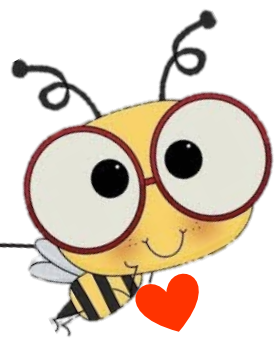


WHAT'S BUZZING AROUND THE HALLS OF SAINT THOMAS?

# The BUZZ

DYNAMIC EDUCATION CENTERED IN CHRIST



a century of Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School • 1925-2025

August 2025

## Welcome back to Saint Thomas!

Welcome to our new families and welcome back to our returning families. You belong here! We are excited for the many blessings God has in store for us in the 2025-26 school year. This is going to be a joy-filled year as we continue to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the founding of our School and Parish – which includes a new preschool building, a new pastor and a new pope! And that leads us to our theme for the 2025-26 school year – *God makes all things new!*

Our School Open House is scheduled for **Monday, August 18 from 4-6pm**. Here is the [2025-26 school calendar](#). Gently used uniforms will be available during Open House or stop by the office any time during the day. Drop off gently used uniforms at any time during the day at the front office.

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

- [Principal's Summer Letter](#)
- **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 [sports physical form](#) and a permission form on file. Bring copies to the Open House.
- **Remind 101** — sign up to receive school messages to your phone by texting @stafam3gr to number 81010.
- [Safety FAQs](#)

Ryan Corcoran, Principal



## Important dates in August / September

August 18	School Open House	4-6pm	All classrooms
August 20	P3 Meet & Greet	Assigned times	Preschool Center
August 20	First Day of school Grs 1-8 Home & School meeting, coffee/donuts K and P4 Meet & Greet	8am/3:20pm 8am Assigned times	Blacktop P4/K classrooms
August 21	First Day of Kindergarten & Kindergarten Enrichment	8-11am/8-3:20pm	K Classroom
August 25	First day of P4/First day of childcare	8-11 am/ 12:15-3:30pm	Preschool Center
August 26	First Day of P3 Uniform holiday	8-11am	Preschool Center
August 28	First day of P3 Wednesday Add On	8-11am	Preschool Center
Aug. 29-Sept 1	No School - Labor Day Holiday		
September 3	Middle School Orientation	6-7:30pm	Ministry Center
September 5	STA Tailgate at CC football game	5pm – gametime	The CAT
September 11/12	8th Grade Retreat		Camp Blodgett
September 17/18	School Pictures (Non-uniform day)		Library
September 18	New Family Parent Meeting	6-7:30pm	Ministry Center
Oct. 14-17	Fall Book Fair		Library

Check our online [2025-26 School Calendar](#) for more!

## Back to School Information

### School phone numbers

Main school (616) 458-4228  
Preschool (616) 965-3944

### Remind 101

We use a text system to notify parents of school closings and other important Saint Thomas information. Sign up by texting @stafam3gr to number 81010.

### Medication

If your child will need to take medication, parents will need to complete this [Parent Medication Consent Form](#). This form must be completed before the first day of school. If it's a prescription medication, we must have doctor's signature. We cannot administer meds without this completed form.

### Parent/visitor/volunteer check in

We will continue our electronic check-in process. All visitors, parents and volunteers must present their driver's license to be admitted. When you visit the school, please be prepared to scan your driver's license.

## 2025-2026 Teachers and Staff

Mrs. Veronica Perdue	Preschool and Aftercare Director
Ms. Sheila Kelly	P3/Childcare
Mrs. Sue Hieshetter	Catechesis of the Good Shepherd
Mrs. Bonnie Burke	Preschool Classroom Aide
Mrs. Emily Brunner	P4
Ms. Emily Warriner	Y5/Preschool Plus
Mrs. Mary Ann Bridge	Kindergarten
Mrs. Molly Mester	Kindergarten
Mrs. Kelly Donohue	Grade 1
Mrs. Kate Casey	Grade 2
Mrs. Jacky Suckow	Grade 2
Mrs. Brenda Tietema	Grade 3
Mrs. Abby VanDyke	Grade 3
Ms. Kallen Leeseburg	Grade 4
Mrs. Amy Zakrajsek	Grade 4/5 Multi-Age
Mr. Mike Mester	Grade 5
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 Dahlquist	Director of Educational Support
Mrs. Cathy Buehler	ESS Teacher
Mrs. Cheryl Coderre	ESS Teacher
Mrs. Katie Morrow	ESS Teacher
Ms. Marley Shelton	ESS Teacher
Mrs. Shawn Schuring	ESS Teacher
Mrs. Meg Sullivan	ESS Teacher
Mrs. Jeanne Walch	Enrichment Teacher
Mrs. Sue Edgerly	Librarian
Mr. Kyle Radigan	Shared-Time Music/MS Choir
Mr. Bill Bier	Shared-Time Band
Mrs. Karen Williams	Shared-Time Art
Mrs. Ashley Emmerson	Shared-Time Physical Ed
Mr. Juan Carlos Soberanes	Shared-Time Spanish
Ms. Jessica Trenshaw	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	Family Liaison
Mrs. Erin Brede	Outreach Coordinator
Mrs. Shannon Godleski	School Lunch Manager
Mrs. Liz Thoreson	Administrative Assistant
Mrs. Katie Lewis	Office/Communications Coordinator

