



COMMUNITY HANDBOOK 2020-21

Policies and Procedures

1. St. Thomas More Academy (STMA) offers a quality liberal arts education. It prepares students to go into the world with sound ethical standards and strong academic and personal skills to love and serve as Christian leaders.
2. Mission alignment, cooperation, and positive engagement with the STMA education lead to the best student outcomes.
3. STMA's curriculum is an integral whole. STMA cannot waive or modify established curriculum, instructional pace, evaluation modes and standards, math placements, house rules, or other school expectations.
4. Students attending all four years at STMA must present at least 33 credits to graduate. The Registrar evaluates transfer credits case-by-case. Transfer credits do not count toward STMA's GPA calculations.
5. The Registrar assigns students to required core courses. Drop/add is not allowed. Most core courses offer honors credit. This requires a 77 or better on the Socratic Honors exam and for the course. Exams are offered only once.
6. Students in grades 10-12 request electives each semester. Drop/add is allowed with Registrar approval. All electives have enrollment caps and are assigned "first-come, first-served." Electives do not offer honors credit.
7. Students in grades 10-12 are required to complete only two (2) electives in 2020-21, but may complete three (3) or four (4) if desired.
8. A student may take geometry elsewhere between grades 9 and 10 with Registrar approval. A passing grade on the STMA geometry proficiency exam afterwards is required for exemption from STMA geometry.
9. Enrolled STMA students may not substitute courses undertaken elsewhere (e.g., under dual enrollment) for required STMA courses and may not take STMA courses for credit if equivalents have been completed elsewhere.
10. STMA uses a traditional 4.0 scale and records grades in FACTS. The Registrar reviews student results each quarter and encourages any needed improvements.
11. Graded work at STMA includes tests, quizzes, in-class writings, lab reports, and formal papers and projects.
12. Other than reading and writing, traditional homework is a modest part of the STMA experience. Silent study periods support efforts to keep tasks inside school. Students are expected to use in-school study time well.
13. Course failures require remediation per teacher direction within specified timelines. The remediation limit for grade 9 is three (3) courses. For grade 10 it is two (2). Only one (1) remediation is allowed thereafter.

14. Submission of a senior thesis that earns a 77 or better is a graduation requirement. Each senior completes a 3000-word paper (4000 and a Socratic Defense for honors) on a topic assigned in the College Writing Course.
15. Each year an *ad hoc* faculty committee reviews nominated writing for the Preparatory Writing Prize (best course paper) and for the Excellence in the Trivium Prize (best senior honors thesis).
16. STMA's proven approach to math practice develops student responsibility and supports high outcomes. Ungraded homework supports graded quizzes. Core math courses allow two (2) quiz drops per semester.
17. Promotion to grade 10 requires a cumulative 1.33 GPA or better over STMA courses. Promotion to grade 11 requires a cumulative 1.66 GPA or better, and promotion to grade 12 requires a cumulative 2.00 GPA or better.
18. Timely graduation requires an approved senior thesis, a cumulative 2.00 GPA or better over all STMA courses, and passing grades for all core and elective courses completed in grade 12.
19. A student receiving STMA-based financial aid must earn a cumulative 2.00 GPA or better at the end of his or her first year and a cumulative 2.33 GPA or better at the end of each subsequent year to retain the aid.
20. STMA may rescind STMA-based financial aid for serious disciplinary or academic cause.
21. Each semester students compete for spots on the Dean's and Headmaster's Lists. The Dean's List requires a 3.89 semester GPA or higher. The Headmaster's List requires a 4.10 semester GPA or higher.
22. Seniors with four (4) consecutive semesters at STMA may qualify for Latin honors. A cumulative weighted 3.89 GPA is required for *summa cum laude*. 3.78 is required for *magna cum laude* and 3.67 for *cum laude*.
23. Seniors who have studied at STMA at least seven (7) semesters are eligible for valedictorian and salutatorian honors. These are decided on cumulative GPA.
24. STMA expects all members of the school community to follow the Gospel rule of love toward God and neighbor that fulfills the Ten Commandments. Parents who violate these norms will be asked to enroll their child elsewhere.
25. It is proper to direct concerns about a student's experience to the nearest competent authority (usually the classroom teacher or activity leader). This ensures prompt and helpful response.
26. STMA cannot monitor all student interactions in and outside school. Parents should contact other parents to talk over ordinary peer-to-peer issues. Staff will assist if resolution is not achieved.
27. STMA cannot always notify families about student issues in advance of counsel, but FACTS formation notes serve to document and communicate interactions.
28. The Deans of Students have broad discretion over student disciplinary formation. Possible outcomes range from counsel to indefinite suspension. Discipline and correction are the responsibility of parents. STMA will make all reasonable efforts to encourage students and support parents in their character formation, but students who disrupt class or otherwise violate school rules will be sent home for their parents to address the conduct. Students who do not correct their conduct will be asked to seek other placement.
29. "Local Formation" notes report low-intensity counsel over conduct. Emailed to students and copying parents, these might come from any STMA staff and seldom raise concerns unless they accumulate in a student's record.
30. "Formation Meeting" notes come from the Deans of Students and report sustained intervention over conduct. These notes often convey requests for family meetings to discern best paths forward to positive resolution.

