane	BAS Shared-Time Spanish
Mrs. Angie Dressander	BAS Shared-Time Technology
Mrs. Emily Brunner	BAS Shared-Time Music
Mr. Anthony Giovannetti	Technology Coordinator
Mr. Ted Coon	Maintenance Supervisor
Mr. Don Serba	Maintenance Staff
Mr. Drew Edgerton	Maintenance Staff
Ms. Donna Ritz	Maintenance Staff
Mrs. Angelique Nowak	Aftercare Staff
Ms. Sarah Ensing	Aftercare Staff
Mrs. Aftyn Johnson	School Counselor
Mrs. Genevieve Boyle	0-5 Programming

Welcome new students and their families!



Damian Alcaraz-Mendez (5)
Brandon Alfaro (P4)
Sailor Baar (K)
Miles Bent (P4)
Eva Bergling (5)
Charlotte Bilbrey (P3)
William Boog (P3)
Anna Boyle (P3)
Luca Bozio (P4)
Regina Brede (P3)
Mia Cuevas (P4)
Kedzie Dakoske (P3)
Noelle DeVasto (K)
Finnian (4) and Seamus (7) Dugan
Elias Fox-LaPorte (K)
Canaan (K) and Kieran (7) GerkeGreen
James Gilmore (P4)
Penelope Horst (P3)
Jimena Ignacio (8)
Hope Johnson (K)
Stevie Johnson (P3)
John Jonaitis (P4)
Helen Kennedy (P3)
Cora Kohler (P4)
Oscar Lee (7)
Georgia (1), Lincoln (6), Mila (K) and Rowan (4) Lefere
Clara Monoyios (1)
Henry Place (K)
Carter Raduazo (3)
Casper Reeve (K)
Isabelle Rossi (P4)
Zackary Schaendorf (7)
Hector Schertzing (P4)
Lily Sculley (K)
Coralie Shankin (P3)
Lennyn Sullivan (K)
Luca Vaccariello (K)
John Welton (P3)
Loyola Wilkinson (P3)

Administration

Mrs. Annie Cicotte	Administrative Assistant
Mrs. Cammi Lawrence	Admissions/Marketing/Registrar
Mrs. Betsy Edgerton	Director of Dev./Outreach
Dr. Marygrace Tyrrell	Assistant Principal
Mr. Ryan Corcoran	Principal

Daily Details...

School day schedule

Grades K-8

8am	School begins
8:00am	Chapel
8:15 am	Classes begin

Lunch/Recess Schedule

K-2nd recess	11:00-11:25 / lunch - 11:30-11:50
3rd-5th recess	11:30-11:55 / lunch - 12:00-12:20
6th-8th recess	11:52-12:25 / lunch - 12:25-12:42

3:15pm	End of Day Prayers
3:20pm	School dismissal

Preschool & Kindergarten

8-11am	P3, P4, K (AM)
12:15-3:20pm	P4 (PM), P4 and K Enrichment

Saint Thomas Mass/prayer

Morning Mass at 7:15am Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday for our community and any school families who would like to attend.

Daily Chapel 8am: Parents are welcome to join.

Weekly Mass

- Monday (Grades 1-3) at 10:10am
- Friday (Grades 4-8) at 10:10am

Students need to be in Mass attire (white shirts/ties, skirts/jumpers) on their Mass day. Parents are welcome to join us for Mass.

End of Day Prayer 3:15pm with a time for reflection and Examination of Conscience.

Parent Rosary, Mondays 8:15am, at the Grotto.

Hornets' Nest

The Saint Thomas After-School Program begins on the first day of school, Wednesday, Aug. 23 and runs from 3:30 - 5:30pm. Please contact Veronica Perdue for more information.

We are also looking for people who would like to be a substitute in the Hornet's Nest. If you are interested in being on our "Sub List," contact Veronica (veronicaperdue@stthomasgr.org).

Be on time...

School begins at 8am. Make every effort to be on time. After 8am, the administration and staff cannot be present at the gate or car line. If you are late, escort your child to the main office door. Ring the bell and your child will be admitted into the building.

...but not too early!

It is important that your student is NOT dropped off before 7:45am.

And if you're absent...

Call (616-458-4228) the school office, between 7:30-8:30am **each day your child will be absent.** Please leave your child's name, grade and reason for absence.

