

# St. Theresa Catholic School



**ST. THERESA CATHOLIC**  
FAITH • SERVICE • COMMUNITY • EDUCATION

## St. Theresa Catholic School Student/Family Handbook

2025-2026

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*The policies, regulations, and procedures contained in this handbook are subject to review and revision during the school year with approval from the Bishop, Superintendent, and diocesan legal counsel.*

**Mission Statement**

**We educate the individual child within our Catholic faith by providing excellent academic experiences and dynamic faith formation.**

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## ORGANIZATION

The organizational structure for St. Theresa Catholic School includes the Diocesan Board of Education and Superintendent of Schools, St. Theresa Leadership Council including pastor, administrators, teachers, parents, and students. To best serve the students with the existing facilities and faculty, grades kindergarten through eight will be divided into a kindergarten through second-grade primary unit, a third through fifth-grade intermediate unit, and a sixth through eighth-grade middle school unit.

## ADMINISTRATION

St. Theresa Catholic School employs an accredited full-time principal licensed by the state of Iowa. The major responsibilities include being the faith leader of the school, personnel director, educational leader, management/administration, public relations, and planning and development. The principal is employed by the parish and has direct accountability to the pastor and the St. Theresa School Leadership Council.

## SCHOOL FACULTY

The faculty of St. Theresa Catholic School is composed of fully accredited professional teachers. All the teachers hold current licensure in the state of Iowa issued by the Board of Educational Examiners. They are qualified to teach in the subject areas to which they are assigned. Faculty members in grades Kindergarten

through fifth grade are hired primarily

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as classroom teachers. Teachers in grades six through eight work in their areas of expertise and certification. Additional specialists are employed in the areas of Art, Guidance and Counseling, Music, PE, and Interventionist.. The faculty is regularly observed and evaluated by the principal.

## **GUIDANCE COUNSELOR**

St. Theresa Catholic School has a full-time guidance counselor for students in kindergarten through eighth grade. The counselor is available to consult with all students, parents, and teachers. The guidance program encompasses individual sessions, group sessions, and classroom units of study. Any student may request to see the counselor by asking a teacher to set up a time or write a note to put in the counselor's mailbox. A parent or teacher may also request that a counselor visit with a student. As the child's advocate, the guidance counselor can help supply creative ways to deal with students experiencing difficulty in and out of the classroom.

## **STUDENT SUPPORT**

St. Theresa Catholic School employs both part-time math and reading interventionists, a student support teacher who serves students. The interventionists support the academic needs of students through collaboration with classroom teachers and families and interventions. They also review data regularly to monitor student progress.

## **SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS**

When a teacher is out of school because of illness, professional meetings, or personal business, a qualified, licensed substitute teacher will take that teacher's place. The substitute will work closely with the classroom teacher and the administrator to ensure a smooth and consistent transition. Substitute teachers are to be accorded the same respect as regular classroom teachers. Substitute teachers have permission to follow every part of the St. Theresa Catholic School Discipline Policy. If substitute teachers have discipline concerns with students according to the discipline policy, they will record the names of the classroom teacher, and a consequence will be given.

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## **COVENANT OF TRUST BETWEEN PARENTS AND ST. THERESA CATHOLIC SCHOOL**

“Jesus said to his disciples, ‘Let the children come to me; do not prevent them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Amen, I say to you, whoever does not accept the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it.’ Then he embraced them and blessed them, placing his hands on them.” (Mark 10:14-16).

At baptism, parents accept the responsibility of forming their child in the practice of the faith. “Catholic parents also have the duty and right of choosing those means and institutions through which they can provide more suitably for the Catholic education of their children” (*Canon 793.1*).

Catholic school personnel partner with the family in proclaiming and witnessing as disciples to the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. They assist parents in fulfilling their responsibility as the primary religious educators of their children.

Parents at St. Theresa Catholic School are aware of this vocational call from God, and in response, commit themselves by word and example to be the first and best teachers of their children in the faith.

Practically, this means parents will:

- Understand that the authentic teachings of Jesus as taught by the Catholic Church, will be part of their child’s education and formation.
- To the best of their ability, respect the teachings of the Church and help their children respect the Church and its teachings.
- Commit to conversing frequently with their children about God and include prayer in their daily home life.
- Participate in and cooperate with the Catholic school in programs that enable them, respectively, to

take an active role in the religious education of their children, including sacramental preparation for Catholic children. ● Support the moral and social teaching of the Catholic Church to ensure consistency between home and school. ● Teach their children by word and example to express compassion and concern for the needs of others. ● Practice stewardship of time, talent, and treasure, and meet their financial responsibilities in support of the school and parish.

St. Theresa Catholic School enters a relationship of trust with each school family. The Parent/Student Handbook provides the school's framework for this trusting relationship by setting out policies and regulations for the orderly, safe, and effective spiritual and academic formation of children.

By completing my/our permissions in JMC, I/we hereby acknowledge that I/we have read this handbook and will abide by these regulations, that I/we have had an opportunity to ask questions about its contents, and that I/we will fulfill my responsibilities as the primary educator of my/our child as outlined in this covenant of trust.

Sign \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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## **SCHOOL VISITORS POLICY**

During the course of any day, there are visitors on our school grounds for various purposes. For this policy, the term "school" will encompass the school building, the playground, parking lots, and any other structure or land used by the school during the school day. The school is secured (locked) between the hours of 8:15am-3:30pm every day that school is in session. During secured hours, all visitors must enter through the North doors, up the steps and sign in at the school office. All visitors will show a state ID and be issued an identification badge. This is to help us guard our students and staff's safety and account for any visitors to our grounds.

Forgotten lunches and other items will be left at the office for students - parents may not deliver to classrooms to maintain instructional integrity. St. Theresa offers performance/display opportunities for students. Parents and other family members are often invited and welcome to attend these events. However, siblings in different classrooms at St. Theresa are to remain in class during these times.

## **VIRTUS TRAINING AND BACKGROUND CHECK**

The Diocese of Des Moines is committed to protecting young people from sexual abuse in the church. The four dioceses of Iowa have developed safe environment programs for clergy, parish and school staff, and volunteers to help keep children safe from sexual abuse. All individuals employed by or volunteer at St. Theresa Catholic School must complete Virtus Training. To complete the online training, please click on the following link: [www.virtus.org](http://www.virtus.org). Please contact the school office if you are unable to register online or have any questions. In addition to Virtus Training, all individuals are required to complete a background check form.

## **SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS**

School volunteers are defined as having regular (i.e., 3 or more hours a month) contact with students. Volunteers must complete the Virtus training one time and have a background check every seven years. Teachers are encouraged to use volunteers in the classroom.

# **SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT**

## **RELIGIOUS FORMATION**

The religious formation of children IS the primary reason for the existence of Catholic schools. Thus, St. Theresa Catholic School's religious education program is of particular curricular importance. Scripture, doctrine, prayer, and Liturgy are related to children at their developmental levels, beginning with their own experiences. Prayer is interwoven throughout the student's day. Prayer begins and ends each day, experienced daily in religion class, before lunchtime, and in other parts of the day.

## **MASS**

Students attend weekly Mass on Wednesdays at 8:35 am with their class. All students are required to attend Mass on Holy Days and the occasion of special liturgies and activities. Adjustments in the requirement for attendance at Mass may be allowed on given days or special events for entire classes when requested by the teacher, and the administrator and Priest provides approval. Parents are invited to attend weekly Mass.

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**Please remember that Liturgy is prayer - not a performance.  
No photography or videotaping will be allowed during Liturgy.**

## **PRAYER**

Each school day begins and ends with all school prayer. Prayer is interwoven throughout each day. Prayer will also be said before and after lunch.

## **SACRAMENTS**

Catholic students in 2nd grade prepare for and receive the sacraments of Reconciliation and First Communion. Reconciliation will be celebrated in the Fall. First Communion will be celebrated in the Spring. Reconciliation will be celebrated for Catholic students in grades 3 – 8 during Advent and Lent.

The preparation of young people for the sacraments is a responsibility shared by parents, parish, school, and the candidates themselves. The parish programs work together with the parents to provide a comprehensive approach to formation for the sacraments. The St. Theresa Director of Religious Education oversees the sacramental preparation for ALL parish and day school children. Homeroom teachers provide the classroom component of this preparation under the direction of the Director of Religious Education and the support of the school administration.

As Catholics, we believe that the Eucharist is the body, blood, soul, and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ. Receiving Communion, therefore, is a sign of unity among Catholics and an assent to this belief. For this reason, non-Catholic students will receive the classroom component of learning about the sacraments, but will not receive the sacraments. Instead of receiving Communion during Mass, non-Catholic students and adults will receive a blessing. If your family is interested in becoming Catholic, please let us know and we would be happy to discuss this with you and guide you through the process.

## COMMUNICATION

### CONTACTING TEACHERS

Our website lists all teacher email addresses, and parents are encouraged to email. Please allow the teacher until the end of the following teaching day to reply to your message. For the continuity of instruction and learning, teachers are not free to visit with parents during class time. It is best to make an appointment in advance to meet with the teacher before or after the school day. A private meeting will allow the teacher to give full attention to the parent's questions/concerns and allow for information to be shared in a private setting.

### SCHOOL-WIDE COMMUNICATION

All information possible will be placed on the St. Theresa Catholic School website. Every Tuesday, you will receive a school newsletter through email with important information. This is our primary form of communication to parents.

### EMERGENCY CONTACT

Each family **must** have an emergency contact listed in JMC that is not a parent. In an emergency, this database states the names of persons to be notified if parents or guardians cannot be reached. Please inform the office if there is a

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change in your family's emergency number(s). Schools are required by law to have emergency numbers on file for all students. Families will be asked to update their emergency information each year.

### PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

- Parent-Teacher Conferences are scheduled in October and February. Parents will receive an email when the site is open to schedule conferences for children in grades kindergarten through fifth. Middle School conferences will be a drop-in format, so parents are not required to schedule a time.
- Conferences are a valuable time of sharing between parents and teachers about academics, growth, maturity, and each child's faith development. It is **expected** that parents attend scheduled conferences. Students may be invited/required to attend conferences. Parent-Teacher Conferences will not be rescheduled outside of the calendared conference times for families using conference days as vacation days
- Specials teachers will be available during conferences. Part-time teachers will attend one night of conferences and inform parents when they will be available.

