



Welcome back to Saint Thomas!

August 2024

Whether a new family or a returning family, we are excited for you to be here for the 2024-25 school year! This is going to be a joy-filled year as we celebrate the 100th anniversary of the founding of our School and Parish.

This [Welcome Family Handbook](#) provides you updated information you need as we move toward the start of the school year. It's a great refresher for returning families too. Our School Open House is scheduled for Monday, August 19 from 4-6pm. [Here is the 2024-25 school calendar](#). Gently used uniforms are available starting Monday, August 12. You are welcome to stop in and check them out and/or drop off any gently used uniforms. If you have a new student, don't forget to complete this [new student parent questionnaire](#) to help our teachers welcome your child.

So...Ready! Set! Go!

Below is an important list of what parents need to start the school year!

- **Supplies** — pack your supplies and bring them to Open House.
- **Med form** — If your child receives medication at school, please complete the [Parent Medication Consent Form](#) and bring it to Open House.
- **Athletic physicals** — If your child is participating in GRACEAC sports, they need to have a physical and a permission form on file. Bring copies to the Open House.
- **New security protocol** — When you visit the school during the school day, be prepared to scan your driver's license.
- **Hot lunch balances** — If you haven't already, you need to pay last year's lunch balance before school starts.
- **Remind 101** — sign up to receive school messages to your phone (instructions on page 2).
- **Big Buzz** — Make sure to read through this packet thoroughly so that you are ready for the school year.



Ryan Corcoran, Principal

Rejoice in the Lord ALWAYS and get ready for a great year!

Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School 2024-25 • You belong here!

Dynamic Education Centered in Christ

Important Dates in August/September...

Date	Event	Time	Location
August 19	School Open House	4-6pm	All classrooms
August 20	P3 Meet & Greets	Assigned times	Preschool Classroom/MC
August 21	First Day of school Grs 1-8 Home & School meeting, coffee/donuts K and P4 Meet & Greets	8am/3:20pm 8:15am Assigned times	Blacktop PreK/K classrooms
August 22	First Day of Kindergarten & Kindergarten Enrichment	8-11am/8-3:20pm	Kindergarten Classroom
August 26	First day of P4/First day of childcare	8-11 am/ 12:15-3:30pm	Preschool Classroom
August 27	First Day of P3 and P4 Enrichment Uniform holiday	8-11am/ 12:15-3:20pm	Preschool Classroom/MC
August 28	First day of P3 Enrichment	8-11am	Preschool Classroom/MC
Aug. 30-Sept 2	No School - Labor Day Holiday		
September 3	Middle School Orientation	6-7:30pm	Ministry Center
September 5/6	8th Grade Retreat		Camp Blodgett
September 18	New Family Parent Meeting	6-7:30pm	Ministry Center
September 18/19	School Pictures (Non-uniform day)		Library
September 22	Picnic in the Park	12-3pm	Wilcox Park

Check our online [2024-25 School 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.

[Sign up for Remind now.](#) You can sign up by texting the number 81010 with the message **@stafam5gr**. 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."

Medication

If your child will need to take medication (prescription or over-the-counter), parents will need to complete this [Parent Medication Consent Form](#). This form must be completed — including the doctor's signature — before the first day of school. We cannot administer meds without this completed form. Thank you for your cooperation.

Parent/visitor/volunteer check in

We have a new check-in process in the front office. All visitors, parents and volunteers must present their driver's license to be admitted to the school. When you visit the school, please be prepared to scan your driver's license. Thanks.

Teachers, staff and new families...

