



STMA Parental Cooperation Expectations

Cooperation with parents in the formation of young men and women to the greater glory of God has always been central to the mission of St. Thomas More Academy.

This is founded upon the teachings of the Church as noted in the Catechism:

2223 Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children. They bear witness to this responsibility first by creating a home where tenderness, forgiveness, respect, fidelity, and disinterested service are the rule. The home is well suited for education in the virtues. This requires an apprenticeship in self-denial, sound judgment, and self-mastery - the preconditions of all true freedom. Parents should teach their children to subordinate the "material and instinctual dimensions to interior and spiritual ones." Parents have a grave responsibility to give good example to their children.

2229 As those first responsible for the education of their children, parents have the right to choose a school for them which corresponds to their own convictions. This right is fundamental. As far as possible parents have the duty of choosing schools that will best help them in their task as Christian educators.

And yet, a school by its very nature is communal and requires gentle cooperation in turn. It cannot be all things to all people at all times, *perfectly*. It must choose a course, communicating clearly what it is and is not. Parents, for their part, choose to align with the school's course via enrollment of their child. Some level of compromise is implicit.

Cooperation between parents and school achieves best outcomes.

If parents have concerns related to the school, they should model the virtue of fortitude and bring them directly to the appropriate teacher or administrator in line with Jesus' teaching in the Gospel:

"If your brother sins [against you], go and tell him his fault between you and him **alone**. If he listens to you, you have won over your brother." (Mt. 15:15)*

To do otherwise, to gossip, murmur, and grumble in the community, or worse, in front of their children, is to undermine the very mission of the school to help parents "in their task as Christian educators."

"Teachers and administrators, whether in universities or schools, have the duty and privilege to ensure that students receive instruction in Catholic doctrine and practice. This requires that public witness to the way of Christ, as found in the Gospel and upheld by the church's magisterium, shapes all aspects of an institution's life, both inside and outside the classroom. Divergence from this vision weakens Catholic identity and, far from advancing freedom, inevitably leads to confusion, whether moral, intellectual or spiritual." (Pope Benedict XVI, Address to Catholic Educators, April 17, 2008)



No husband should grumble about his wife in front of their children. No wife should criticize her husband in front of their children. It would undermine the rightful authority of the other parent.

Properly understood, the school is an extension of parents. To grumble, criticize, or negatively gossip about the school in front of children or in the community, undermines the very authority given to the school by the parents to achieve best formation outcomes for their children. Moreover, such behavior fails to maintain the consistent public witness essential for the mission of the school.

If parental trust and confidence in the school cannot be maintained, it is in the best interest of the children to find another placement. Otherwise, it is counterproductive to maintain enrollment in the school.

Finally, it is both helpful and important for parents to inform the school of significant challenges going on in the life of the child that could impact their ability to learn. This could be learning disabilities, anxiety/depression, serious illness in the family, turmoil in the home, separation/divorce, etc. If parents are themselves discussing a challenge and are aware of the fact that it is affecting their child's life, it is worth bringing it to the attention of the Dean of Students in trust and confidence.

It is our sincere hope that we can work together to achieve shared aspirations for the best outcomes of the students entrusted to our care.