



STUDENT HANDBOOK

2011-2012

THE ACADEMY'S MISSION

St. Thomas More Academy is pleased to continue the vital tradition of Catholic preparatory education by integrating a gold standard academic curriculum with the deepest spiritual wisdom of Catholic Christianity. We prepare our students in a dynamic and joyful learning community to assume leadership roles as responsible, compassionate and contributing members of society. Our ultimate goal is to empower our students as whole persons to love and serve God as Christ's disciples.

OUR PATRON AND OUR IDENTITY

"The King's good servant, but God's first." (St. Thomas More)

One of the greatest scholars and leaders in 16th century Europe, St. Thomas More stood boldly for Catholic truth while remaining richly engaged in the increasingly secular society of his native England. He left behind an enduring legacy of Catholic excellence that is our model at St. Thomas More Academy. Our graduates are urged to form examined lives and to engage boldly in the world as Christian leaders in what Pope John Paul II called the "new evangelization" of the 21st century.

Prayer of St. Thomas More

O Lord, give us a mind that is humble, quiet, peaceable, patient and charitable, and a taste of your Holy Spirit in all our thoughts, words, and deeds. Give us a lively faith, a firm hope, a fervent charity, a love of you. Take from us all lukewarmness in meditation and all dullness in prayer. Give us fervor and delight in thinking of you, your grace, and your tender compassion toward us. Give us, good Lord, the grace to work for the things we pray for.

PROGRAM OF STUDIES

"Reason is by study, labor, and exercise of logic, philosophy, and other liberal arts corroborate and quickened; and the judgment . . . much ripened." (St. Thomas More)

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

FIRST YEAR

Algebra I or Geometry
Arts Studio (M, Th)
Biology
Classical History
Classical Literature
Grammar
Introduction to the Arts (F)
Introduction to Catholicism
Latin I
Math and Science Lab (F)
St. Thomas More Course (W)

SECOND YEAR

Arts Elective (F)
Chemistry
Elective
Geometry or Algebra II
Jewish and Christian Scriptures
Latin II
Math and Science Lab (F)
Western Canon
Western History
Writing Methods

THIRD YEAR

Arts Elective (F)
Algebra II or Advanced Mathematics
American History
American Literature
Elective
History of the Church
Latin III or Modern Language I (immersion)
Logic and Rhetoric
Math and Science Lab (F)
Physics

FOURTH YEAR

Advanced Mathematics or Calculus
British Literature
Economics and Government
Elective
Latin IV or Modern Language II
Math and Science Lab (F)
Moral Theology
Philosophy
Senior Tutorial (F)

Electives

Strong academic electives are a distinctive feature of the Academy's curriculum. Students ordinarily take six semester-length electives during their four years of studies. These valuable courses enrich the student's preparatory experience and position for college placement success.

Elective topics vary term to term. *Bastiat and Pieper, Christianity in Japan, Linear Algebra, Marine Biology, Plato's Republic, The Middle East Since 1914, Select Choir, Shakespeare, and The Limits of Technology* are just some of the fine courses that have filled the Academy's electives curriculum in recent semesters.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

“One of the greatest problems of our time is that many are schooled but few are educated.” (St. Thomas More)

“All who have meditated on the art of governing mankind have been convinced that the fate of empires depends on the education of youth.” (Aristotle)

The Academy strives to provide a gold standard Catholic college preparatory education. STMA is a highly academic institution with appropriately high standards.

Evaluation of Performance

Student performance is evaluated on a 4.5 base scale. Enhanced credit is available for Honors/AP courses.

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Percentile</u>	<u>Standard Credit</u>	<u>Honor/AP Credit</u>
A+	98-100%	4.5	5
A	93-97%	4	4.5
B+	90-92%	3.5	4
B	85-89%	3	3.5
C+	82-84%	2.5	3
C	78-81%	2	2.5
D+	75-77%	1.5	2
D	70-74%	1	1.5
F	below 70	0	0

Each academic year comprises two semesters, each of which has two quarters. Each quarter grade is valued as 40% toward the relevant semester grade. The semester examination is valued at 20%. Final course grades are determined by averaging the results of the fall and spring semesters.