## ACADEMICS

### CURRICULUM

Diocesan standards and benchmarks and the Iowa Core are the foundation of our curriculum. Teachers are required to teach, reteach as needed and assess student learning based upon these standards and benchmarks. The standards and benchmarks can be found on the Dioceses of Des Moines website at [www.dmdiocese.org](http://www.dmdiocese.org).

St. Theresa offers a variety of quality, broad curriculum. The curriculum includes the following: Faith Formation Guidance Reading / Literature  
Language Arts Spelling/ Handwriting Mathematics  
Science Social Studies Music / Band  
Physical Education Art Library Skills

Other areas integrated throughout the regular curriculum include:  
Study skills Global education/ 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills  
Character Education/ Social skills Leader in Me  
Human Growth and Development/ Theology of the Body

## **STANDARDS AND BENCHMARKS/IOWA CORE**

All diocesan schools are bound by the diocese's standards and benchmarks for each curriculum area or the Iowa Core Curriculum. All meet the criteria determined by the State of Iowa Department of Education. All diocesan schools are the State of Iowa accredited. Standards and Benchmarks are posted on the Diocese of Des Moines website. [Des Moines Diocese Standards and Benchmarks](#)

## **REPORTING STUDENT PERFORMANCE**

The Diocesan Progress Report is the Standards-based report for student progress in grades Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> Updated 7/2025 7

grade. It is available for parents on JMC following the end of each trimester. The achievement levels are used to show student progress assessed during each trimester.

The Achievement Scale for 4,3,2,1 for Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade is:

4 – Above grade-level expectations

3 – Meets grade-level expectations - **this is the goal for all students by the end of the**

**year** 2 – Progressing towards grade-level expectations

1 – Attempts; not meeting grade-level expectations

### **Grades 6-8**

Parents can access JMC for grades 6-8 to view assignments, including missing or late work, quiz and test scores. Grade 6-8 content teachers are required to update grades on JMC bi-monthly. Teachers will contact parents any time there is a question or concern about a student.

### **Grades K-5**

Parents can access JMC to view student progress reports. Teachers will contact parents any time there is a question or concern about a student.

## **HOMEWORK**

Homework is an extension of the learning process in the classroom. Homework can enhance the study skills of a

student and reinforce concepts learned during the school day. Quality work to the best of each student's ability will be insisted upon. As a general rule, developmentally appropriate homework assignments will be given to students in all grades. Students in grades three through eight will be required to maintain a St. Theresa Catholic School planner. Students are expected to write daily assignments in their planner as an encouragement to build independent learning and organizational skills.

Parents will be informed at the start of the school year of the homework policy for each grade level. Long-range projects, assignments, and tests will be given at the discretion of each teacher but will be communicated and coordinated within the grade level. At all times, assignments are to be done neatly and entirely with the appropriate materials. Parents are encouraged to provide their children with a suitable atmosphere, a specific time, and a regular location in which to study.

If a child is absent from school, he/she is responsible for completing the work missed. **Requests for homework for absent students should be made to the school office and will be made available within 24 hours to be picked up.**

Students need to be sure to be responsible and packed for the day when they leave for school in the morning. If they forget something, they'll have the natural consequences for not being prepared for class or having a late assignment.

## **SPECIAL SERVICES/STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

Through the Diocesan Office of Schools, St. Theresa Catholic School has the Superintendent of Schools, Director of Educational Services, and a Director of Teaching and Learning.

Through Des Moines Public Schools (LEA), the following are among the personnel available: school psychologist, social worker, audiologist, speech therapist, occupational therapist, and educational consultant.

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St. Theresa Catholic School *first* utilizes a problem-solving approach through the Student Success Team (SST) if students are discrepant academically or behaviorally based on data. If necessary/practical and local problem solving is unsuccessful, St. Theresa Catholic School may also utilize the services of DMPS.

St. Theresa Catholic School does NOT offer a special education program. Accommodations will be made for students with special needs based upon the following procedure. St. Theresa Catholic School will seek to serve identified, qualifying students with special education needs through Des Moines Schools if a cooperative effort that adequately meets the child's needs can be established with the public school and the parents. Students who require more extensive special education services as determined through testing, DMPS recommendation, and/or medical diagnosis shall be staffed to a full-day public school program to meet the child's needs more appropriately.

## **STUDENT SUPPORT PLAN**

St. Theresa Catholic School serves children whose needs fall under Section 504 of the Civil Rights Law. These accommodations are put in place for students with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity using a student support plan.

## STANDARDIZED TESTING

Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress (ISASP) (grades 3-8) is given to students in the spring of each year. The results of the ISASPS are shared with parents when available, normally late summer of early fall. FAST testing (grades K-8) three times a year. Results are shared at conferences and sent home at the end of the year.

Additional Diocese of Des Moines testing includes the ACRE faith test for grades five and eight.

## STUDENT RECORDS

A permanent record of each student is kept on file in the school office. According to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, parents have the right to see their child's permanent record upon request. Parents can contact the administrator to view their child's records or obtain a copy of the file.

## PROGRESS REPORTS/GRADING

A progress report, or report card, reflects a standards-driven education/Iowa Core Curriculum in our Diocese. This progress report format summarizes a child's educational success in the curriculum using proficiency levels.

Progress reporting is based on the following beliefs:

- Progress reporting should promote self-esteem and motivate continued growth toward specific goals for each child.
- Progress reporting should provide parents and students with accurate information and encourage parental involvement.
- Progress reporting will recognize that each child has unique needs and abilities, and the assessment will reflect the effort and actual accomplishments based on consistent norms.
- Progress reporting and conferences will allow interaction with the child's best interests in

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The Official Diocesan Progress Report evaluates students purely based on the **individual student's ability**, rather than the academic ability of other students in the same class or grade level. Parents must encourage their children to do their very best while at the same time accepting the children as they are.

Progress reporting and student assessment are based on the overall philosophy and mission statement of the Catholic Schools of the Des Moines Diocese. Progress reporting is based on the following assessment principles and guidelines (K-8):

1. Differentiation of instruction is necessary for a student to grow and progress.
2. Behavior- is not to be considered part of the proficiency level assessment. Behavior is reported in a separate area on the progress report.
3. Extra credit will not be given in any diocesan school.
4. Zeros- teachers will use ID (insufficient data) on the progress report (incomplete work). Teachers will

use 0 only when the number of correct responses reflects the score.

5. Homework must be meaningful, purposeful, high quality, and aligned to specific benchmarks and grade-level expectations.
6. Incomplete work/ Late work- students are expected to complete all required work on time.
7. Formative work (process or practice - for example, assignments, practice work) - evaluated formative work guides instruction and learning. Formative work is typically not used towards the final proficiency grade or letter grade. However, most recent formative assessments may be used.
8. Summative work (results of what was learned – for example, projects, papers, tests) - multiple summative assessments for each benchmark/GLE (Grade Level Expectation) are used to determine a student's performance.

Progress reports are issued three times per year and accessed on the JMC parent portal at the end of each trimester.

## **FAILING GRADE**

A failing grade is used only for the student who can do the required work and receive a passing grade but does not accomplish this.

1. If the student does not improve after parental notification, a meeting will be held to gain further insight into the student's problems. A plan of action will be developed, and the student's progress will be monitored and documented.
2. The teacher will continue to inform the administrator about the student's progress.

## **GRADING SCALE**

In addition to a proficiency level, students in grades 6, 7, and 8 will also be graded on an A-F system based on the student's overall performance in that subject area. The grading scale is:

A+ 97-100% B+ 87-89.9% C+ 77-79.9% D+ 67-69.9% A 93-96.9% B 83-86.9% C 73-76.9% D 63-66.9% A- 90-92.9% B- 80-82.9% C- 70-72.9% D- 60-62.9% ID/F 59.9% and below

## **HELPFUL DEFINITIONS**

**Standards:** The K-12 Diocesan Standards describe what a student should know and be able to do in a subject by the end of 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

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**Grade Level Expectations (GLE's)/ Benchmarks:** These are more specific than a standard and detail what content needs to be mastered in what grade level to make progress towards meeting a standard. On the progress report, the GLE's/ benchmarks are listed under the standards.

**Proficiency level assessment:** Proficiency level (4, 3, 2, 1) is given to students for the benchmarks assessed during each trimester. This level is a snapshot of where a student is on each benchmark for meeting that standard. A proficiency level of 3 means that the student is where he/she needs to be at that grade level for that benchmark. The proficiency levels are as follows and **DO NOT** correlate to a grade (A, B, C, D, F):

- 4: Above grade-level expectations- a student has developed a solid understanding of the benchmark and can provide the teacher with in-depth knowledge and skills when given the opportunity.
- 3: Meets grade-level expectations- a student has a solid understanding of the

benchmark at grade level and can demonstrate the knowledge on multiple assessments. **This is where we want all students to be by the END of the year.**

- 2: Progressing toward grade-level expectations- a student has the beginning skills of understanding the benchmark, however, needs more practice to gain a solid understanding of the benchmark.
- 1: Not meeting grade-level expectations- a student cannot understand the benchmark at grade level.

## **ENRICHMENT**

St. Theresa Catholic School's program will follow the guidelines developed through the School's Office of the Diocese of Des Moines. We believe that ALL children have talents and gifts. Enrichment activities are planned for entire classes or subject areas regularly by classroom teachers.

## **MIDDLE SCHOOL**

### **STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY**

*Middle school years are an important time in the formation of students. There are developmental changes for students in physical, social, emotional, and academic areas. The middle school philosophy of education was adopted in the Diocese of Des Moines to better address the needs of students during this period of transition. While acknowledging the characteristics of adolescence, St. Theresa Catholic School believes that middle school students must continue to develop self-discipline and more responsibility in their lives both in and out of school. Middle school students will be held accountable for their behavior and academic work.*

### **ASSIGNMENT BOOKS**

An assignment book is a tool for academic success and a means to communicate between home and school. Each student will have an assignment book that will be filled out each day. Students are expected to share the book with parents, and parents are expected to look at the book at least a couple of times a week, or possibly nightly. Students are required to have their assignment notebook in class and use it. Signatures from teachers and/or parents may be required at the teacher's discretion.

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### **ASSIGNMENT COMPLETION/QUALITY - LATE WORK**

Completing assignments or projects is a skill that students must learn and master for success in later life. The workforce requires employees to finish projects and assignments on time. Assignment completion in school is a way to begin developing this good habit.