31. Failures of academic integrity--plagiarism and other forms of cheating--are always serious. All students are fully informed about expectations. *A second instance of founded academic disintegrity will incur indefinite suspension.*
32. STMA students participate in school Masses, small-group "households" with faculty mentors, the annual March for Life, and in Service and Outreach projects built around the corporal works of mercy.
33. STMA offers many extracurricular activities, all of which support the top Luddy School outcomes (below) and sharpen portfolios for college and future careers.
34. A student must attend school (virtual or physical) a full day on the day of an extracurricular event to participate in it. Documented professional appointments are exceptions.
35. Teachers cannot supervise students at sports and other off-campus events. Families are the proper resource. STMA's Athletic Director is exclusively authorized to communicate with the NCISAA and Conference schools.
36. Without exception, a student who earns a failing grade or posts a cumulative GPA below 2.0 on a quarterly report must set aside the privilege of extracurricular participation to focus on improving grades.
37. In consultation with the Deans of Students the Registrar will restore suspended extracurricular eligibility on evidence of sustained academic improvement. The Registrar's judgment is determinative.
38. The Deans of Students may suspend extracurricular eligibility as a formation intervention. They may restore at their discretion eligibility that has been suspended for formation reasons.
39. Extracurricular organizations (e.g., Drama, FFA, Student Council) may establish their own higher standards around GPA, conduct, and student contribution.
40. During school students must follow the uniform code (below). Appropriate non-uniform dress is allowed only when leaving school to participate in an athletic event or in a practice, class, or club that requires it.
41. Because of the Covid situation, all persons must wear plain/single color masks in campus buildings. Students with breathing difficulties or relevant medical issues may remove masks in settings that allow distancing.
42. Students represent STMA on and off campus and must avoid presentations that risk scandal or divisiveness or in any other way chaff against the values and sensibilities of a well-ordered Catholic community.
43. Because of the Covid situation standard attendance policies are suspended for 2020-21. Students and families should follow the school's published Covid guidelines.
44. Excessive absences without documented medical warrant--more than ten (10) from physical or virtual school--will lead to conversations with the Deans of Students about continued STMA placement.
45. Students are urged to keep in mind that too much delay in making up missed work impacts academic progress.
46. A student absent from physical or virtual school for graded work must make it up by the end of the third day after return. Afterwards a missing quiz is dropped. A missing test loses ten (10) points per day pending submission.
47. A student absent from physical or virtual school when a paper is due must submit the paper electronically or by proxy by 8:00 AM on the due date. Afterwards the paper loses ten (10) points per day pending submission.

48. The Registrar must have permission to release a student during school hours. Release is only to the student's parent or to a person the student's parent has approved in FACTS.
49. A self-driving student may leave and return during school hours only for a professional appointment (and with appropriate permission).
50. STMA does not charge a materials fee. There are occasional fees for field trips, athletics, and some classes and clubs. Some courses require modest book purchases. Online readings are common.
51. Core STEM courses often provide textbooks. Excessive damage on return requires reimbursement.
52. Each student must have computer and printer access outside school and a personal TI-83+ or TI-84 graphing calculator for use in and outside school.
53. All document requests (including for transcripts and teacher references) strictly require three (3) weeks' notice to the relevant party. STMA cannot ensure on-time delivery without this notice.
54. To protect students and maximize outcomes all teachers require confidentiality guarantees for references and only provide references directly to reviewers.
55. STMA can only release a student's records (e.g., transcripts, diplomas) after financial accounts are fully settled.
56. STMA supports all graduates during transitions into college, other schooling, or professional work and vocation.
57. Parents/caregivers with strong feelings about where their graduating student should go to college must notify the college placement director prior to college advising meetings and sign a form indicating which colleges/universities (if any) they are open to considering for their student. If there is only one school that they will allow their student to attend this must be indicated. In this latter case there will be no need for college advising meetings.
58. Failures to profit from the STMA education merit serious concern. As a private school STMA may dismiss a student at any time without right or process of appeal.
59. Campus visitors (including parents and former students) must pick up a visitor's tag at the front desk. In keeping with current city and state requirements, visitors entering campus buildings are required to wear masks.
60. Notice of non-scheduled school closures is available on WRAL television, at wral.com, on the school's Facebook page, and via text from Remind 101.