Semester examinations provide instructors with a tool for determining whether a student has mastered the subject. Serious indisposition is the only suitable cause for absence from semester examinations. Accordingly, permission to miss a semester examination is granted only by the Headmaster.

Note that a student's *minimum* performance each semester to retain good academic standing is a *semester* cumulative grade average of 76.5% (reference evaluation table, above). It is also necessary to hold a cumulative 76.5% over *all* semesters at the Academy in order to retain good standing, and to present a minimum 76.5% to graduate from the Academy. This minimum standard reflects STMA's academic values and is not negotiable.

Headmaster's and Dean's Lists

Criteria for honors are a cumulative grade average for the preceding semester of at least 96.5% for the Headmaster's List and at least 92.5% for the Dean's List. Certificates are issued to mark a student's inclusion in the honors roster. Inclusion is also duly noted on student's transcript. Honor Society membership is extended to all students who qualify thus for the Dean's List.

Late and Missing Academic Work

Timeliness is important, of course, for success in college and for success in life. All assigned work for classes at the Academy is due when scheduled due.

Within 48 hours of return from an absence that occurred on an assignment's due date the returning student must bring his or her instructor(s) a parent's or caregiver's note speaking to the absence. Upon receipt the instructor will set a new due date of his or her choosing, though not exceeding one week from the student's date of return. Work submitted by the instructor's new due date is accepted without penalty.

Without a note within the 48-hour period the student's grade on the missing work is permanently recorded in RenWeb as incomplete.

If a student does not submit timely work despite being present in school on an assignment's due date, the instructor may impose grading penalties as he or she sees fit pending submission, and will not accept work more than one week from the original due date.

Absence

It is important for students to come to the Academy, to study in its classrooms and with its faculty and participate in its communal life. Excessive absence disrupts the preparatory experience. Any student missing more than ten (10) class days in any semester is subject to repeat the semester and thus the grade. A period of absence equal to ½ day is noted, and two ½ days are considered a full day's absence. The Dean counsels any student who reaches seven absences in a semester.

Resolving Academic Issues

STMA's instructors embrace and practice its academic values and assess student standing routinely in their grades for and comments upon student work. Academic intervention for the sake of a student's highest and best performance is first and foremost a local matter, between the instructor, the student, and the student's family. Instructors communicate academic challenges and work earnestly to help every student succeed.

The Academy considers that from time to time a student might nonetheless move off-target and in charity makes earnest effort to move the student back to minimum standard and beyond. This effort is expressed in a clear and consistently exercised protocol, the predictability of which guarantees all students prompt and assertive support.

The Registrar notifies and encourages any student who lapses below minimum standard for a single semester.

The Dean of Studies places on *academic probation* any student who lapses below standard for two *consecutive* semesters.

While in academic probation a student is unable to participate in athletics or other Academy-sponsored extracurricular activities. She or he must also report to the Dean at each *mid-quarter* report to review progress. Remedy is possible as early as *mid-semester* assuming performance is sufficient to warrant the Dean's confidence that the student will end the semester in good standing. Otherwise probation persists until the next semester report.

The Dean also places on academic probation any student who does not complete timely *summer remediation* subsequent to a course failure. The Academy offers summer remediation opportunities for failed courses. Any student engaged in remediation must follow his or her instructor's directives for success and abide strictly by timelines.

The Dean refers to the Faculty Review Committee any student who does not achieve academic good standing after the probationary semester. Based on an intensive review of the student's academic record, the Committee may make one of two decisions. The Committee may decide to secure the student's formal written commitment to achieve academic correction by the end of one further term of study, or may decide that the student is notifying the Board of Directors that he or she is selecting out of the Academy due to academic underperformance. In either case the Committee communicates its decision to the student and the student's family.

A student who unfortunately remains outside good academic standing for more than five semesters may not remain a student at the Academy.