For work that is not complete, directions haven't been followed, or the work is done poorly, it will be documented as late. No excuses, outside of serious illness or family emergency will be accepted for incomplete work. If a student is experiencing difficulty with an assignment, it is the student's responsibility to contact (email/before school) the teacher before the class period. Again, assignment completion leads the way to responsibility.

## CHEATING

Students are required to do their own work. Students should ask teachers and parents for help when they need assistance or assignment clarification. Students who copy homework, students who give assignments or test answers to another classmate, or students who take answers from another classmate, will receive a natural consequence for cheating/being a part of cheating behavior. The student getting the answers will have to redo the assignment, complete tasks to relearn material, or test outside the school day.

## PLAGIARISM

This is designed to enhance and enrich students' academic and ethical education at St. Theresa Catholic School. The information outlined in the following policy is intended to provide students with guidelines to enable academic judgment, develop integrity, and preserve honor.

1. **Directly Copying** the work of another person without using all of the following: (1) quotation marks, (2) proper credit immediately following the quote, and (3) listing any sources on the "works cited" page at the end of the assignment.
2. **Paraphrasing** another person's ideas without using all of the following: (1) proper credit immediately following the paraphrase and (2) listing the source on the works cited page at the end of an assignment.
3. **Using and failing to appropriately credit** any work or answers that have been written, created, or developed by another person. This includes work or solutions that have been generated through electronic translation engines, literary summary sources and inappropriate collaboration with other students.
4. **Recycling previously submitted work.** *Recycling* an assignment is the resubmission of academic work that has been previously submitted by oneself or another student.
5. **Using artwork or pictures without proper citation.** Students may not use artwork or photographs, including clip art created by another person, without an appropriate source.

### Consequences of Plagiarism:

The following steps will be administered

1. Redo the assignment
2. Meeting with Principal
3. Natural consequence assign

## PREPARATION FOR CLASSES

Middle school students switch classrooms and teachers for different subjects. In the beginning, this may be difficult for students. At the beginning of the year, teachers will help remind students of needed materials for classes; however, it is

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their responsibility to be prepared. After a period of acclimation to the schedule and classes, students not coming to class with the appropriate classroom materials may result in a referral. Tardiness for a class will result in a referral.

## PROOF OF STUDY/STUDY EVIDENCE (in Middle School)

To have the possibility to retake a test, students need to have shown "Proof of Study/Study Evidence" before

taking the original test. Each teacher will set study evidence requirements for their subject.

## RE-TAKES

When students take a final unit test, they may have the opportunity to retake the test to improve proficiency. Retakes will not be given for novels, long-term projects, or quizzes. Students may be required to meet with a teacher to show the practice of the skills missed on the test before retaking.

## SERVICE HOUR PROGRAM

Middle School students will be completing service hours as part of faith formation. This allows students to become involved in the community in doing the corporal works of mercy to meet some of their curriculum standards. It is a good opportunity for students to be involved at church and in the community. The faith formation teacher will share the information about service hours with students.

## ATTENDANCE

Because of the impact on their academic success and the work ethic they are establishing, students are expected to be present when school is in session. For the safety of a student, it is paramount that parents call or email (office and teacher) the school before 8:15 AM if their child is to be absent/tardy that day. Parents may leave a voicemail message if necessary. If the school has not been notified, the office will contact the parents before 9:00 AM. If a student leaves the school without permission or is not in class, parents will be contacted, and the student will be considered truant. The student will be required to make up that time or comply with other disciplinary arrangements that fit the situation.

Excused reasons for an absence include:

- illness including extended illnesses
- hospitalization, doctor's care, or doctor's appointment
- death in the family or family emergency
- court appearance or other legal situation beyond the control of the family
- a planned family absence with prior approval of administrator with students completing work, tests, and projects completed before leaving when possible
- an extracurricular activity outside of St. Theresa Catholic School, is in good academic standing as deemed appropriate by administration and classroom teacher
- the administrator shall have the final determination of excused absences

## PROCEDURES FOR EXCESSIVE ABSENTEEISM

- It is a parent's responsibility to see that their child attends school as required by the Iowa Compulsory Attendance statute.
- After three days of a child's absences, a note for the doctor must be presented to the school.
- Suppose a student reaches **52 hours of absences in a trimester**. In that case, the parents will be notified by the administration that the possibility exists for loss of academic credit for the trimester work.

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- **98.7 hours in one school year will be considered excessive absenteeism**. Students who reach 98.7 hours will place themselves in jeopardy and may have inevitable academic consequences.
- Students must be in attendance 5 ½ hours per day, excluding lunchtime, to receive credit for a full day of school attendance. Students who arrive after 10:00 AM or leave before 2:00 PM are counted as ½ day

absent.

## **TARDINESS**

If a pattern of tardiness or an excessive number of tardiness is observed, the teacher will contact the parents and administrator. At this time, a conference may be held to make recommendations for corrective actions. These actions may include (but are not limited to) an attendance contract between the school, the parents, and the student.

Parents are requested to call St. Theresa Catholic School before 8:15 AM to notify the school of a student's tardiness and order lunch. Medical or dental appointments are excused tardies when accompanied by a note from the office. After 8:15 AM, the students must come to the office to sign in. Tardiness causes interruption to classes already in session. To maintain instructional integrity in the classroom and facilitate a swift transition for the student, parents cannot accompany tardy students to the classroom.

## **PROCEDURES FOR EXCESSIVE TARDINESS**

- Parents will receive notification from the school office after a student's **eighth unexcused** tardy. ● Upon a student's **tenth unexcused tardy in a trimester**, a consequence will be assigned for that and every other tardy after that. Students/Families that are continually tardy to school will be subject to possible administrative action.

## **EXCUSING STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL**

If a child is to be excused from school during the school day, parents need to communicate to school through an email or a note, and the student **must be picked up from the school office, not the classroom or playground**. **For security and safety reasons, students must sign in and out of school from the school office.**

## **STUDENT ATTENDANCE FOR ACTIVITIES**

It is required that a student be present for a minimum of ½ day to attend a school-related event or extracurricular activity.

## **HIGH SCHOOL TOURNAMENTS**

If a local high school would be involved in state-level tournaments, students may obtain an excused absence providing the following criteria are met:

1. If possible, school work for the day must be completed and turned in to the teacher before departure; otherwise, it must be turned in the following day. Students will not receive make-up work time for work assigned during their absence. Tests must be made up in advance.
2. Students are responsible for obtaining the following day's assignments and handing these in on time.

## **LEAVING SCHOOL GROUNDS**

Students cannot leave the school building or playground during the school day without their parents' or guardians' written permission.

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## **MAKEUP WORK**

It shall be the responsibility of the student on the day of their return to arrange with the teachers for make-up work. All school work missed because of an absence due to illness, or a family emergency will be **made up within forty-eight hours**. Extended valid absence or individual needs will be taken under consideration for an extension of time.

Under examination of our school calendar, please note our scheduled vacation days and teacher professional development days. Please try to arrange family activities so that students will not miss school. Vacations that result in absence from school are strongly discouraged. Families are encouraged to schedule breaks during the time school is NOT in session, rather than taking children out of school.

If a student is to be gone from school for a vacation, the teacher(s) must be informed **at least one week** ahead of time to arrange for schoolwork and tests. **A student's work is given before the vacation must be completed and turned in upon returning to school. Otherwise, it will be considered late.** Teachers may hand out additional makeup work upon the return of the student to class. This other work must be turned in upon a teacher-assigned deadline. Any work not completed at this time will be considered a late assignment.

### **DAILY PROCESSES (SEE DETAILS BELOW)**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Action</b>
7:45 AM	Student may be on school grounds
8:00 AM	Students enter the building with teachers
8:15 AM	School day begins - students are to be in their classrooms
3:27 PM	End of school day prayer and announcements
3:28 PM	Teachers bring students to carline/buses
3:40 PM	Students not picked up are sent to the office.

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### **DROPOFF AND PICKUP PROCEDURES FOR STCS**



**Drop off and pick up are both drive through.**

## **MORNING DROP OFF FOR K-8th GRADE STUDENTS**

- Students may be dropped off starting at 7:45 am when staff are present to welcome them. Students are to be dropped off in the main parking lot between the church and school, entering from Merle Hay Rd. Follow along the cones in a single file line allowing children to exit cars in the marked area.
- Children should be prepared to exit the car quickly. If they need assistance or are not ready to exit the car, please park in the lower parking lot, help them out and walk them up the hill towards the school. • Students should exit on the right side of the vehicle and immediately move through the cones towards the school. This allows students to not have to pass in front of or behind cars moving through the line.
- Cars are allowed to safely and slowly pass other stopped cars on the left after children have exited the cars. Be mindful of where children are.
- Only PreK and Early Childhood Learning Center parents are to use the west teacher parking lot to drop off or pick up children.
- If you arrive after 8:15 am, students must be dropped off at the school office on the north side of the building. • Students who would like to eat breakfast may enter the gym between 7:45-8:10. Breakfast time is over at 8:15, meaning students should be done eating. Students are tardy if they are not in their classroom at 8:15. If you want your student to eat breakfast, you need to have plenty of time to eat and get to class on time.

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- Students who arrive between 7:45 – 8:00 in the parking lot carline are to wait on their class markings and

remain there until school staff direct them to come inside. If the weather is inclement students will be allowed to go into the building.

- All student cell phones are to be turned off and put in lockers or backpacks while on school grounds.

## **EARLY CHILDHOOD LEARNING CENTER AND PK DROPOFF AND PICKUP**

Families who use the ECLC program refer to the ECLC handbook .

### **CARA CARPENTER AVENUE**

Parents may use the bus lane on Cara Carpenter Avenue for pick up and drop off during the school day, after 8:15am and prior to 3:30pm. If you are helping with school events, please park on the street but not in the bus lane, in the teacher parking lot or in the church parking lot and walk around. We have buses and deliveries coming throughout the day so that lane needs to be clear.

Parents are NOT allowed to pick up or drop off students before or after school on Cara Carpenter Avenue which includes the bus lane.

### **STUDENTS WHO WALK TO/FROM SCHOOL**

Students walking to school grounds should cross streets at corners using crosswalks.