## Welcome new students and families!

Noah (P4) and Piero (7) Acosta  
 Damian Alfaro (P4)  
 Abigail Berhane (K)  
 Lucy Bilbrey (P3)  
 Amelia (P3) and Michael (P4) Bozio  
 Leo Combs (P4)  
 Ryker Dakoske (P3)  
 Thomas DeVasto (Y5)  
 Gabriella Dutcher (P3)  
 Pia Franco (P3)  
 Declan (Y5) and Lorraine (3) Gorski  
 Simon Grosch (P4)  
 Iris Huff (P3)  
 Ezra Johnston (P3)  
 Simon Kammel (P3)  
 Archie Keegan (P4)  
 Joan Kennedy (P3)  
 Winifred Kirvan (Y5)  
 Sage Koepke (P4)  
 Benjamin Kohler (P3)  
 Alden (2) and Jackson (K) Lehmkuhl  
 Eric Lewis (2)  
 Frank Lis (P3)  
 Hayes Marino (P3)  
 Carter McDaniel (P4)  
 Jayden Medlin (K)  
 Dominic Modelski (P3)  
 Manuel Osorio (7)  
 Louis (P3) and Theodore (P3) Paszkowski  
 Marion Roskam (K)  
 Lucy Shoettle (P3)  
 Evelyn Scott (P4)  
 Braelyn Serba (Y5)  
 Cassian Shankin (P3)  
 Evelyn Stoddard (3)  
 Sinead Sullivan (P4)  
 Fiona Terranova (Y5)  
 Lucia Topie (K)  
 Brighton (4) and Dulcie (2) Webster  
 Maxwell Wedberg (6)  
 Walter Wicksall (P3)  
 Elise Williams (K)  
 Tommy Williams (P4)  
 Balian Woodbeck (P4)

Mrs. Cammi Lawrence	Director of Admissions/Registrar
Mr. Jeremiah Sluggett	Director of Teaching/Learning, AD
Mr. Ryan Corcoran	Principal

# Daily Details

## School day schedule

### Grades K-8

8am School begins at Chapel

8:15am 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

8:05-11:05am

P3, P4, Y5

11:05am-12:30pm

Lunch Bunch

12:30-3:30pm

Childcare / Preschool Plus

## Saint Thomas Masses

For our community and any school families who would like to attend, here is the weekly Saint Thomas Mass schedule:

Monday – NO MASS

Tuesday – 7am Mass

**Wednesday – 8:15am School Mass (all are welcome)**

Thursday – 7pm Mass at St. Stephens

Friday – 7 am Mass

1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of the month only – 8am Mass

## Weekly School Mass

Wednesday, 8:15am, Grades 1-8

[School Mass Schedule](#)

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

**End of Day Prayer 3:17pm** with a time for reflection and

## Hornets' Nest

Hornets' Nest, our after-care program, will be held in the new preschool building this year. It runs 3:30-5:30 pm. Students attending Hornets' Nest will be escorted by a Saint Thomas staff member to the preschool building after school.

Anyone who will be attending Hornets' Nest needs to turn in their paperwork by Monday evening at the Open House. Mrs. Perdue will have extra forms available in the preschool building. Check out the [Hornets' Nest letter](#) for more info.

## Don't be late...

School begins at 8am. Students must be on time to ensure a safe start to the day. After 8am, the administration and staff cannot be present at the gate or car line. The church will be locked once chapel starts at 8am. If you are late, escort your child to the main office door. Ring the bell and your child will be admitted into the school.

