



COMMUNITY HANDBOOK 2017-18

"Do not be afraid. Do not be satisfied with mediocrity. Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch."

Pope St. John Paul II

St. Thomas More Academy (STMA) offers a Catholic classical college preparatory education grounded in the great conversations of history and ordered to truth. Students work in a joyful and faithful community that nurtures human excellence. Graduates are formed as whole persons with high ethical standards and superior skills and sent out to love and serve as Christian disciples.

WELCOME!

1. STMA offers students in grades 9-12 an opportunity to profit from robust Catholic formation and superior academic instruction in a safe, orderly, beautiful, and productive environment. We value sound character and high achievement. Clear and consistent standards and expectations have been established in the school to inspire excellent outcomes. Students who are alert, cooperative, and willing to work hard will thrive and gain their education's lasting worth.
2. Questions or concerns about a student's experience must be directed first to the nearest competent authority (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, ¶1883). Depending on the activity, this is ordinarily the classroom teacher, coach, or club leader. Because of our commitment to subsidiarity questions and concerns that are not directed first to the nearest competent authority are always redirected.
3. STMA's program of studies is deeply intentional and tightly designed. Courses, curriculum, assignments, pace, math placements, academic and disciplinary protocols, house rules, and other school policies are not open to waiver or modification.
4. The Registrar assigns students to courses. Teacher and section assignments are definitive for core and support courses. Students may request elective changes up to 3PM on Friday of the second full week of classes. Changes are at the Registrar's discretion.
5. Students may not take courses for credit at STMA if those courses have already been completed elsewhere. Rising sophomores who have completed Algebra 1 at STMA may request to take summer Geometry elsewhere in the interests of enrolling in sophomore Algebra 2. Permission is at the Registrar's discretion.
6. Most core courses offer honors options. Electives do not. Students who pursue our

accelerated math track are enrolled with honors designation in those courses by default. Students may request honors designation in other courses up to 3PM on Friday of the second full week of classes. (Requests go to the teacher.) Honors credit requires a grade of 77 or better on the course's honors examination and for the course. Otherwise the student earns standard credit. Examinations can be taken only once.

7. For many students the annual Dean's Seminar is STMA's most rigorous learning opportunity. Enrollment is selective and requires a history of superior classroom performance. These seminars carry honors credit, but do not require honors examinations. A course grade of 77 or better is required for honors credit.

8. We respect the student's activities and commitments around home, church, and community. Academic loads have been carefully regulated. Most of the student's work at home is reading and periodic writing. Courses in mathematics, science, grammar, and foreign language require other out-of-class work ("homework") that is designed for completion in school during structured study periods. These assignments are ordered to success on graded quizzes. To take a quiz for credit in these subjects a student must complete all out-of-class work that has been assigned for the quiz. These subjects permit two (2) quiz drops per semester at the semester's end.

9. STMA grades on a traditional 4.0 scale. Students and families can review grades, formation notes, due dates for high-value assignments, syllabi, and the Registrar's quarterly grade reports on Renweb. The Registrar reviews full student results at the end of each academic year. The chief metrics of assessment are course grades and cumulative GPA over STMA courses.

10. Course failures are rare. If a student fails a course he or she must pass faculty-directed summer remediation within the teacher's strictly specified timeline to advance in the school. If a student merits more than two (2) failing course grades or posts a cumulative GPA below 1.33 at the end of an academic year she or he cannot advance.

11. A cumulative GPA below 2.00 always signals a critical need for improvement. A minimum cumulative 2.00 GPA is required to advance from the junior to the senior year. To retain scholarship support from STMA a funded student must post a minimum cumulative 2.00 GPA at the end of his or her first year and a minimum 2.33 thereafter.

12. STMA forms students for success in college and professional vocations. We expect students to arrive on time or early to classes, to avoid excessive time out, to meet deadlines, and to maintain proper comportment. Students are to be alert, attentive, and respectful in class. Class disruption is not allowed. Students are also to avoid exclusivity and coupling on campus and at school events.

13. Parents/guardians, students, and staff represent the school across many venues, including the Internet, on which even stray words become permanent. Online postings (e.g., in social media) must not be contrary to STMA's core values regardless of where the postings originate.