### **AFTERNOON PICK UP FOR K-8th GRADE STUDENTS**

- Students are to be picked up in the main parking lot between the church and school. Cars enter the drive to the school playground from Merle Hay Rd. Please drive south on Merle Hay to enter the lot. ● Cars are not to be on the playground prior to 3:15 pm..
- Cars should be in two lines from Merle Hay Rd. until the school playground where cars will alternate into a single line. Parents stay in their cars. Classes will be brought outside at 3:30 for parent pick up. Teachers/staff will assist students in finding their cars.

### **AFTER SCHOOL REGULATIONS**

- All students are to leave the school grounds immediately after dismissal unless attending Early Childcare Learning Center, waiting for the bus, or participating in some supervised activity scheduled for that time. ● Students are not permitted to be in the church, gym, music room, or in areas other than those assigned, except under direct supervision of a member of the school staff.
- Students are not allowed to wait at school for sports or other activities that are scheduled later in the afternoon or evening, except by prior arrangement.
- Arrangements for a student to remain after school should be made 24 hours in advance if

possible. Updated 7/2025 17

- Students not picked up by 3:40 will be sent to the office. The school does not have staff to handle after school supervision. If you need care after 3:40 you will need to make arrangements with the aftercare program. You will be charged for care after 3:40. We understand there may be a rare emergency.
- Cell phones should be shut off and put away while on school grounds. If a student needs to call/text home for a ride they must have teacher permission.

**STUDENTS WHO NEED TO LEAVE DURING THE SCHOOL DAY** No student is to leave the school grounds after arriving unless written permission or phone call from parents is shared with the teacher or office. It is critical that the office knows the location of all students for safety.. The process for students to leave early includes:

- Parents of PreK – 2nd grade students must bring/meet their children in the office to sign them in and out when it is necessary for the students to arrive late or be dismissed early.
- Middle school students must sign in/out in the office after parent contact and can walk out to the car.

**Please notify the school office if there is a change in who is picking up your children. Students will not be allowed to go with a non-designated person unless the school office has been notified.**

## **LUNCH/BREAKFAST/NUTRITION**

### **BREAKFAST/HOT LUNCH**

- Students who bring a cold lunch to school may purchase milk or water.
- Teachers/staff will not microwave food for students.
- Pop is not allowed.
- Lunch from outside restaurants is not allowed for visitors or students.
- Students who come to school without lunch will be required to eat hot lunch.
- Students are expected to remain on campus for lunch.

### **LUNCH COST/LUNCH TIMES**

Student lunch price for the 2025-2026 school year is \$3.15, and milk only is \$0.50

	Lunch	Recess
	11-11:20	11:20-11:45

	5 11:30-11:50	11:50-12:15
	8 12-12:15	12:15-12:30

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**NUTRITION DEPARTMENT\*\***

Daily lunch including milk .....	\$3.15
Second Entrée .....	\$1.50
Individual milk .....	\$0.50
Small water .....	\$0.50
Adult lunch .....	\$4.97
Breakfast .....	\$2.50
Adult breakfast .....	\$3.00

\*\*free or reduced price meals are available for those who qualify\*\*

\*to receive free and reduced lunch benefits, students must get a qualifying meal\*

Lunch funds are added through your jmc/blackbaud.

**SCHOOL NUTRITION**

USDA Non-Discrimination Statement: “In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the Agency (State or local) to apply for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English. To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form (AD-3027) found online at [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit a completed form or letter to USDA by (1) mail: U.S.

Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) Fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) Email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

Iowa Non-Discrimination Statement: *“It is the policy of this CNP provider not to discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability, age, or religion in its programs, activities, or employment practices as required by the Iowa Code section 216.6, 216.7, and 216.9. If you have questions or grievances related to compliance with this policy by this CNP Provider, please contact the Iowa Civil Rights Commission, Grimes State Of ice building, 400 E. 14th St. Des Moines, IA 50319-1004; phone number 515-281-4121, 800-457-4416; website: <https://icrc.iowa.gov/>.”*

**DISCIPLINE**

**PHILOSOPHY**

St. Theresa Catholic School fully implements a team-based, school-wide design for appropriate behaviors that includes all students and staff in all settings. We use guidance to help students become leaders and Disciples of Christ. It is a flexible approach that can be changed based on data to meet our student population's needs. We create a learning environment that encourages positive social interactions, active engagement, self-regulation and leadership skills for

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every student.

The St. Theresa Catholic School Expectations are:

- Be respectful
- Be responsible
- Be safe
- Be faithful

## DEFINITION AND PURPOSE

Following rules and practicing social skills are essential in the same way as developing academic and physical skills. Critical to Catholic education are the skills of taking ownership, building trust, respect, and confidence; showing consideration for others; learning to share, and accepting responsibility for the choices that are made.

1. Discipline is as fundamental in Catholic education as it is in Christian life. Good discipline originates in the home because parents are the first teachers of the child. A parent should teach by example to develop in the child good habits of behavior and proper attitudes toward school.
2. School discipline is an outgrowth of good home training; therefore, **cooperation between home and school is essential**. The school should expand, encourage and develop those habits and attitudes.
3. Individual students must contribute to the group's good, take ownership of their actions, and learn to accept the consequences.
4. Discipline is based on mutual respect for each person as a human being with needs and feelings while knowing each individual can act responsibly.
5. Students have feelings, needs, and rights. In addition, students need to know that teachers also have feelings, needs, and rights.
6. There will be an atmosphere within each classroom and throughout the school conducive to learning and where healthy self-concepts can develop. A whole class should not be disrupted by the inappropriate behavior of one or several students.
7. There are distinct differences in acceptable conduct in the hallways, restrooms, gym, lunchroom, at assemblies, in the carline, during mass, and on the playground. Absolute quiet is not demanded in these areas. However, any time classes are in session, students are expected to be quiet when moving within the building out of respect to working.
8. Students are also to be respectful upon entering and exiting the building.
9. The church is always to be entered reverently and respectfully bowing to the altar upon entering a pew.

## DEFINITION OF BEHAVIOR CONSEQUENCE

- **Quiet Lunch**- When students are assigned to quiet lunch, they will eat in the office. During this time, the students have the opportunity to think about their actions and talk through what they were thinking and

feeling at the time of the incident.

- **Conferencing-** This may be required involving parent(s), teacher(s), student, and/or Administrator.
- **Behavior Contract/Plan-** A student may be placed on a behavioral contract/ plan with a teacher or administrator. The contract is designed to address the concern with a corrective action plan and a written commitment from the student to change with parental support.
- **Removal From The Classroom** is allowed as permitted by Iowa Code.

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- **Detention-** Detention is a consequence and may be assigned to students who choose to misbehave. The student will serve detention on an afternoon agreed upon by the administrator and the family.
- **Exclusion From Class Or Activities-** This may include participation in school-sponsored activities or performances. Parental and/or administration notification may be given regarding exclusion.
- **In-school Suspension-** Students may be required to serve an in-school suspension assigned by the administration or assistant administration as defined by the Code of Iowa 12.3(6). Parents will be notified promptly. The student will serve the in-school suspension in the office and receive all assignments for that day to be completed and turned in by the end of the day.
- **Unenrollment-** Unenrollment of a student shall be made upon the recommendation of the administration. A student may be unenrolled from school for breach of discipline, violation of the policies and regulations, or when the student's presence is detrimental to the school's best interests. In addition, the priest and administration may unenroll any student whose presence in school would be harmful to the health or morals of other students or the welfare of the school. Regarding due process rights, the student's parents may request a hearing before and before the final decision. Every consideration will be made to avoid the unenrollment of a student from St. Theresa Catholic School. This may include referring the student and their family to a local community resource for counseling. Readmission after unenrollment may not take place for one year and only with the explicit permission of the administrator and pastor.

## **POSSESSION**

Possession is defined as owning, having, or controlling material either physically (on one's person) or within one's personal sphere of influence (in lockers, vehicles, bags, etc.). In alcohol situations, possession is defined as being on the premises where alcohol is served or consumed illegally.

## **RESTITUTION**

Restitution is defined as the replacement cost involved in replacing or repairing school incurred loss or damage. Arrangements for the determination and payment of restitution must be made between the student's family and the school.

## **RESTRAINT AND PHYSICAL FORCE**

Restraint is the act of physically controlling or directing the actions of a student. The professional and administrative staff may use reasonable and appropriate means of redirection or restraint as may be necessary to prevent a student from harming themselves, another person, or property. Restraint should not cause severe or permanent harm. Per Iowa Code, deliberately striking a student is specifically prohibited. The use of reasonable force in self-defense or defense of another may be warranted for protection.

Factors determining reasonable and appropriate actions are:

1. Age

2. Physical stature and strength of the student
3. Previous history
4. Maturity of the student
5. The seriousness of the infraction
6. Apparent motive and state of mind
7. The nature of the danger to the student or the heart of the threat to another.

Whenever physical contact, reasonable force in self-defense, or physical restraint is used, it shall be reported immediately to the administration, and the parent(s) shall be notified.

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## **THREATS OF VIOLENCE/ DANGEROUS WEAPONS**

It is the goal of St. Theresa Catholic School to provide all students, staff, and parents with a safe and orderly environment. For that reason, St. Theresa Catholic School responds to all threats of violence or anything that could be thought of in that way as serious in intent. All threats will be investigated by the administration, assistant administration, or guidance counselor. The threat will be reported to, and a meeting will be conducted with the student's parents. Dangerous weapons are not allowed on school grounds or at school-sponsored events. Dangerous weapons will be taken from students and others who bring them onto the school property. When a dangerous weapon or a look-alike is taken from a student, the student's parent will be contacted, and the student will be sent home. St. Theresa Catholic School will take disciplinary action, including a recommendation for professional counseling. The incident may be reported to law enforcement officials for further action. The Diocesan Superintendent and Pastors will also be notified and consulted.