COMMUNITY STANDARDS

“Above all it is expected that the attention of instructors to the disposition of the minds and morals of the youth under their charge will exceed every other care; well considering that though goodness without knowledge is weak and feeble, yet knowledge without goodness is dangerous, and that both united form the noblest character, and lay the surest foundation of usefulness to mankind.” (John Phillips, founder of Phillips Exeter Academy)

“Remember the precept that St. John the Evangelist used to give to his disciples: “Love one another.” Since it is not a mere exhortation, but a command, it would be sinful to do otherwise. Therefore, do away with insults, quarrels, envy, revenge, mockery, or bad will. Be good to one another.” (St. John Bosco)

The Academy’s rule is charity.

Faculty, students, and parents/caregivers are all incorporated into community standards that characterize a gold standard Catholic preparatory school. All of these standards have their root in charity. Ours is an environment of respect and dignity in which authentic academic excellence and vital love of God and neighbor are highly prized. Without exception faculty, students, and families are expected to approach one another with the dignity and respect appropriate to the school and generally to Christian life.

Resolving Formation Issues

The Academy does not employ any point, “strike,” or demerit system. The essence of STMA is reflected in its relationship with any student who might be struggling. Most formation challenges are adequately addressed locally between students and their instructors. Instructors are custodians of the Academy’s standards. They express these in their own relationships with students. Fraternal dialogue and correction in the spirit of Christ is common and highly valued. This engagement is fruitful for clarity and growth and ordinarily closes any issues that are attracting counsel.

From time to time this preferred local path does not lead to resolution. When it does not the Dean of Studies meets formally with the student to document the issue(s) and discuss and achieve correction. Nearly all formation challenges are settled at the Dean’s meeting.

The Dean refers any student who requires more than two formal meetings in an academic year to the Faculty Review Committee. The Committee secures the student’s written commitment to achieve timely and adequate response. In this intervention the Committee fully communicates and partners with the student and the student’s family.

Any student who earns two Committee referrals from the Dean in an academic year

incurs documented suspension from the Committee for a duration determined by the Committee. Any student who unfortunately earns more than two referrals thereby notifies the Board of Directors that he or she is selecting out of the Academy.

There are several things that STMA students have agreed are intolerable on campus. These are bullying, illegal drugs, sexual impropriety, and flagrant disrespect toward the learning environment. These “zero-tolerance” issues earn immediate referral to the Board of Directors.

As befits a quality preparatory school, STMA practices a standard of dress (see appendix, below). Students honor the dress expectation as an expression of the school. Students wear the uniform crisply and groom neatly and modestly as an expression of the school’s high mission for Catholic excellence. If a student’s dress/grooming is off-key she or he is duly notified and expected to self-correct.

A few other practical demands help preserve the quality of our school. Students must refrain from using cellular phones during school hours. Telephones are available for necessary calls. Similarly, no personal media players or game systems are allowed in school. As their bulk poses a safety issue, large backpacks are also not permitted in classrooms.

CHRISTIAN SERVICE

“Then the King will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see thee hungry and feed thee, or thirsty and give thee drink?’ And the king will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of my brethren, you did it to me.’” (*Matthew 25:34*)

The Academy expects its students to express love of neighbor beyond its walls in authentic service toward persons in need. The Academy does not tally service hours. Instead, multiple off-campus opportunities organized around the Christian corporeal works of mercy are presented each semester through the school-based Student Service/Outreach Program. Graduation from the Academy requires completion of at least one initiative per year of study.

STMA fully embraces the words of Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati, who reminds us that “the foundation of our faith is charity. Without it, our religion would crumble. We will never be truly Catholic unless we conform our entire lives to the two commandments that are the essence of the Catholic faith: to love the Lord, our God, with all our strength, and to love our neighbor as ourselves.”

ATHLETICS

"Do you not know that in a race all the runners compete, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it!" (1 *Corinthians* 9: 24).

"St. Paul the Apostle proposed the image of the athlete to the Christians of Corinth in order to illustrate Christian life and as an example of effort and constancy. Indeed the correct practice of sport must be accompanied by moderation and training in self-discipline. The Christian can find sports helpful for developing the cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance in the race for the wreath that is "imperishable," as St. Paul writes." (John Paul II)

With the kind support of family volunteers the Academy sponsors a variety of sports activities for students as a rich expression of its vision of Christian excellence. Sports on offer include co-ed soccer, basketball for both young men and young women, and co-ed Ultimate Frisbee. Competition for team membership is often quite keen. Moreover, STMA seeks out strong inter-school competition in the interests of constant improvement.