Student drop off/pick up

- Students must NEVER cross Wilcox Park Drive to enter or exit a car. **For the safety of all our children,** DO NOT drop off or pick up students at the curb in front of school or church. **Please drop off or pick up students in the "Car Line" or "Gate Line" only.**
- Make sure your children know if they are "Gate Line" or "Car Line" at pickup. The **Car Line** is in the Church parking lot, off of Wilcox Park Drive. The **Gate Line** is near Children's Healing Center, off Fulton Street.
- At pick up, please put your last name on your front dashboard.
- Treat **Wilcox Park Drive** as a **ONE WAY street (westbound only).** Use **Hope Street** to travel eastbound.
- When exiting the parking lot, turn right onto Wilcox Park Drive. By creating this ONE WAY environment, we can make the beginning and end of our school days more relaxing for you and our neighbors.



Student information...

School supplies

School supplies are tools that help with learning. Check out the website for [lists of school supplies](#) (select Parents, then School Information, then Supply Lists) or the list that was mailed from your child's teacher.

Infinite Campus information

Infinite Campus is the student management system for all diocesan Catholic schools. This online system gives parents access to student attendance, grades, lunch account balances and report cards.

The Infinite Campus is <https://micloud1.infinitecampus.org/campus/portal/parents/grcss.jsp> Bookmark it or find it in the lower right corner of the school home page. New families will be given a user name and password for the Infinite Campus Student Management System during the first week of school.

Canvas information

Canvas is a learning management system that will let Saint Thomas students and parents easily navigate learning and expectations from any device. Log into Canvas at <https://canvas.grdiocese.org/>. Find a link to Canvas at the bottom of our school website. Here is a quick [Canvas app tutorial](#) and [navigating Canvas](#) video.

School lunch

We will return to paid hot lunch for this coming school year. Because of our partnership with West Catholic, we are able to keep lunch prices low and food quality high. There is again the opportunity for families to apply for the free and reduced lunch program. Please check out the links below for more details about this year's lunch program.

[Free and reduced lunch form](#)

[Food service payment instructions](#)

Classrooms that have a student with severe food allergies will post a notice of a specific allergens that could cause a life-threatening reaction. Classroom teachers will inform parents when there is a student with food allergies in the classroom to avoid known foods with allergens. Please check out our [Allergen and Health Snack Management Policy](#) for more information.

School uniform policy

Our uniform providers are My Aplus Uniforms and Lands' End. To order from My Aplus Uniforms, please visit the [My Aplus Uniforms website](#). To order Lands' End, visit the [Lands' End Saint Thomas Uniform Store](#). Any items in the Land End store are approved; items not available on this website are must be purchased from My A+ Uniforms. Here are [instructions for ordering uniforms from Lands' End](#) and the [Lands' End fit guide](#).

For information about our Uniform Policy, check out our [Saint Thomas School uniform policy](#) or contact the School Office with questions.

The last Tuesday of every month is a uniform holiday for Saint Thomas students. Please check these [uniform holiday guidelines](#) for clothing that students should avoid wearing even on uniform holidays.

Cell phone policy

Cell phones **are not allowed** in the classroom at Saint Thomas, unless permitted for assignments.

If your student needs to bring a cell phone or any other electronic personal device to school, their teacher will collect it and store it in the classroom during the entire school day.

Students who need to contact parents during the day must use the classroom or office phone. Likewise, a parent who needs to get a message to their student must call the school office and we will deliver the message.

Let's work together to eliminate unnecessary distractions!

Diocesan busing information

Grand Rapids Area Catholic Schools Transportation Consortium provides busing for students. Families must register each year by signing a new contract. If you have not registered and are interested, call Maureen in the Transportation office at 616-246-6470.

Home & School..

Home & School extends a warm welcome to all new and returning families. As a parent or guardian of a Saint Thomas student, YOU ARE A MEMBER of our Home & School Association.

We help build the bridge between home and school. We provides support for teachers, plan all-school social events, and help build community here at Saint Thomas. We have many opportunities for you to volunteer. Attend our Home & School meetings to find out how you can get involved.

On **Wednesday, August 23**, after drop off, stay and join us on the blacktop (in the Ministry Center if it rains). We'll provide donuts and coffee, followed by a Rosary and a short Home & School meeting.

We are looking forward to a great year ahead, and hope to have many people join us on Wednesday! Little ones, of course, are welcome. ~Genevieve Boyle, Home & School President

Virtus training

Protecting God's Children Awareness Sessions
If you are new to our school or still need to attend Virtus training (live or online). This is required for all school volunteers.

Online training is now available!