## **PROTOCOL**

**These steps will be followed in each case:**

1. Teacher, parent, or student(s) report threat to the administration.
2. Administrator or designee interviews student(s).
3. Parents of the student(s) who made the threat will be called. No threat will be taken lightly.
4. If a student is threatened and depending upon the nature and seriousness of the threat, the threatened student's parent(s) will be called.
5. Student(s), lockers, and personal items may be searched at any time without notice. (policy 561)\*
6. Upon investigation, if the administration determines that there is reason to believe that the investigation results support the threat of violence, the provisions in the disciplinary policy will be followed regarding suspension and/or expulsion.
7. Any valid threat may be reported to the police.
8. Parent(s) of the student who made the threat will be required to come to school as soon as practical and remove the student from the school grounds. St. Theresa Catholic School will require professional counseling through the House of Mercy, Catholic Charities, or a counselor of the family's choosing approved by the school.
9. The student will not be allowed back into school until a professional counselor has provided in writing a document saying that the student is not a threat to themselves or others. The student may be searched daily as a condition for a return to St. Theresa Catholic school.
10. The guidance counselor or designee will meet regularly with the student making the threat. Teachers are also asked to be cognizant to curtail any teasing that might come out of this disciplinary action.
11. Documentation by all involved regarding the situation and post-disciplinary activities will be kept on file.
12. Any student who sells a controlled substance while on school grounds and/or at a school-related function will be subject to **immediate expulsion.**

\*The law as to private schools and search, and seizure is clear. A private school, while respecting a student's

and employee's property, may, nonetheless, with or without probable cause, search person, lockers, books, bags, and other possessions since the search is not conducted by "public" authorities as opposed to "private" authorities. That is to say that search and seizure may happen at a private institution without constitutional safeguards. St. Theresa Catholic School's policy is to respect people's Constitutional rights and balance those rights against the school's responsibility to ensure a safe environment.

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## **ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE/HARASSMENT**

See the Appendix for these policies and regulations

# **DIOCESE OF DES MOINES Catholic Schools Policies/Regulations**

## **STUDENT PERSONNEL**

Policy 579 – Harassment, Bullying, and Hazing

Policy 579.1 – Investigation

Policy 579.2 – Complaint Form

Policy 579.3 – Disclosure Form

Policy 579.4 – Data Collection and Report Form

### **Harassment and bullying may include, but are not limited to, the following behaviors and**

- circumstances:**
- Verbal, nonverbal, or physical or written harassment, bullying, hazing, or other victimization that have the purpose or effect of causing injury, discomfort, fear, or suffering to the victim;
  - Repeated remarks of a demeaning nature that have the purpose or effect of causing injury, discomfort, fear, or suffering to the victim;
  - Implied or explicit threats concerning one's grades, achievements, property, etc. that have the purpose or effect of causing injury, discomfort, fear, or suffering to the victim;
  - Demeaning jokes, stories, or activities directed at the student that have the purpose or effect of causing injury, discomfort, fear, or suffering to the victim; and/or
  - Unreasonable interference with a student's performance or creating an intimidating, offensive, or hostile learning environment.

This policy shall be in effect while students are on school property, while on school-owned or school-operated/leased vehicles; while attending or engaged in school-sponsored activities, and while away from school grounds if the misconduct directly affects the good order, efficient management, and welfare of the school. Students who believe they or another student or students are victims of bullying or harassment should immediately report their concerns to a teacher, guidance counselor, or administrator. The school must promptly and reasonably investigate allegations of bullying and harassment. The administration will be responsible for handling all complaints by students alleging bullying or harassment.

If a staff member believes they are or have been bullied or harassed by a student, they should contact the administration, who must investigate the matter. If the staff member chooses, the issue may be reported to legal

authorities. Retaliation against a person because the person has filed a bullying or harassment complaint, assisted or participated in a harassment investigation or proceeding is prohibited. An individual who knowingly files a false harassment complaint and a person who gives false statements in an investigation shall be subject to discipline by appropriate measures, as shall a person who is found to have retaliated against another in violation of this policy. A student found to have retaliated in violation of this policy shall be subject to measures including suspension and expulsion.

The administration is responsible for developing a system that collects data relating to incidents of harassment and bullying. The administration shall also ensure that the anti-harassment and anti-bullying policy and procedures are

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integrated into the school's Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP) and shall ensure that the same is reported according to the plan's terms. Nothing in this policy shall be construed to impair the school's ability to educate and administer consistent with the mission of the Catholic Church. Nothing in this policy is intended to condone behavior or lifestyles that are inconsistent with Catholic teachings.

Harassment is a serious matter. All activities in the investigation will be carried out with discretion, and privacy will be maintained to the fullest extent possible. Information related to these complaints will be kept confidential, consistent with the Diocesan obligations.

Level I Investigator: Administration and/or Guidance Counselor, St. Theresa Catholic School, 515-277-0178.

## **DRESS CODE**

### **OVERVIEW**

The St. Theresa Dress Code promotes a positive, focused learning environment. Neat, clean, and appropriate attire helps minimize distractions and maintain respectful standards for all.

All students are expected to follow the dress code. Those who do not may be required to call home for appropriate clothing and may receive levels.

PreK students are encouraged but not required to wear the uniform.

### **K-8 UNIFORM**

The following outlines the uniform descriptions for K-8th Grade students:

#### **PANTS**

- Plain navy or khaki dress pants, corduroy or Docker style pants with pockets
- Pants should fit nicely and be in good condition
- No cargo pants(no side pockets or zippers), knit pants(jeggings), jeans, joggers, tight or revealing pants, pants with designs on pockets or leggings(unless under skirts or jumpers)

#### **SHORTS/CAPRIS**

(August 23 – October 31 & April 1 – Last Day of School only)

- Plain navy or khaki walking shorts or capris
- Shorts should be mid thigh length but may not extend below the knee
- No shorts or capris with designs on pockets

## **JUMPERS/SKIRTS/SKORTS**

- Colors allowed: navy, khaki or classic Navy/Evergreen Plaid purchased from Land's End ● Must wear solid black, white or navy leggings underneath jumpers, skirts and skorts from November 1-March 31 to cover underwear, warmth and help with modesty.

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- Undershorts from April 1-October 31 under dresses and skirts to cover underwear, helping with modesty. ● Jumpers/skirts/skorts should be mid thigh length but may not extend below the knee.
- Uniform Polo shirt must always be worn under jumpers
- Leggings or shorts must be worn under ALL jumpers/skirts/skorts

## **SHIRTS/BLOUSES**

- Plain white or navy polo, blouse or turtleneck
- Kelly green polo with school logo purchased from Smith Pro or Land's End (required for weekly school mass) ● Only solid white undergarments or camisoles underneath shirts; no long sleeve shirts under short sleeve shirts

## **SWEATERS/FLEECE/SWEATSHIRTS**

- Solid white, gray or navy sweaters; crew neck, v-neck, or cardigan styles; may be worn over, but not in place of, uniform shirts or blouses
- St. Theresa Catholic black fleece with school logo purchased from Smith Pro or Lands End ● Navy or kelly green St. Theresa Catholic crew neck (non-hooded) St. Theresa Logo sweatshirts purchased from Smith Pro worn over a school dress code polo
- Hooded sweatshirts allowed on Spirit Days and Out of Uniform Days only.

## **SOCKS**

- Must wear socks
- Solid white, black or navy - can have small emblem of a different color
- Solid white, black or navy tights for girls

## **SHOES**

- All students should wear shoes which are clean and in good condition
- Shoes must have a closed back (no strap) on them and no open toes
- Tennis shoes are required for PE

## **HAIR**

- All hair must be a natural color

- Hair must be worn out of the eyes
- Shaved designs in hair are not allowed for any students
- Boys' hair must not touch the collar and must not extend below the ear lobe

## **JEWELRY/ADORNMENT**

- If jewelry becomes distracting to the student or others, the child must remove the jewelry and give the jewelry to the teacher. The jewelry will be returned to the student at the end of the day.
- Girls are allowed no more than two small earrings per ear
- Boys may not wear earrings during school or at any school sponsored function
- Body piercings are not acceptable
- No tattoos – permanent or temporary

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## **HATS**

- Hats may be worn to school, but may not be worn in the building unless there is teacher/administration approval.
- No neck scarves, bandanas, or apparel that covers the entire head may be worn unless there is administration approval.
- Veiling is allowed during mass.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

- K-5th students should wear regular school uniforms with tennis shoes.
- 6th - 8th grade students will wear the official black PE shorts and green PE shirt (ordered through school)

## **OUT OF UNIFORM DAYS**

These are days when students may wear clean, well-kept jeans or athletic pants to school. No cargo jeans or leggings pants are allowed. Shorts must be mid-thigh length. A modest, school appropriate shirt of choice may be worn. Shorts may not be worn from November 1-March 31.

## **SPIRIT DAYS**

Spirit Days are held the last Friday of each month. Students may wear clean, well-kept school appropriate St. Theresa Catholic, Dowling Catholic or faith-based tops. Students should wear school dress code shorts, skirts or pants.

## **WATER BOTTLES**

All student water bottles **MUST** be clear/transparent with a secure lid. They must be leak proof. No metal. No solid color plastic. These are the only water bottles that will be allowed in classrooms and at school. Water bottles will be allowed in classrooms, unless a student is not able to handle their water bottle in the room. Water bottles should be filled with water only, no add-ins, flavoring or other beverages.

## HEALTH

A school nurse will be on site once a week. Certificates of immunization are required of every new student before entrance into school. Students are expected to have a physical examination before entering kindergarten, grade 4, and grade 7. Examination forms are available online, from the school office, or from your doctor's office. The nurse maintains individual pupil health records as required by the State of Iowa. Vision screening is done for grades 1, 4, and 7 each year and for students where the concern is identified. An audiologist from Heartland AEA conducts hearing screenings annually.

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### ACCIDENT OR ILLNESS

If a child becomes ill or is hurt, he/she should report to their teacher or staff member. Students who are sick will come to the office to be seen by the nurse. The nurse will assess the student to determine if they should go home. When a child is ill or has an accident at school, the parent/guardian or emergency contact will be notified. No child is ever sent home until prior arrangements have been made. If a parent receives a phone call or text message from their child stating they are ill and needs to be picked up, please ask the nurse to verify this information.

### COMMUNICABLE DISEASE

St. Theresa Catholic School policy on staff or students who may contract a communicable disease is contained in the Policy Book of the Diocese of Des Moines (Policy #411, 511). Should parents need any specific information on this policy, please contact the administration. The State of Iowa requires age-appropriate education on communicable diseases. Catholic Church-approved materials are used.

### HEALTH CARE PLANS

The Iowa Administrative Code 281--41.23(281) states the definition of the individual health plan as "the confidential, written, preplanned and ongoing special health service in the education program. It includes assessment, planning, implementation, documentation, evaluation, and an emergency plan. The plan is updated as needed and at least annually. Licensed health personnel develop this written plan with the education team." The Administrative Code further states prior to the provision of special health services, a written individual health plan is on file [IAC 281--41.23(1)(b)(4)].