Top Luddy School Outcomes

STMA incorporates the Top 15 Luddy School Outcomes to encourage students to better themselves and reach new heights. By graduation each student should have mastered all of these Outcomes.

1. Unfailing Integrity compels a person to follow a strong code of ethics with honesty in all situations.
2. A Cooperative and Contributive Team Member knows how to collaborate to achieve successful results.
3. A Virtuous Leader with Well-Developed Judgment combines thinking skills and traits such as humility, generosity, and courage.
4. A Strong Work Ethic links perseverance, reliability, and honesty.
5. Self-Reliance creates confidence to depend on one's own powers and resources to meet all of one's needs.
6. Dreams and Aspirations to Change the World help us remember that directed efforts bring us closer to our goals.

7. A Truth Seeker searches for the correct, right, or accurate explanation of reality, following the scientific method.
8. Traditional American Values and Entrepreneurialism drive a leader to build and sustain a thriving economy.
9. A Critical Thinker discerns the truth of a statement or observation through questioning and examination.
10. Well-Developed People & Communication Skills promote effective sharing with a clear message.
11. Continuous Learners take lessons from all aspects of life and work, learn from mistakes, and adapt to change.
12. Gratitude acknowledges the gifts one has been given and the contributions of others.
13. Competent Technical Skills allow individuals to join modern technological industries and navigate modern life.
14. A Healthy Mind, Body, and Spirit offer freedom to operate at optimal levels and achieve a higher sense of fulfillment.
15. Astute Problem Solving leads one to identify the solutions to a problem, evaluate likely outcomes, assess risk, and choose correctly.

House Rules

Students are to maintain proper decorum inside and outside school. Compliance with “house rules” is expected. STMA cannot and does not allow the following:

- Class disruption. Per the Board of Directors, classroom disruption will not be tolerated. Non-compliant students will be sent home for the day per directive.
- Sleeping in school.
- Sloppy dress.
- Class postures that suggest disaffection/disengagement.
- Political imagery, clothing, stickers, posters, etc.
- Exclusivity and coupling on campus and at school events.
- Use of personal electronic devices on campus between arrival at school and 3PM. Devices brought to school must be turned off and stowed in the student’s locker until 3PM.
- Public presentations (including internet and social media postings) that do not respect STMA’s Catholic values and honor its good reputation.
- Cyber- and other forms of bullying or meanness.
- Use of STMA’s logo or name without permission.
- School-related filming, photography, or audio recording without explicit permission.
- Video or audio recording in a class or school assembly.
- Frivolous activity on school computers.
- Student printing on school printers.
- Unsecured medications. All medications (including OTC) must be secured with the Registrar, along with written parent/guardian instructions.
- Smoking/vaping/related products, alcohol, illegal substances, or weapons on campus or at school events.
- Eating/snacking in class without verified medical reasons or explicit instructor permission.
- Storage of large backpacks and bulky personal belongings outside assigned lockers.
- Untidiness in school spaces. Students may not tape anything to the outside of lockers and must keep all school spaces clean, neat, undamaged, and free of trash.

Uniform

Because of the Covid situation the ordinary dress code is amended for 2020-21. With the exception of the STMA sweatshirt (which is ordered through the school) the required vendor for STMA apparel is Flynn & O’Hara, at (800) 441-4122 and www.flynnohara.com. The administration’s judgments around student dress are determinative.

Upper School	Young Women	Young Men
<p>Monday-Friday</p> <p>*Any approved uniform from this chart may be worn Monday through Friday while masks are mandated.</p>	<p><u>Optional Outerwear Choices:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Blazer (black for grades 9-10; maroon for grades 11-12) -Wine Sweater -Sweater Vest -Fleece Jacket -Black Embroidered Soft-Shell Jacket -STMA Sweatshirt (with STMA polo shirt underneath) <p><u>Bottoms:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Trousers (black or charcoal) -Skirt/Kilt (knee-length plaid, charcoal, or black) <p><u>Tops:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -STMA Polo shirt (short or long-sleeves; white, gray, or maroon) -STMA Oxford shirt (white) <p><u>Shoes/Socks:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -All-black closed-toe shoes (in good condition; flat or low-heeled, not to exceed 2 inches in height) -Black, charcoal, or gray socks (socks are optional) 	<p><u>Optional Outerwear Choices:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Blazer (black for grades 9-10; maroon for grades 11-12) -Wine Sweater -Sweater Vest -Fleece Jacket -Black Embroidered Soft-Shell Jacket -STMA Sweatshirt (with STMA polo shirt underneath) <p><u>Bottoms:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Trousers (black or charcoal) -Belt (black) <p><u>Tops:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -STMA Polo shirt (short or long-sleeves; white, gray, or maroon) -STMA Oxford shirt (white) <p><u>Shoes/Socks:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -All-black closed-toe shoes (in good condition) -Black, charcoal, or gray socks