A physical within one calendar year of the start date of a particular sport's try-outs and practices is required for participation. Fee-based registration is also required to help support the costs of facilities, referees, and sports uniforms.

GRADUATION

A student who has completed 30 credits of preparatory study with a grade average above 76.5%, successfully completed the senior thesis, and fulfilled the Academy service obligation is eligible for graduation from the Academy.

Commencement honors are offered to all graduates according to merit. A student achieving at least a 92.5% grade average over his or her course of studies graduates *cum laude*. A cumulative average of at least 95% earns a diploma *magna cum laude*. A student presenting at least a 97.5% cumulative average is graduated from the Academy *summa cum laude*.

Two highly sought Academy awards are also part of the graduation experience. The *Excellence in the Trivium Award* recognizes the most successful senior thesis from the graduating cohort, and the *Francis Burbidge Award* honors the student whom the faculty agree has exercised the most notable leadership presence during the senior year.

COLLEGE PLACEMENT

"It is Jesus who stirs in you the desire to do something great with your lives, the will to follow an ideal, the refusal to allow yourselves to be ground down by mediocrity, the courage to commit yourselves humbly and patiently to improving yourselves and society, making the world more human and more fraternal." (John Paul II)

STMA seeks to seed well-formed young leaders into the world of higher education as strong representatives of authentic Gospel values and agents of positive cultural change. The Academy is proud of its history of outstanding college placement. Our students have received admission and financial support offers from a range of secular and religious colleges at all levels of admissions difficulty. Catholic, Chicago, Colgate, Cornell, Davidson, Elon, Emory, Franciscan, Georgetown, NYU, North Carolina, Notre Dame, Randolph-Macon, Vanderbilt, and Washington and Lee are just a few of the fine schools that have selected candidates from our most recent graduating classes. Consistent with its core identity, the Academy begins exploring with the student his or her college hopes from start of the preparatory experience and urges constant striving for true Catholic excellence.

SCHOOL CLOSURE

School closures for inclement conditions are made public on WRAL television, at wral.com, and on the Academy's web site (stmacademy.org).

SCHOOL EVENTS

The Academy uses Google Calendar for its calendar management resource. All major school events as well as sporting events can be found on this calendar. The calendar is on the STMA website at <http://smacademy.org/calendar/events/>

The calendar can also be bookmarked or saved in your favorites for ease of access. If you use Google Calendar for other purposes, you can easily add the STMA Calendar to your list of calendars.

KEY CONTACTS

Deacon Brad Watkins
Headmaster
brad.watkins@stmacademy.org

Dr. Wesley Kirkpatrick
Dean of Studies
wesley.kirkpatrick@stmacademy.org

Mrs. Ann Cureton
Administrative Assistant
ann.cureton@stmacademy.org

APPENDIX

Full Dress Uniform

Worn on Fridays and as announced.

- Black (underclass students) or maroon (upperclass students) blazer with STMA crest
- Charcoal gray trousers. Young women may wear charcoal gray or plaid skirts instead of trousers.
- Oxford shirt in white, with either long or short sleeves
- STMA necktie for young men
- Black socks and belt and closed-toe black or oxblood dress shoes. Young women may wear flats or low-heeled shoes.

Ordinary Uniform

Worn Mondays through Thursdays.

- Black trousers. Young women may wear black skirts.
- White, wine or gray STMA polo
- Wine-striped oxford shirt
- Wine sweater or sweater vest over uniform oxford shirt or polo
- Wine fleece jacket

Please note that:

- Shirts should be tucked in and buttoned while on campus
- Skirts should be knee-length
- Students who remain on campus after school are to remain in uniform until departure
- During all school functions, dress and grooming should always be appropriate and modest, reflecting the community standards of a gold standard Catholic preparatory school

The uniform and other STMA apparel (polo shirts, sweaters, fleece jacket and all pants & skirts) is available for purchase from:

Educational Outfitters
919.804.5437 or 866.326.5437;
250 Nottingham Drive, Cary, NC 27511
<http://www.educationaloutfitters.com>