### HEALTHY KIDS ACT

**Background-** In 2008 the Iowa Legislature passed a law known as the Healthy Kids Act. There are three aspects to the law designed to improve the health of Iowa's youth: 1) a physical activity component, 2) detailed nutritional guidelines, and 3) students receive CPR training. Compliance with the rules will be checked at DE site visits. The adopted rules are available electronically at [Healthy Kids Act Rules](#).  
**See appendix: Drink/Snack Guidelines**

### PHYSICAL ACTIVITY REQUIREMENTS

The law requires that all students in grades K-5 in all public and accredited non-public schools engage in 30 minutes of physical activity each school day. The law requires grades 6-12 students must engage in 120 minutes

of physical activity each week. This time is provided during the St. Theresa Catholic school day.

## HEARING SCREENING

Hearing screenings will occur annually. Students who “fail” the initial screening will receive a second screening and perhaps additional testing by an audiologist. Parents will receive a written report of test results only if abnormal after the second stage of testing. This is a screening process only and does not identify all hearing or ear problems. If a child has had hearing or ear problems recently, this information can be sent to the school nurse for the audiologist. Parents do have the opportunity to decline screening/testing, but they need to contact the school nurse before testing dates. Any age student can receive a hearing screening at parent request or teacher request with parent consent. If there are any questions about the hearing testing program in the school, please contact the school nurse or administrator.

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## MEDICATION GUIDELINES

In accordance with State Code 281 IAC 41.12 (11)

To establish and maintain a system of safe storage, handling, and dispensing of prescribed medication, the following procedures are enforced to help ensure protection for the student and St. Theresa Catholic School:

1. All prescription and over-the-counter medication that is to be taken during the school day must be turned into the school office and stored in a secure area unless an alternate provision is documented.
2. Prescription medications must be in the original pharmacy-labeled container with the date, pupil name, prescriber, or person authorizing administration, medication, dosage, and time. The pharmacy label on prescription medication is considered prescribers instruction. If the medicine is given at home and school, request a “school container” from the pharmacy.
3. A student may be considered for co-administration or self-administration with demonstrated competency and instructions from the physician, written physician and parental permission.
4. Parents must complete the parent “Request for Giving Medication” form for prescribed and over-the-counter medication that is to be administered at school. A separate form is to be used for each medicine or when the dosage changes.
5. Over-the-counter medications must be in the original container and must be labeled with the student’s name. All over-the-counter or non-prescription medications will not be administered by school personnel unless accompanied by the physician’s instructions and signed parent permission.
6. Parents may administer medications at school to their own children.
7. Antibiotics that are prescribed three times a day should be given at home. There may be exceptions for those to be given with meals.

At vacation time, end of the year, or end of the dispensing time, any remaining medication will be returned to the parents or destroyed.

## SEVERE FOOD ALLERGIES

St. Theresa Catholic School does have students with **severe, life-threatening** food allergies. Due to the risk of hepatitis and individual food allergies, the Polk County Health Department has strongly suggested strict guidelines in the way treats, snacks, and holiday parties are handled at school.

## WHEN SHOULD YOUR CHILD STAY HOME?

The following are public health recommendations when deciding whether or not to send a child to school that wakes up not feeling well. **Although sometimes inconvenient, parents are expected to adhere to the 24-hour guidelines for the health of all.**

- **Diarrhea/Vomiting** - within the last 24 hours: keep the child home.
- **Fever** - 100 degrees or greater: keep the child home until fever-free at least 24 hours. ● **Runny Nose** - 1) due to allergies: send the child to school, 2) due to cold virus with other symptoms such as cough, sore throat, headache, yellow/green drainage from the nose: keep the child home.
- **COVID-19**- highly contagious- fever, new loss of taste or smell; diagnosis is made by a nose swab: the child will need to be out of the building until 24 hours with no fever and improved symptoms.
- **Strep Throat** - highly contagious bacterial infection - sore throat, fever (usually), aches; diagnosis is made by a throat culture: the child needs to be on an antibiotic for at least 24 hours and symptoms subsiding before returning to school.
- **Pinkeye** - highly contagious and presents itself with burning, itching red eyes with yellow drainage: the child should be seen by a physician and should be on medication for at least 24 hours and symptoms subsiding before returning to school.

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- **Chicken Pox** - one of the most common contagious viral diseases of childhood. Symptoms include low-grade fever and a distinctive rash. The rash begins as red bumps, which develop into blisters that pop and form scabs. The rash causes itching, which may be severe. Children should not return to school until all blisters have scabs. This usually takes seven days or more.
- **Impetigo** - a skin infection that occurs when bacteria invade skin that is broken, scratched or burned. The areas most affected are the hands and face, especially around the nose and mouth. It usually begins as red spots which fill with fluid (blisters). The blisters rupture easily, and the fluid dries and forms a honey-colored crust. Treatment is with an antibiotic ointment, oral antibiotics, or both. The child should be on medication for 24 hours before returning to school.
- **Rash** - may be due to many different illnesses and may be contagious. A physician should be contacted for diagnosis and permission for the child to return to school.

If a child is home ill for more than three consecutive days, the school will require a note from a physician regarding the child's extended absence for illness.

If a child needs to stay in from recess after an illness, a physician's note is required.

If a child requires exclusion from PE or recess for an extended period of **greater than one day**, a physician's note will be needed.

## REQUIRED HEALTH DATA

Immunization cards for PreK/Kindergarten

Physicals for students in Kindergarten, 4th and 7th

Annual physicals for student athletes in grades 5-8

Lead screening for PreK/Kindergarten

Dental screening for Kindergarten

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **BIRTHDAY/CLASS PARTIES**

Birthday/private party invitations are never to be passed out at school unless **all classmates are invited**. Invitations should be sent unlabeled (no names) and will be sent home at the end of the day.

Birthdays are essential to every child, and kids like to celebrate their special day with their classmates. Birthdays may continue to be celebrated in each classroom, but with **store bought treats or** pencils, erasers, stickers, bookmarks, etc. Birthday celebrations are not an expectation or requirement; however, should a student elect to bring a treat, there should be one provided for each student. Parent homeroom helpers will organize class parties throughout the school year. All food items that can be purchased for the party **must be individually packaged**.

### **ASBESTOS MANAGEMENT PLAN**

St. Theresa Catholic School has an asbestos management plan and is in compliance with the rules and regulations of AHERA.

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The asbestos management plan for St. Theresa Catholic School is available for review in the school office. This management plan is required under the federal “Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act” (AHERA) codified in 40CFR Part 763. If you have any questions please contact the school office at 277-0178.

### **CHANGE OF ADDRESS AND PHONE NUMBERS**

Please notify the school office promptly concerning any change of address, school districts, mileage distance, phone number, or emergency information. This courtesy will help keep records in order.

### **DUE PROCESS**

Anonymous allegations about student misbehavior will not be investigated.

Due process rights for St. Theresa Catholic School students are defined below in the subheading “Grievances”. It is our practice to inform every student of the rules. Open communication between teachers and parents can resolve most issues.

St. Theresa Catholic School students will be given an opportunity to be aware of the school rules and acceptable behavior. Parents will be made aware of the matters leading to the proposed discipline and may provide their perspective on a situation and resulting in disciplinary action.

### **ELECTRONICS**

#### **Personal Communication Devices**

It shall be the policy of the Diocesan Catholic Schools Office, under the aegis of the Bishop, that all Catholic schools

will adhere to the policy regarding personal communication devices.

Cell phones, smart watches, and other communication devices may not be used between the start of the school day and the end of the school day. Hours of school day operation are listed in each school's parent/student handbook.

At Dowling Catholic High School, administrators retain the discretion to allow phones at specific times of the day. These times will be listed in the parent/student handbook.

For all diocesan schools, the use of cell phones or any device capable of capturing images is strictly prohibited in locker rooms or restroom areas. Families and students may use the main office when communicating messages from home or school.

Should a student not comply with the policy and the conditions listed in the parent/student handbook, consequences will be enforced. These consequences shall be listed in the parent/student handbook.

Policy 584 Adopted: July 16, 2025

Teachers will confiscate any personal communication devices that they see during the school day. Confiscated personal communication devices must be picked up by parents. A meeting with the parent, the student, school staff, and the administrator will be held if personal communication devices use is an ongoing problem.

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## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

### **CRISIS PLAN**

In the event of a crisis at St. Theresa Catholic School, emergency response procedures which are part of the St. Theresa Catholic School emergency operations plan are activated. St. Theresa Catholic School maintains and frequently reviews the Crisis Plan manual. The safety of our students is the most important priority throughout any crisis situation.

### **FIRE/TORNADO/INTRUDER DRILLS**

Regular fire, tornado, and active threat drills are practiced throughout the school year. Safety is our priority in any crisis situation.

### **INCLEMENT WEATHER**

The decision to dismiss classes because of inclement weather will be determined by administration. Such a decision will be announced on local TV and school communication. Parents will also be notified by an automated phone call and text message through jmc. This information will also be available on [www.kcci.com](http://www.kcci.com) or [www.whotv.com](http://www.whotv.com).

If St. Theresa Catholic School closes due to inclement weather, St. Theresa Childcare will also close.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Field trips are an extension of the regular classroom curriculum and are learning activities; therefore, all students go on field trips. Permission slips will be sent home before each field trip. All field trip costs will be charged to Blackbaud.

## **GRIEVANCES**

1. Contact the teacher or director involved with the concern. The administration will generally refer parents to the individual directly if this step is not completed.
2. Contact school administration if the concern is not resolved.
3. If the grievance is still unresolved, parents/guardians will take the grievance to the pastor.
4. If the grievance remains unresolved, parents/guardians can appeal the decision to the Superintendent.

The administrator may recommend that a student withdraws from the school. Following a full and fair review of all available facts, the administrator may unenroll a student.

## **GUM AND CANDY**

Students may not chew gum and/or eat candy on school premises (including the playground, gymnasium, all areas of the church) or field trips.

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## **LOST ITEMS**

Labeling all clothing items, especially outerwear, will decrease lost items. If unlabeled items are lost, they will be placed in the Lost and Found box. At the end of each trimester, unclaimed items will be donated to a local charity.

## **MEDIA CENTER PROCEDURES, TEXTBOOKS, AND FINES**

All students will check out books for a period of one week. Books may be renewed once for another week if requested. New books will not be checked out until others are returned. Any book, or textbook, not returned by the end of the school year will be assessed as a replacement value added to Blackbaud billing.