2024-2025 Teachers and Staff

Mrs. Veronica Perdue	Preschool and Aftercare Director
Mrs. Sheila Kelly	P3/Childcare
Mrs. Samantha Fair	Childcare Staff
Mrs. Sue Hieshetter	P4/CGS Teacher
Mrs. Bonnie Burke	Preschool Classroom Aide
Mrs. Emily Brunner	P4 Enrichment
Mrs. Mary Ann Bridge	Kindergarten
Mrs. Molly Mester	Kindergarten
Mrs. Katie Morrow	Kindergarten Classroom Aide
Mrs. Hilary Wilson	Kindergarten Classroom Aide
Mrs. Kate Casey	Grade 1
Mrs. Kelly Donohue	Grade 1
TBD	Grade 2
Mrs. Brenda Tietema	Grade 2/Grade 3 Multi-Age
Mrs. Abby VanDyke	Grade 3
Mrs. Kailey Malonek	Grade 4
Mrs. Amy Zakrajsek	Grade 4/5 Multi-Age
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
Ms. Emily Hunter	ESS Teacher
Mrs. Shawn Schuring	ESS Teacher
Mrs. Meg Sullivan	ESS Teacher
Mrs. Jeanne Walch	Enrichment Teacher
Mrs. Sue Edgerly	Librarian
Mrs. Kathy Proulx	Middle School Choir
Mr. Bill Bier	BAS Shared-Time Band
Mrs. Karen Williams	BAS Shared-Time Art
Mrs. Ashley Emmerson	BAS Shared-Time Physical Ed
Mrs. Becky (Keane) Lee	BAS Shared-Time Spanish
Ms. Jessica Trenshaw	BAS Shared-Time Technology
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. Danielle Boog	0-5 Programming
Mrs. Genevieve Boyle	0-5 Programming
Mrs. Erin Brede	0-5 Programming
Mrs. Bobbi Lopez	Admin. Asst. / Childcare Staff
Mrs. Shannon Godleski	School Lunch Manager

Welcome new students & families!

Ibrahim (5) and Joodi (8) Abbas Al Gburi
Bernadette Alcaraz-Mendez (K)
Teresa Bannister (8)
Samuel Berkemeier (P4)
Autry Bockheim (7)
Brooks Bowen (P3)
Collins (P4) and Lucy (K) Chun
Emmett Clark (K)
James Cooper (K)
Jude (P3) and Rafael (P3) Corcoran
Cora Cuevas (P3)
Giorgio Delgado (P3)
Charles Dutcher (K)
Esmee Eakin (P4)
Hannah Fey (P3)
Dominic Fredrickson (K)
Emma Gilmore (P3)
Patrick Goebel (P3)
Leona Grosch (P4)
Kellen Gurumendi (P4)
Claire (8) and Henry (5) Hines
Louie (P4) and Rory (3) Holmes
Jack Jennings (1)
Levi Johnston (P3)
Ignatius Jonaitis (P4)
Archie Keegan (P3)
Andrew (5) and Christopher (2) Knox
Weston Kohler (P4)
Benjamin (K), Caroline (3) and James (4) Leonard
Ari Lopez (P4)
Thomas Lynch (P4)
Weston Marino (K)
Gabriella (7), Grace (7) and Kain (2) Miller
Lucia Polderman (P3)
Juliet Schertzing (P4)
Grady Schneider (6)
Adelaide Schoettle (P4)
Joseph Sedore (4)
Briella Serba (K)
Roma Silengo (K)
Audrey Sneller (K)
Jonah Stoddard (7)
Tate Stoffer (P3)
Gabriel (4) and Mariana (8) Topie
Reuben Van Drunen (P3)
Jesse VanHaren (P4)
Anne Weeber (P4)



Front office

Mrs. Annie Cicotte	Administrative Assistant
Mrs. Liz Thoreson	Administrative Assistant
Mrs. Cammi Lawrence	Admissions/Marketing/Registrar
Mrs. Betsy Edgerton	Director of Dev./Outreach
Mr. Jeremiah Sluggett	Director of Teaching/Learning, AD
Mr. Ryan Corcoran	Principal

Daily Details...

School day schedule

Grades K-8

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

Lunch/Recess Schedule

K-1st recess	11:00-11:25 / lunch - 11:30-11:50
6th-8th recess	11:35-11:55 / lunch - 12:00-12:20
2nd-5th recess	12:00-12:25 / lunch - 12:30-12:50

3:17pm	End of Day Prayers
3:20pm	School dismissal

Preschool & Kindergarten

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



Don't be late...