14. Honor and integrity are highly prized. All may expect to hear the truth, and all are expected to tell the truth. Academic impropriety is contrary to Gospel values. The faculty honor committee reviews any alleged issues and refers findings to the Dean of Studies.

15. STMA permits students to miss ten (10) school days per academic year. Early departures and late arrivals accrue toward the total allowance. Use of the absence allowance is entirely at parent/guardian discretion. Excessive absences undermine key outcomes and can invalidate the study year. Limited accommodation is possible only for serious cause and is at administrative discretion.

16. We understand that brief professional appointments might sometimes need to be scheduled during school hours despite best efforts to schedule them at other times. The Registrar waives this time out when the student provides a written note from the attending professional.

17. The Registrar must have parent/guardian permission to release a student from school during school hours. A student can only be released to a parent/guardian or to a person the student's parent/guardian has approved in Renweb. A self-driving student may leave and return to campus during school hours only for a professional appointment. Students may leave classroom instruction for phone calls only for grave and urgent reasons.

18. If a student is absent from class when a paper is due he or she must submit the paper to the teacher electronically no later than 8AM on the due day. Otherwise the teacher will deduct one letter grade that day and each day thereafter until the paper is submitted. If a student is absent from class on a day that one of the course tests is given he or she must make up the test before the second class after the absence. Otherwise the teacher will deduct one letter grade after that class and each day thereafter until the test is completed.

19. All document requests (including reference requests) require three (3) weeks' notice to the person being asked to fulfill the request. STMA cannot ensure on-time delivery of documents without adequate notice. Requests without adequate notice may be declined. All teachers require guarantees of confidentiality for student references and only provide references directly to reviewers. Student records (including transcripts) are released only if all financial accounts with the school are settled at release.

20. STMA's top-quality programs in humanities, math, science, and the arts prepare students for success in a competitive market. All seniors are expected to cooperate with school placement activities and to secure a four-year college admission. Most graduates opt first to attend college, though some discern that other directions are best. Graduates have STMA's enduring support wherever their paths lead.

21. Graduation from STMA requires 34 STMA credits from students who have attended the school all four years. The Registrar evaluates transfer credits case-by-case. Graduation also requires a minimum cumulative 2.00 GPA over all STMA courses and a minimum grade of 77 on the senior thesis.

22. STMA awards "Latin" honors to qualifying seniors who complete at least four (4)

semesters in the school. *Summa cum laude* requires a minimum GPA of 3.89, *magna cum laude* 3.78, and *cum laude* 3.67. Valedictory and salutatory honors are decided on GPA over STMA courses at spring mid-term of the senior year. Eligibility requires seven (7) semesters of study in the school.

23. Participation in extracurricular organizations and activities is a valuable privilege at STMA. Studies come first. A student who posts a failing grade on a quarterly Registrar's report may not participate until he or she elevates the grade to passing on the next report. With exception for professional appointments, a student must attend school for a full day on the day of an extracurricular event to participate. Extracurricular organizations may establish their own unique standards, e.g., around GPA, quality of contribution, etc. These standards are at the discretion of faculty advisers.

24. STMA's athletics program offers strong witness to the school's core values. For policies and protocols students and families are directed to the *Athletics Handbook*. Teachers are unable to supervise students at public events and gatherings off-campus. Parents/guardians are the proper resource.

25. STMA does not charge a materials fee, but there are fees for field trips, athletics, and some classes and clubs. Textbooks are provided for most core courses in mathematics and science. Charges are assessed if there is significant damage upon return. Each student must have a personal TI-83+ or TI-84 graphing calculator. Courses often require book purchases. Online readings are routine. Students must have computer and printer access outside of school.

“Remember the precept that St. John the Evangelist used to give to his disciples: ‘Love one another.’ [This] is not a mere exhortation, but a command . . . Be good to one another.”

St. John Bosco

26. The fundamental expectation pertaining to conduct in the STMA community is the Gospel rule of love toward God and neighbor. It encompasses all personal interactions that might occur in the community among parents/guardians, students, and staff. The question is always whether or not one has expressed Christian charity in word and deed.

27. Teachers will intervene if students manifest problematic attitudes or behaviors. Teachers cannot notify parents/guardians in advance of all interventions, but they will convey via Renweb formation notes the details of interventions undertaken and resolutions achieved. This prompt, personal, and solution-oriented process resolves challenges quickly and empowers best outcomes.