## **MONEY**

To remove monies from the school, the only time money should be sent to school is for out-of-uniform days. All other funds will be collected through Blackbaud.

## **NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION**

Applicants for admission and employment, students, parents, employees, sources of referral of applicants for admission and employment with St. Theresa Catholic School are hereby notified that this school does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability as defined in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as it applies to the diocesan schools and Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act, as it applies to the diocesan schools, in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs and activities. Any person having inquiries concerning St. Theresa Catholic School's compliance with the regulations implementing Title VI and Title IX of the Civil Rights Laws, the Americans with Disabilities Act, or Section 504 is directed to the administrator to coordinate the school's efforts to comply with the regulations related to these laws.

## **OTHER ANNUAL NOTICES**

School districts are required to give all patrons several annual notices. The following is a list (which may not be exhaustive, but represents the DE's best efforts) of state and federal notices that all districts are required to give to the public every year.

There are some model notices required by federal law available electronically. They are as follows: •

- Notification of Rights under FERPA: [www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/pdf/ferparights.pdf](http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/pdf/ferparights.pdf)
- Model Notice for FERPA Directory Information: [www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/mndirectoryinfo.html](http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/mndirectoryinfo.html)
- Model Notice of Rights under PPRA (Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment):  
[www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/pdf/modelnotification.pdf](http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/pdf/modelnotification.pdf)
- PPRA Model Notice and Consent/Opt-Out:  
[www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/pdf/ppraconsent.pdf](http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/pdf/ppraconsent.pdf)
- Notice of Parents of Parental Involvement Rights under Title I, Part A:  
[www.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/parentinvguid.doc](http://www.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/parentinvguid.doc)
- Child Nutrition Programs: [www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Guidance/eligibility\\_guidance.pdf](http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Guidance/eligibility_guidance.pdf)
- Posters with Education Rights of Homeless Children: [www.serve.org/nche/products\\_list.php#youth\\_poster](http://www.serve.org/nche/products_list.php#youth_poster)

## RECESS

All children are expected to participate in all recesses unless excused by a note from a

doctor. Updated 7/2025 32

## SCHOOL EVENTS

Attendance is mandatory at all special school and class activities for which advance notice is given and school time is used for practice and preparation.

Such activities include vocal/band concerts (part of their standards and grade), field trips, and other such activities, whether held during the school day or in the evening. Students may only be excused in the event of an emergency or a serious conflict where the presence of the student is not essential to the performance and the conflict is unavoidable. In such cases, a request to be excused must be made in writing (and in advance when possible). The request will be reviewed by the sponsor of the activity and the administration.

**Note regarding school events:** Athletic events, parties, and similar events are generally not considered sufficient grounds for absence at special school events. Students must attend, at minimum, half of the school day on the day an event or activity is held to participate in that event or activity.

## SUPPORT FOR THE HANDBOOK

The St. Theresa Catholic School has reviewed and approved the contents of this Handbook and is committed to enforcing the policies and practices outlined here. This handbook is reviewed yearly by the administration, faculty, staff and Leadership Council. The administrator is the final recourse and reserves the right to amend the handbook at any time. Parents will be given prompt notification.

## Diocesan School Policies

## APPENDIX

### STCS DIGITAL RESOURCES ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

The following guidelines for digital resources apply for all students in grades K-8:

- School digital resources (including computers, networks, and peripheral devices) may be used for classwork and for school-related activities only unless a teacher/administrator gives permission.
- In grades 4-8: 1:1, devices purchased and used for classwork must be Chromebooks.
- Keep your password private. Students should access only their own account(s).
- Inappropriate use includes, but is not limited to the viewing of unsuitable material; playing games for recreational purposes; bypassing school filters; downloading and installation of the software; making unauthorized changes to computer settings, videoing/filming on school grounds without permission, and harming the school's digital resources in any way.
- The use of games and simulations that are teacher-directed and tied directly to the school curriculum and grade-level expectations is appropriate for digital resources.

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- For students' safety, all computers are remotely monitored. Students who use their equipment to access the school's guest network must follow the same set of rules.

Students who do not comply with the above rules could lose computer privileges for one school day for their first offense. This would be done by restricting student access only to sites needed for class. A second offense may result in the loss of computer privileges for the school week. A third offense may result in the loss of computer privileges for the remainder of the school year. Depending on the severity of the infraction, other consequences may apply.

Everyone using St. Theresa Catholic School information technology resources, including, but not limited to, School-owned networks and/or School-owned devices, is responsible for:

1. being ethical and respectful of the rights of others and the diversity of the communities, including the rights to privacy and all other legal requirements and restrictions regarding access to and use of information;
2. refraining from any illegal and improper intrusions into the accounts of others and/or into any school information technology resources and systems;
3. taking all reasonable steps to ensure the accuracy and the security of the information that they compile or provide;
4. refraining from acts that waste resources and prevent others from having broad access to St. Theresa Catholic School resources;
5. recognizing and honoring the intellectual property rights of others, making citations as appropriate; and
6. refraining from the use of technology to bully/harass others.

## **STCS WELLNESS POLICY**

The following Wellness Policy has been modified and adapted from the Des Moines Diocesan Policy #712, “Nutrition and Physical Activity Wellness Policy” for local use at St. Theresa Catholic School in Des Moines, Iowa.

### **EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS**

#### **Nutrition and Physical Activity Wellness Policy**

St. Theresa Catholic School and Leadership Council promotes healthy students by supporting wellness, good nutrition, and regular physical activity as part of the total learning environment. St. Theresa Catholic School supports a healthy environment where students learn and participate in positive dietary and lifestyle practices. By facilitating learning through the support and promotion of good nutrition and activity, schools contribute to the basic health status of students. Improved health optimizes student performance potential.

St. Theresa Catholic School provides a comprehensive learning environment for developing and practicing lifelong wellness behaviors. The entire school environment, not just the classroom, shall be aligned with healthy goals to positively influence a student’s understanding, beliefs, and habits as they relate to good nutrition and regular physical activity.

St. Theresa Catholic School supports and promotes dietary habits contributing to students’ health status and academic performance. All foods available on school grounds and at school-sponsored activities during the instructional day

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should meet or exceed the school’s nutrition practices. Foods should be served with consideration toward nutritional integrity, variety, appeal, taste, safety, and packaging to ensure high-quality meals.

St. Theresa Catholic School established a local Wellness Committee in 2019. The committee was responsible for developing and implementing the St. Theresa Catholic School Wellness Policy based on the Diocesan Schools Board Wellness Policy recommendations. The Student Improvement Advisory Committee (SIAC) is responsible for the ongoing evaluation of our policy. School Administration will report annually to the St. Theresa Catholic School Leadership Council regarding the effectiveness of the Wellness Policy.

### **SPECIFIC WELLNESS GOALS**

#### **Nutrition Education and Promotion - Appendix A**

St. Theresa Catholic School will provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion. To accomplish this goal, ● A baseline assessment of nutrition education currently provided has been conducted. Based on this assessment, a sequential and interdisciplinary nutrition education curriculum has been developed which addresses age-appropriate topics covered in each grade level. Nutrition education may be integrated into other areas of the curriculum such as, but not limited to, math, science, language arts, social studies, PE, and

- guidance; ● The staff responsible for nutrition education will effectively deliver an accurate nutrition education program as outlined. Preparation will provide essential nutrition knowledge, combined with skill practice in program-specific activities and instructional techniques and strategies designed to promote healthy eating habits. ● Nutrition education information will be appropriate, approved, and/or recommended curriculum. ● The School Lunch Program and cafeteria will serve as a learning laboratory to allow students to apply classroom nutrition education; and
- The School Lunch Program, complying with federal, state, and local requirements, will promote fruits, vegetables, whole-grain products, low fat and fat-free dairy products, healthy food preparation methods, and health-enhancing nutrition practices.

## **Physical Activity- Appendix B**

### ***Physical Education***

St. Theresa Catholic School will provide physical education that:

- is taught by a licensed physical education teacher;
- currently shall be taught in grades K-5 a minimum of 45 minutes per week;
- currently shall be taught in grades 6-8 a minimum 120 minutes times per week; and
- shall comply with the physical activity requirements as established by the Healthy Kids Act

### ***Recess***

Elementary and middle school students will be provided recess period during the school day as allowed per curriculum schedule, and preferably be offered outdoors, if able.

### ***Physical Activity and Punishment***

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Staff members and employees should not use physical activity (ex. running laps, push-ups) or withhold opportunities for physical activity (ex. recess, physical education) as punishment.

## **Other School-Based Activities that Promote Student Wellness - Appendix C**

### ***Integrating Physical Activity into Classroom Settings***

Students need opportunities for physical activity beyond recess and physical education classes to embrace regular physical activity as a personal behavior fully. Toward that end, St. Theresa Catholic School will: ● offer classroom health education that complements physical education;

- discourages sedentary activities such as watching television, playing computer games, etc. as part of the school day; and
- encourages classroom teachers to provide activity breaks between lessons and classes and to use additional recess time as a reward, as appropriate/possible during the school day.

### ***Communication with Parents***

St. Theresa Catholic School will support parents' efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity

for their children. The school will:

- encourage parents to pack healthy sack lunches and snacks and to refrain from including beverages and food that do not meet nutrition standards; and
- provide parents with a list of foods that meet the school's snack standards and suggestions for non-food-related items for celebrations/birthday treats, rewards, and fundraising activities.

### ***Food Marketing in Schools***

School-based marketing will be consistent with nutrition education and health promotion. Our school will promote healthy foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, whole-grain products, and low-fat dairy products.

### ***Before and After School Programs***

St. Theresa Catholic Before and Afterschool Program will encourage physical activity and healthy habit formation. The before and after school program will abide by the healthy snack and physical activity requirements under its certification through the Department of Health and Human Services.

### ***Staff Wellness***

St. Theresa Catholic School values the health and well-being of every staff member and will work to support personal efforts by staff to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Toward that end, our school will work to establish and maintain a Staff Wellness Committee, which will support staff activities and education based on interest.

## **Nutritional Guidelines for All Foods Available on Campus - Appendix D**

### ***School Meals***

Meals served at St. Theresa Catholic School through the National School Lunch

Program will: Updated 7/2025 36

- be appealing and attractive to children;
- be served in clean and pleasant settings;
- meet, at a minimum, the nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal law; ● offer a variety of fruits and vegetables, preferably fresh when available/affordable;
- serve low fat or non-fat dairy products and nutritionally equivalent non-dairy alternatives, when available/affordable.