Upcoming virtual sessions:

St. Robert of Newminster Parish (virtual sessions)

6477 Ada Dr., Ada, Michigan

- Thursday, Aug. 17, 2023 at 1:30pm
- Tuesday, Aug. 29, 2023 at 6pm

Register online at www.virtus.org. On the left side of the page, select "First-Time Registrant." Then select "View a list of sessions." Click in the box stating "Select your organization." Scroll down and select "Grand Rapids, MI (Diocese)." Scroll down the page to see the locations. Go to the top of the page and select "Start Registration." Complete the registration.

Servant leaders

Servant leadership is a hallmark of what we do and who we are at Saint Thomas. Our students will participate in service to family, service to parish and service to community through our Saint Thomas serves service initiative.

We will focus on this initiative through daily chapel talks, reflection before Mass and during the celebration of Mass.

If you have service ideas or needs and/or would like to help organize additional service projects, contact Genevieve Boyle (Home & School president) at genevievemytb@gmail.com.

Job opportunities...

Office Manager

We are seeking a full time school office manager to perform a variety of support activities essential to a growing school. The ideal candidate will provide clerical support, manage a multitude of tasks simultaneously, be the first point of contact during the school day on both the phones and the main entrance, manage attendance database, process invoices, track hourly employees, schedule activities through our scheduling software, manage calendars, report illnesses to the health department, and other duties as necessary. If interested, please send a resume and cover letter to Cammi Lawrence (clawrence@stthomasgr.org).

Food service job opportunity

Part-time/ Food Service staff needed to prepare and serve school lunch at Saint Thomas during 2023-24 school year. Benefits include: same schedule as school (no evenings, weekends or holidays), summers off, support school community and get to know school staff and students. If you are interested, contact Marywieber@grwestcatholic.org.

Recess/Lunch/Aftercare/Sub needs

Come hang out at school, get to see your kid and earn some spending money. We're in need of the following: aftercare (subs), lunch supervisors, recess supervisors, substitute teachers. Email marygracetyrrell@stthomasgr.org if you are interested.

Required notifications...

Asbestos notification

To comply with the requirements of the EPA's Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act, all of the school buildings in the Diocese of GR have been inspected for asbestos containing materials. If you would like to review the Management Plan for Saint Thomas, it is available in the school office. The Management Plan will state recommended activities which will maintain the asbestos materials in a non-friable condition. ~ Ted Coon

Pesticide notification

As a part of our pest management program, pesticides are occasionally applied. You have the right to be informed prior to any pesticide application made to the grounds or buildings. In certain emergencies, pesticides may be applied without prior notice, but notice will be following any such application.

Immunization requirements...

State Law requires that each student entering Preschool, Kindergarten or a new school have a certificate of immunization on file at the time of registration or no later than the first day of school. In addition, Preschool students are required to have a physical dated within the past two years. Please see the immunizations required for all new students, preschoolers, kindergarteners and seventh grade students. **Preschool Requirements:** Up-to-date Immunizations Record on file. Signed Physical dated within the past two years. Consent for disclosure for immunization information on file. **Kindergarten Requirements:** Up-to-date Immunizations Record on file. Vision & Hearing Screening Record on file. Consent for disclosure for immunization information on file. **New Saint Thomas students:** Up-to-date Immunizations Record on file. Consent for disclosure for immunization information on file. **All 7th Grade Students:** Up-to-date Immunizations Record. Consent for disclosure for immunization information on file.

For more information, see the [Vaccines required for school entry](#) and the [Vaccines required for child care and preschool](#) from the State of Michigan.

Immunization Waiver: If you wish to obtain a non-medical religious or philosophical waiver, you must schedule an appointment at the Kent County Health Department by calling 616-632-7200.

Welcome littlest Hornets...

We want to welcome a few new members to our Saint Thomas community:

Ruby Patricia Beadling arrived July 26, 2023. Parents are Carissa and Patrick; proud siblings are Bryce and Lola.




James and Maxine Piszczatowski Bilbrey were born July 19, 2023. Parents are Marissa and Craig Bilbrey; proud siblings are Eliana, Charlotte and Lucy.



Matthew Kevin VanderHyde arrived on July 3. Parents are Katherine and Michael VanderHyde. Proud siblings are Martin, Thomas, Sophia, Edward, and Lillian.



Welcome, Ruby, James, Maxine and Matthew! You belong here!

Saint Thomas 
PICNIC
in the **PARK**
Sept. 17, 12-3pm
Wilcox Park