28. A teacher might determine that a student's conduct is grave enough to warrant disciplinary referral to the Dean of Studies. Referrals are rare. Depending on the presenting issue(s), the Dean's responses may range from counsel to indefinite suspension from STMA.

29. STMA's founder and leaders endorse values that are proper to a Catholic classical preparatory school. The school's teachers and staff are engaged in a shared labor for the good of young people. By freely enrolling, parents/guardians and students express aspiration toward and support for the ends of the STMA education and signal trust in the school and intended cooperation with school expectations. Antagonism toward school policies or persons conflicts with the Gospel and undermines key outcomes. (See *Galatians* 5:20.) The student who is not profiting from his or her learning opportunities at STMA merits serious concern as well. (See *Matthew* 25:14-30.) These situations require prompt resolution in accord with administrative counsel.

30. As a private school STMA may dismiss a student at any time. The Headmaster's decisions around enrollment are final; there is no right or process of appeal.

31. Notice regarding non-scheduled school closures is available on WRAL television, at wral.com, at <http://stmacademy.org>, via text from Remind 101, and on the school's Facebook page.

32. STMA requires the parents/guardians of enrolled students to submit a signed Community Handbook Statement of Support. The Registrar provides this form to all parents/guardians before the start of classes each fall. A student who does not have a signed form on file by Friday, August 18, 2017 may not attend classes until one is submitted.

The 2017-18 Community Handbook abrogates and supersedes any prior statements of STMA policy.

Top STMA Student Outcomes

Love of God	Continuous Learner
Love of Neighbor	Competent Technical Skills
Love of Church	Ability to Find the Best Solutions and Outcomes
Love of History	Cooperative and Contributive Team Member
Love of Beauty	Strong Work Ethics
Unfailing Integrity	Dreams and Aspirations to Change the World
Virtuous Leader with Well-Developed Judgment	Traditional American Values and Entrepreneurialism
Self-Reliant Individual	Well-Developed People and Communication Skills
Truth-Seeker	Gratitude
Critical Thinker and Problem Solver	Healthy Mind, Body, and Spirit

Grading Scale

Grade	Numerical	Narrative	Standard Credit	Honors Credit
A	95-100	Truly exceptional; meets or exceeds highest expectations	4.0	4.33
A-	93-94	Outstanding work; superior across all course areas	3.667	4.0
B+	91-92	Very good; superior across most course areas	3.333	3.667
B	87-90	Good; solid across most course areas	3.0	3.333
B-	85-86	Good, but falls short of solid in in most course areas	2.667	3.0
C+	83-84	Meets all basic expectations	2.333	2.667
C	79-82	Acceptable; meets most basic expectations	2.0	2.333
C-	77-78	Meets a minority of basic expectations	1.667	2.0
D	70-76	Minimally acceptable	1.0	N/A
F	<70	Unacceptable	0	N/A

House Rules

Just as any home has rules around the ordinary day-to-day, so STMA has house rules. A few are especially important to understand from the beginning of the student's experience.

If a student chooses to bring a personal electronic device (phone, tablet, etc.) on campus it must be stowed in the student's assigned locker and turned off from arrival to 3PM. STMA accepts no liability for devices brought on campus.

On-campus filming and photography and use of STMA's logo or name all require administrative permission. Class audio recording is not permitted.

All student medications (including over-the-counter pain relievers) must be deposited with the Registrar for secure storage, together with written parent/guardian instructions.

Each student is assigned a school locker. Large backpacks and other personal belongings should be stored in the assigned locker. Bags must not be left in areas of the school that see steady traffic (e.g., bathrooms, hallways, the center, etc.). Supplemental storage is also available for sports gear.

Students may not engage in gaming and frivolous activities on school computers. School printers are exclusively for faculty use.

All non-student visitors to campus must sign in at the front desk.

Smoking and smoking products are prohibited on campus and at all school functions. Gum chewing is not permitted on campus. Eating during classes is only allowed for verified medical reasons.

STMA's facilities are a gift. Students express gratitude by keeping all spaces (including assigned lockers) clean, neat, and undamaged. Items cannot be taped to the outside of lockers. Trash must never be scattered in the buildings or on the grounds. All students are expected to participate fully in school cleanups.

A student who cannot stay awake during class or on-campus events will need to go home for the day.