Schools should share information about the nutritional content of meals with parents, students, and staff on menus and/or other sources of communication in the lunchroom and school kitchen.

### ***Free and Reduced-Price Meals***

St. Theresa Catholic School will make every effort to eliminate any social stigma attached to and prevent the overt identification of students who are eligible for free and reduced-price meals. Toward this end, St. Theresa Catholic School utilizes an electronic identification and payment system.

### ***Qualifications of Food Service Staff***

St. Theresa Catholic School will:

- Employ a food service director who is properly qualified, certified, and/or credentialed according to current professional standards; and
- Assure/maintain records that demonstrate that all food service staff and school lunch volunteers have had adequate pre-service training in foodservice operations and provide continuing education opportunities according to their level of responsibility.

### ***Sharing of Foods***

St. Theresa Catholic School will discourage students from sharing foods/beverages during meal or snack times, given concerns about communicable disease, food allergies, and other restrictions on some children's diets.

### ***Food Served as Rewards or in Celebrations***

Teachers/staff will be encouraged to use non-food items for student rewards/incentives. For school-based celebrations, staff/parents will be required to provide snacks/drinks based on the above-mentioned nutrition and portion size standards. Homeroom parents will be provided with a list of acceptable party treats for classroom parties.

### ***Foods Served at School-Sponsored Events Outside of the School Day (Concessions Stand, etc.)***

Concessions at St. Theresa Catholic school-sponsored events outside of the school day will offer some items which meet the nutrition mentioned above and portion size standards as healthy choice alternatives.

### ***Food Safety***

St. Theresa Catholic School will develop standards that address food safety and sanitation policies and procedures that need to be followed when non-School Lunch program employees use the school lunch program facilities to maintain

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food safety and sanitation standards of foods provided, and maintain sanitation standards as outlined by the schools HACCP program.

## **Plan for Measuring Implementation - Appendix E**

### ***Monitoring***

The Des Moines Diocesan Schools Superintendent will ensure compliance with established Diocesan Schools Board Nutrition and Physical Activity Wellness Policy.

At St. Theresa Catholic School:

- The school administration will ensure compliance with the Diocesan Schools Board Nutrition and

Physical Activity Wellness Policy and will report on the school's compliance with the superintendent; ● Foodservice staff will ensure compliance with the nutrition policy and goals with food service areas and will report this matter to the administration;

- The building administration will report on the most recent USDA School Meals Initiative (SMI) review findings and any resulting changes. If the school has not received an SMI review from the state agency within the past three years, the administration will request from the state agency that an SMI review be scheduled as soon as possible;
- The superintendent will develop a summary report every three years on diocesan-wide compliance with the Diocesan Schools Board established Nutrition and Physical Activity Wellness Policy, based on input from the local schools with the diocese; and
- The report will be provided to the Diocesan Schools Board and distributed to all local school wellness committees, parent/teacher organizations, administrators, and health services personnel in the diocesan schools.

### ***Policy Review***

To help implement the Diocesan Schools Board Nutrition and Physical Activity Wellness Policy, St. Theresa Catholic School will conduct a baseline assessment of the school's existing nutrition and physical activity environments and practices. The result of this assessment will be compiled at the diocesan level to identify and prioritize future needs. Assessments will be repeated every three years to help review policy compliance, assess progress, and determine areas of improvement. As part of that review, the Diocesan Schools Office will review the Nutrition and Physical Activity Wellness Policy, its goals and practices, and the provision of an environment that supports healthy eating and physical activity. The Diocesan Schools Office, and individual schools within the Diocese, will collaborate to review the wellness policy and goals and develop work plans to facilitate future implementations.

### **Drink/Snack Guidelines at St. Theresa Catholic School** ***These are to be followed from 8:00 AM to 3:30 PM.***

*At St. Theresa, we have developed our guidelines to promote a safe, healthy environment and lifestyle across our school building. There also is a lot of research on how well healthy fed students learn better in the classroom.*

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### **FOOD/DRINKS CONNECTED TO TEACHING**

Teachers will gain pre-authorization for any food items to help in the learning of their Standards and Benchmarks. The request needs to be sent to the Administration for approval.

[Healthy Snack List](#)

# DIOCESE OF DES MOINES CATHOLIC SCHOOLS POLICIES/REGULATIONS

## STUDENT PERSONNEL

### Harassment, Bullying, and Hazing

It shall be the policy of the Diocesan Catholic Schools Board that all schools maintain an environment free from unlawful and undesirable verbal and physical harassment, bullying and/or hazing. Schools should develop and incorporate programs to eliminate harassment, bullying, and hazing from all students and school personnel.

For this policy, harassment, bullying, and hazing shall mean any electronic, written, verbal, or physical act or conduct toward a student which is based on any actual or perceived trait or characteristic of the student and which creates an objectively hostile school environment that meets one or more of the following conditions:

- Places the student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or property;
- Has a substantially detrimental effect on the student's physical or mental health;
- Has the effect of substantially interfering with the student's academic performance; or
- Has the effect of substantially interfering with the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the school's services, activities, or privileges.

"Electronic" shall mean any communication involving the transmission of information by wire, radio, optical cable, electromagnetic, or other similar means. "Electronic" includes but is not limited to communication via electronic mail, internet-based communications, pager service, cell phones, electronic text messaging, or similar technologies.

The phrase "trait or characteristic" of the student as used in this policy includes, but is not limited to, age, color, creed, national origin, race, religion, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical attributes, physical or mental ability or disability, ancestry, political party preference, political belief, socioeconomic status, or familial status.

The term "sexual orientation" means actual or perceived heterosexuality, homosexuality, or bisexuality. The term "gender identity" means a person's gender-related identity, regardless of the person's assigned sex at birth.

Harassment, bullying, and hazing may include, but are not limited to, the following behaviors and circumstances: • Verbal, nonverbal, or physical or written harassment, bullying, hazing, or other victimization that has the purpose or effect of causing injury, discomfort, fear, or suffering to the victim;

- Repeated remarks of a demeaning nature that have the purpose or effect of causing injury, discomfort, fear, or suffering to the victim;
- Implied or explicit threats concerning one's grades, achievements, property, etc.

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that have the purpose or effect of causing injury, discomfort, fear, or suffering to the victim;

- Demeaning jokes, stories, or activities directed at the student that have the purpose or effect of causing injury, discomfort, fear, or suffering to the victim; or
- Unreasonable interference with a student's performance or creation of an

intimidating, offensive, or hostile learning environment.

This policy shall be in effect while students are on school property, while on school-owned or school-operated/leased vehicles, while attending or engaged in school-sponsored activities, and while away from school grounds if the misconduct directly affects the good order, efficient management, and welfare of the school.

Students who believe they or another student or students are the victims of bullying, harassment, or hazing should immediately report their concerns to the school administrator or the administrator's designee. The school must promptly and reasonably investigate allegations of bullying, harassment, and hazing. The administrator or the administrator's designee will handle all complaints by students alleging bullying, harassment, or hazing.

If a staff member believes she/he is bullied, harassed, or hazed by a student, the staff member should contact the administrator, who must investigate the matter. If the staff member chooses, the issue may be reported to legal authorities.

Retaliation against a person because the person has filed a bullying, harassment, or hazing complaint or assisted or participated in an investigation or proceeding is prohibited. An individual who knowingly files a false complaint and a person who gives false statements in an investigation shall be subject to discipline by appropriate measures, as shall a person who is found to have retaliated against another in violation of this policy. A student found to have retaliated in violation of this policy shall be subject to measures, including suspension and expulsion.

The administrator shall ensure that the anti-harassment, anti-bullying, and anti-hazing policy and procedures are printed in the Handbooks and integrated into the school's Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP). The administrator or the administrator's designee is responsible for collecting data relating to incidents of harassment, bullying, and hazing. Data must be reported in the spring Basic Education Data Survey (BEDS) and to the local public annually.

Nothing in this policy shall be construed to impair the school's ability to educate and administer consistent with the mission of the Catholic Church. Nothing in this policy is intended to condone behavior or lifestyles that are inconsistent with Catholic teachings.

## **THREATS OF VIOLENCE/ DANGEROUS WEAPONS**

St. Theresa Catholic School will respond to all threats of violence as serious in intent. All threats will be investigated by the program administrator, counselor, and/or designee. The threat will be reported and a meeting will be conducted with the student's parents. St. Theresa Catholic School will take disciplinary action, which may include a recommendation for professional counseling. The incident may be reported to law enforcement officials for further action. Administration, Diocesan Superintendent, and Pastors will also be notified and consulted.

## PROTOCOL

These steps will be followed in each case:

1. Teacher, parent, or student(s) report threat to the administration.
2. Administrator or designee interviews student(s).
3. Parents of the student(s) who made the threat will be called. No threat will be taken lightly.
4. If a student is threatened and depending upon the nature and seriousness of the threat, the threatened student's parent(s) will be called.
5. Student(s), lockers, and personal items may be searched at any time without notice. (\*Diocesan Policy 561)
6. Upon investigation, if the administration determines that there is reason to believe that the investigation results support the threat of violence, the provisions in the disciplinary policy will be followed regarding suspension and/or expulsion.
7. Any valid threat may be reported to the police.

Parent(s) of the student who made a valid threat will be required to come to school as soon as practical and remove the student from the school grounds. St Theresa Catholic School may require professional counseling through [**Employee Family Resources, Catholic Charities, House of Mercy, etc.**] options or a counselor of the family's choosing approved by the school. The student will not be allowed back into school until a professional counselor has provided in writing a document saying that the student is not a threat to themselves or others. The student may be searched daily as a condition for a return to school. The guidance counselor or designee may meet regularly with the student making the threat. Teachers are also asked to be cognizant to curtail any teasing that might come out of this disciplinary action. Documentation by all involved regarding the situation and post-disciplinary activities will be kept on file.

# Handbook Acknowledgement

I have read and understand the St. Theresa Catholic School Handbook. I have discussed the handbook with my student so they understand school expectations.

My family understands and students will comply with dress code and water bottle policies.

I understand parents, students and families should work in collaboration to support the students learning in faith, academics and life skills.

I have reviewed behavior expectations with my student.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's/Guardian's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_