## ...but not too early!

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

## And if you're absent...

Call the main office (616-458-4228) or email [secretary@stthomasqr.org](mailto:secretary@stthomasqr.org) 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.**

## Student drop off/pick up

Students must NEVER be dropped off on Wilcox Park Drive. **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 the new preschool building, 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.** Parents should not use Grace Street for parking, as the back gate will be locked during school hours.

## Preschool parking update

The outside lane of the Gate Line's north loop will be used for gate line pick up and drop off. The inside lane of the north loop will be used for preschool pick up and drop off. There will be spots in front of the preschool entrance for parents to drop off their children. Parents will not need to walk their preschoolers in – a teacher will meet you at your parked car. Preschool drop off and pick up will be staggered by five minutes.

# Parent Information

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 provide 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 20**, 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 are available if you are new to our school or still need to attend Virtus training (live or online). This is required for all school volunteers. If you've taken Virtus somewhere else, please contact the school office and let them know:

- Where you took Virtus (City, State and Diocese)
- What your name was when you took it
- What your current address is.

We can get Saint Thomas added to your Virtus profile, but we need the bulleted information above.

If you haven't taken Virtus, you can register online at [www.virtus.org](http://www.virtus.org). Here are some [Virtus instructions](#).

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.

**Online training is now available!** The online training is at the bottom of the dropdown menu when choosing a training. The online training takes a little more than an hour to complete.

## Volunteer opportunities

We have lots of volunteer opportunities. Once you've completed your Virtus training, contact the front office to find out how you can share your gifts and talents with our community. We're currently looking for recess and lunch supervisors (free salad bar for any lunch supervisor!).

## 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 by texting 81010 to @stafam3gr

Facebook – [www.facebook.com/saintthomasgr](http://www.facebook.com/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 [genevieveymtb@gmail.com](mailto:genevieveymtb@gmail.com).



## Student information...

### School supplies

School supplies are tools that help with learning. Your child should have received a list in the summer letter from their homeroom teacher. If you did not receive a supply list or teacher letter, please contact the office.

### Infinite Campus

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 link 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. To be notified when your child is absent or tardy, please turn on your notification settings in the Infinite Campus app.

### Canvas

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](#).

### 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/Smartwatch policy

Cell phones and smartwatches **are not allowed** in the classroom at Saint Thomas. If students need to bring a cell phone or smartwatch or any other electronic personal device (anything that connects to the internet) to school, their teacher will collect them and store them 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

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



# LUNCH information

## Lunch updates

- The new lunch price is \$3.50
- Doubles are still an option for an additional \$2.00. Doubles are not covered by free and reduced qualification.
- Starting after Labor Day, students will have an alternative entree option. This means the main entree will still change each day but now there will be an alternative option. The alternative option will rotate weekly. For example Monday is hamburgers, Tuesday is chicken nuggets and for the whole week students can opt for turkey sandwiches if they do not like the entree for the day.

## Salad bar is back!

We offer a free salad bar everyday in the lunchroom, for any student (even those who do not order hot lunch) and for anyone who volunteers in the lunch room.

## Ordering school lunches

Every morning, teachers will ask their students who would like hot lunch. If your student arrives late, they should tell the front office if they want hot lunch. We offer a free salad bar daily to encourage our students to have healthy eating habits.

Please see the **important** links below:

[Free and reduced lunch form](#)

[Food service payment instructions](#)

Classrooms that have a student with severe food allergies post a notice of a specific allergen 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.

## Lunch menu

Our monthly lunch menu will be posted in the Buzz newsletter on Fridays. Here are the first months' menus:

- [August 2025 lunch menu](#)
- [September 2025 lunch menu](#)



## 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 EPA's Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act, the school buildings in the Diocese of GR have been inspected for asbestos. If you would like to review the STA Management Plan, it is available in the school office. The Management Plan will state recommended activities that 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.



# Saint Thomas TAILGATE PARTY!

at the Catholic Central football game

When? **Friday, Sept. 5, 5pm** until game time

Where? Catholic Central Football Game  
The GAT (2770 Knapp St. NE, Grand Rapids)

Who? Sponsored by our **Saint Thomas Education Foundation and Boosters** for all Saint Thomas students and their families

Details: Look for the Saint Thomas flag in the CC parking lot. We'll provide pizza, popcorn and candy. Feel free to bring snacks to share! Bring your own drinks. Meet the Boosters and get more information about Saint Thomas athletics. Join us for fall football fun!



*You belong here!*