Proper STMA dress and demeanor is crisp, professional, and modest at school and at all school events.

The full dress uniform is required on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Full dress consists of the black blazer with crest (sewn to blazer pocket) for grades 9-10 and the maroon blazer with crest for grades 11-12, charcoal gray trousers with black belt (young women may wear the knee-length charcoal gray or plaid skirt instead), the white long- or short-sleeved Oxford shirt, black socks, and closed-toe black dress shoes. Young women may wear flats or low-heeled shoes. Young men wear the wine-striped necktie. Juniors begin wearing the maroon blazer after the annual Convocation Mass.

The full dress uniform is optional on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. The blazer is optional. Optional dress allows not only the full dress variations, but also black trousers for young men and women, knee-length black kilts/skirts for young women, and not only the white Oxford shirt, but also the white, wine, or gray STMA polo. The wine sweater, sweater vest, or fleece jacket may be worn as well.

The required vendor for STMA apparel is Flynn & O'Hara, at (800) 441-4122 and www.flynnohara.com.

When on campus students must wear the day's uniform with shirts properly tucked and buttoned. Jewelry or other accessories should be simple and subdued. Students may change out of uniform on campus only when participating in an athletic event, outdoor class, or club that requires other dress.

The Headmaster's judgments around the suitability of dress and demeanor are determinative and final.

Course of Studies

	<i>First Year</i>	<i>Sophomore</i>	<i>Junior</i>	<i>Senior</i>
<i>Trivium</i>	Grammar and Writing	Logic and Rhetoric	Introduction to Philosophy	Advanced Topics in Humanities, Senior Tutorial
<i>History</i>	Ancient History	Medieval History	Modern European History	American History
<i>Literature</i>	Ancient Literature	Medieval Literature	Modern European Literature	American Literature
<i>Theology</i>	Studies in Scripture	Introduction to Catholicism	Church History, Moral Theology	Bioethics, Catholic Traditions in Economics
<i>Language</i>	Latin 1	Latin 2	Latin 3 or Spanish 1 or French 1	Latin 4 or Spanish 2 or French 2
<i>Mathematics</i>	Algebra 1 or Geometry or Algebra 2	Geometry or Algebra 2 or Precalculus	Algebra 2 or Precalculus or Calculus 1	Precalculus or Statistics or Calculus 1 or Advanced Math
<i>Sciences</i>	Biology	Chemistry	Physics	Advanced Topics in Science, Senior Tutorial
<i>Electives</i>	n/a	Four (4), varied	Four (4), varied	Four (4), varied
<i>Support Courses</i>	STMA Orientation, Introduction to Technology	n/a	SAT Prep, Non-Cognitive and Technical Skills 1, College Workshop	Non-Cognitive and Technical Skills 2

Staff 2017-18

Deacon Brad Watkins, Headmaster (M.F.A., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)
Wesley Kirkpatrick, Dean of Studies (Ph.D., University of Notre Dame)
Jake Noland, Supervising Instructor (Ph.D., Texas A&M University)
Ann Cureton, Registrar (B.A., University of North Carolina at Wilmington)
Randall Blessing, Math and Sciences (M.S., Creighton University)
Luisana Briceno, Humanities (B.S., University of Zulia)
Kristy Chandler, Humanities and Fine Arts (M.S., North Carolina State University)
Joel Decker, Humanities (M.Div., Duke University)
Christina Geradts, Humanities (B.A., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)
Mattison Hale, Humanities (M.T.S., Boston College)
Kelly Jackson, Math (M.S., Georgia Institute of Technology)
Kate Kirkpatrick, Humanities and Sciences (B.A., Franciscan University)
Adriana Lee, Business (M.B.A., University of Virginia)
Metta Longo, Math (B.A., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)
Charles McCants, Humanities (M.T.S., Duke University)
Emily Nye, Humanities (M.T.S., University of Notre Dame)
Kell Peterson, Humanities (Ph.D. Candidate, University of Wales Trinity Saint David)
Joseph Rankin, Math (M.S., Franciscan University)
Jeff Rice, Humanities and Fine Arts (B.A., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)
Dan Rolando, Math and Sciences (M.S., North Carolina State University)

“If we want to have a good society we must concentrate all our forces on the Christian education of the young.”

St. John Bosco