Middle School	Young Women	Young Men
<p>Monday-Friday</p> <p>*Any approved uniform from this chart may be worn Monday through Friday while masks are mandated.</p>	<p><u>Optional Outerwear Choices:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Charcoal cardigan -Fleece Jacket -Black Embroidered Soft-Shell Jacket -STMA Sweatshirt (with STMA polo shirt underneath) <p><u>Bottoms:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Trousers (black or charcoal) -Skort (knee-length plaid, charcoal, or black) <p><u>Tops:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -STMA Polo shirt (short or long-sleeves; white, gray, or maroon) -STMA Oxford shirt (white) <p><u>Shoes/Socks:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -All-black closed-toe shoes (in good condition; flat or low-heeled, not to exceed 2 inches in height) -Black, charcoal, or gray socks (socks are optional) 	<p><u>Optional Outerwear Choices:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Charcoal cardigan -Fleece Jacket -Black Embroidered Soft-Shell Jacket -STMA Sweatshirt (with STMA polo shirt underneath) <p><u>Bottoms:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Trousers (black or charcoal) -Belt (black) <p><u>Tops:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -STMA Polo shirt (short or long-sleeves; white, gray, or maroon) -STMA Oxford shirt (white) <p><u>Shoes/Socks:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -All-black closed-toe shoes (in good condition) -Black, charcoal, or gray socks

Course of Studies

Middle School	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
History	Ancient and Classical History	Western Civilization	American History and Government
Literature and Writing	Great Books 1	Great Books 2	Great Books 3
Math	Saxon 7/6	Saxon 8/7	Algebra 1/2
Science	Earth Science	Life Science	Physical Science
Trivium	Spelling and Grammar	Informal Logic	Basics of Composition
Language (Latin)	Introduction to Latin	Latin 1A	Latin 1B
Theology	Great Bible Stories	Jesus Christ	The Catholic Church
Other	Arts and Making Digital Citizenship Healthy Living Music Electives (varied topics, half-semester)	Arts and Making Digital Citizenship Healthy Living Music Electives (varied topics, half-semester)	Arts and Making Digital Citizenship Healthy Living Music Electives (varied topics, half-semester)

Upper School	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
Trivium	Grammar Preparatory Writing	Formal Logic	Introduction to Philosophy	Advanced Topics in Philosophy (2021-22) College Writing: Thesis Research and Composition

History	Ancient History: Prehistory and First Civilizations Ancient History: The Classical World	Medieval History: The Early Middle Ages Medieval History: The High Middle Ages	Modern European History: Early Modern to 1873 Modern European History: 1873 to the Present	American History: Colonial to 1865 American History: 1865 to the Present
Literature	Ancient Literature : Great Stories from Myth and Scripture Ancient Literature : Great Stories from Greece and Rome	Medieval Literature: Early Medieval Writing Medieval Literature: Dante to Chaucer	Modern European Literature: Renaissance to Romanticism Modern European Literature: 1850 to the Present	American Literature: Origins to the Civil War American Literature: 1865 to the Present
Theology	See literature	Introduction to Catholicism	Bioethics	Moral Theology Traditions in Politics and Economics
Language	Latin 1	Latin 2	Latin 3 or French 1 or Spanish 1	Latin 4 or French 2 or Spanish 2
Mathematics	Algebra 1 or Geometry or Algebra 2	Geometry or Algebra 2 or Precalculus	Algebra 2 or Precalculus or Calculus	Precalculus or Advanced Functions or Calculus or Calculus 2 (2021-22)
Science	Biology	Chemistry	Physics	Advanced Topics in Math and Science (2021-22)

Other	First Year of Studies Music	Semester Electives (varied topics, three per year)	Non-cognitive Skills 1 Semester Electives (varied topics, three per year)	College Workshop Non-cognitive Skills 2 Personal/ Professional Development Semester Electives (varied topics, three per year)
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Grading Scale

Letter	Numerical	Narrative	Standard	Honors
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

The 2020-21 STMA Community Handbook abrogates and supersedes any prior STMA Community Handbooks.

August 13, 2020