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) or email (secretary@stthomasgr.org) 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. Turn on Infinite Campus notifications to be notified when your child is absent.

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 welcomed 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 welcomed to join us for Mass.

End of Day Prayer 3:17pm with a time for reflection and Examination of Conscience.

Parent Rosary, Mondays 8:15am, Grotto.

Hornets' Nest

The Saint Thomas After-School Program begins on the first day of school, Wednesday, Aug. 21 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).

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.

Preschool parking update

For the safety of our students and school, we have added a fence/gate where the blacktop meets Grace Street. This means that our preschool parking lot is smaller this year. Please be patient as this is a temporary arrangement until we move to the Early Childhood Center next year. We ask as many P4 parents as possible to park in the Church parking lot for both drop off and pick up.

Student information...

School supplies

School supplies are tools that help with learning. Your child should have received a list in the summer letter that was mailed from their homeroom 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

Because of our partnership with West Catholic, we are able to keep lunch prices low and food quality high. Menus come out monthly in the Buzz. And we offer a free salad bar for anyone everyday. 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 post a notice of a specific allergens that could cause a life-threatening reaction. Classroom teachers 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 (including smartwatches) 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.

Parent page...

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 21**, after drop off, stay and join us on the blacktop (in the Ministry Center if it rains). We'll provide the 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

- Monday, Aug. 26 at 6pm
- Monday, Sept. 16 at 1pm
- Thursday, Sept. 26 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.

School communication

The Buzz Newsletter is a 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 cell phone. [Sign up now.](#)

Facebook – www.facebook.com/saintthomasgr

Twitter feed – @SaintThomasGR

Instagram – SaintThomasGR

YouTube – Saint Thomas the Apostle GR

Teachers' newsletters – emailed weekly

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.

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.

New dental requirement...

Senate Bill 280 was signed into law in December 2023. Beginning in the 2024-2025 school year, a parent, guardian, or person in loco parentis who applied to have a child registered for the first time in kindergarten or first grade in a school in Michigan must comply with the following:

- Have a dentist or dental hygienist conduct a dental oral assessment on the child not earlier than six months before the date of the child's registration with the school and obtain from the dentist or dental hygienist a written statement certifying that the child has received the dental oral assessment.
- If the parent, guardian, or person in loco parentis of the child does not meet the requirements described above, the individual must ensure that the government entity or person selected by the DHHS conducts a dental oral assessment on the child.

Beginning in the 2024-2025 school year, a parent, guardian, or person in loco parentis who applies to have a child registered for the first time in kindergarten or first grade in a school in Michigan must present to school officials, at the time of registration but not later than the first day of school, one of the following:

- 1) a statement of religious exemption to the bill's requirement OR
- 2) the statement from a dental professional described above OR
- 3) a written statement indicating that the parent, guardian, or person in loco parentis will provide for the child's dental oral assessment by the DHHS's program. A child cannot be excluded from school attendance if the parent, guardian, or person in loco parentis of the child does not present a statement described above to school officials on or before the first day of school.

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.

Upcoming events...



Sunday, September 22 — Picnic at Wilcox Park Kick off to our yearlong celebration!

A family-friendly fall bash for the entire Parish, School and neighborhood community. Knights of Columbus will be grilling again so lunch is on us. There will be live entertainment from some of Saint Thomas' very best. Games, activities, food trucks, and yes.... the dunk tank is back!

Sunday, September 29 to Saturday, October 5 — Silent Virtual Auction

There is no cost to participate. Register for the silent auction online and start bidding. All proceeds from this silent auction go directly to our Home and School Association providing our students and school resources, supplies, field trips and family events.

Saturday, October 5 — Roaring '20s Auction Gala

Our largest and most impactful fundraiser for our Parish and School. A roaring great time for parents, parishioners, grandparents, alumni, and friends. Strolling dinner, drinks, photobooth, dancing and live auction event. Optional costumes from the 1920's are welcome! Tickets are selling fast so make sure to get yours today at <https://cbo.io/tickets/sta/Auction>

You belong here!

