

Safe and Caring Schools

In Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools we are proud to proclaim that our principles of practice underline everything we do. The first two statements in our Principles of Practice support our commitment to Safe and Caring Schools:

***We honor our children.
We provide a safe & secure environment.***

Our schools are places where all students, staff and parents feel welcome. Our motto, **“Inspired by Christ, Aspiring to Excellence”** and our Principles of Practice, proudly proclaim that our schools are Christ-filled centers that ensure a satisfactory climate for learning and that we respect each student as a person, unique in God’s creation.

Our Division has clear administrative procedures outlining the division’s policy on student behavior and staff discipline procedures. These are located in Administrative Procedures # 310-314 and can be found on the division’s web site.

Our division Education Plan further outlines our commitment in Goal 2 Outcome 2.2 “Schools are safe and caring” and Outcome 2.3 “Children at risk have their needs addressed through effective programs and supports.” We are serious about ensuring our students feel safe at school and are in a Catholic Christian environment conducive to learning.

Each school has student behavior expectations specific to the needs of that school to ensure a safe and caring environment. These expectations are listed on the school’s web site, in the school handbook or are posted in classrooms. Expectations are shared with students at the beginning of each year and are also shared with parents so we can work together to provide all students with the best possible educational experience while in our schools.

For further information, please contact the Principal at 403-346-8951.

Bill 10

Red Deer Catholic Regional School Division is committed to using the LIFE Framework as a guideline for the creation and operation of student groups that are comprehensive in their approach to inclusion and open to the exploration, in a Catholic context, of a variety of issues including bullying, sexual harassment, sexual orientation, gender identity, discrimination, justice, and respectful relationships and language. The LIFE Framework is the result of a provincial collaboration of Catholic school jurisdictions. Each of our schools may be organizing LIFE Framework/Diversity groups. They will keep their communities informed as these groups are established by placing notices in their newsletters/websites.

SCHOOL DIVISION MISSION STATEMENT

Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools is committed to serve the children and parents with a complete offering of learning opportunities delivered within the context of Catholic teachings and tradition within the means of the District.

Our schools are gospel-centered communities of hope, fostering a Catholic Christian value system within a pluralistic society.

**CONTINUING THE MISSION OF JESUS PROPHET,
PRIEST AND SERVANT KING**

We make His life, mission and teaching our focal points of belief and conduct within our Catholic schools. Therefore, the education of the whole child—intellectual, aesthetic, emotional, social, physical, and spiritual—**IS OUR SERVICE COMMITMENT.**

Principles of Practice

- ▷ **We honour children ...**
Our schools are child-centered communities. We celebrate each student as a unique child of Christ through our love, caring and respect.

- ▷ **Children feel safe and secure ...**
Our schools provide an environment of belonging for all children through gospel-centered communities of hope.

- ▷ **We live and proudly proclaim our Catholic Christian faith ...**
Our faith permeates our thoughts, words and deeds as we model Jesus, serving children first.

- ▷ **We provide quality education in a Catholic environment ...**
Our schools maintain high standards of academic achievement while fostering lifelong faith development.

- ▷ **We are a prayerful education community ...**
Our Catholic Christian education system reflects the communion of home, school and church providing daily opportunities for prayer and celebration of our faith.

- ▷ **Our staff practices servant-leadership ...**
Staff members are committed members of our faith community who serve the family, school and church.

- ▷ **Clarity of purpose focuses us on our mission ...**
Our Catholic Christian faith is clearly and consistently communicated and supports our unique and distinct ministry.

- ▷ **We value our staff ...**
Our staff members are an integral part of our community and we affirm their ministry and life long journey.

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS MIDDLE SCHOOL
MISSION STATEMENT

As a Christ-centered community of life-long learning, we believe that our shared partnership with home, church and community is essential in our ever-changing society.

Acknowledging the uniqueness of each individual as a gift from God, the mission of St. Thomas Aquinas Middle School will be to provide all individuals with the opportunity and the responsibility to develop to their fullest potential and to experience success.

“Learning, Loving and Growing with Christ”

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

As a disciple of Christ, you are asked to:

- **Respect** yourselves and others
- Be punctual
- Come to class prepared
- Give your full cooperation and attention
- Complete all assignments fully and on time

****Award Days celebrate exceptional achievement in Christian Spirit, academics and athletics.**

SCHOOL PROGRAMS

1. Academic Programs

📁 The **Core Program** for middle school includes Religion, Language Arts, Math, Social Studies, Science, Physical Education, and Health. **The first five subjects comprise the Academic Core.**

📁 **CTF Options** may consist of Band, Choir, Food & Fashion Studies, Stress Busters, Construction, Design & Communication Technologies, Rec Ed., Computer Technology, Drama, Art, French, and many other topics. All students will have an opportunity to sample modules within each of the courses.

2. Inclusion

Inclusion – Students experiencing difficulty or needing enrichment in their classes will receive a variety of supports in the classroom. They may have adaptations, modifications, access to support staff, access to inclusion teachers, lunch hour homework room, Stressbusters option, and others that may be beneficial for individual student learning.

Knowledge & Employability Program - This program is designed for students who require an integrated program that enhances their academic and occupational competencies and their abilities to enter into employment, and/or continuing education and training. Program criteria must be met to be accepted.

3. Student Support Services

School Counsellors – Teachers, parents or students themselves may refer students to a counsellor. Referrals are made directly to the counsellors via the school staff or by telephone. Written referral forms are also available. Our counsellors provide both personal and career counseling.

Family School Enhancement Counsellor – FSEC is available as a liaison to child welfare, social workers and other local agencies. Family School Enhancement Counsellor works in conjunction with our counsellors.

Student Initiatives / Mental Health - Mental Health can be contacted at 340-5466. This service requires a referral.

Crisis Help Line- 1-877-303-2642- Students who are in need of someone to talk to in a crisis situation may call the help line which is available to them 24 hours a day.

CO-CURRICULAR & EXTRA CURRICULAR PROGRAMS

School Sports (*School colors are red & black*)

and staff time to participate in some fun competition and good exercise.

Extra Curricular Activities include Cross-Country Running, Volleyball, Basketball, Badminton, Ski Club, Track & Field, Music & Choral. Competitive and non-competitive programs will be in place for all grade levels.

Special Events- some special events include Liturgical Celebrations, Thanksgiving, Advent, Epiphany, St. Thomas' Feast Day, Confirmation, Shrove Tuesday, Lent, Easter, Pentecost and Grade 9 Farewell. Students, staff and parents play an important role in all these events.

Intramural programs run over the lunch break to provide both students

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OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

Homework Calendars:

All teachers have a homework calendar which can be accessed through our school webpage at staschool.ca this is a great resource for parents to check for homework and upcoming test dates.

PowerSchool Parent Login – All parents/guardians have 24 hour access to your child's grades and assignments. Login and password information remains the same for current students. Login information will be sent home for all new students.

Celebrations- St. Thomas Aquinas regularly celebrates our faith life. Parents, families and friends are always welcome at our masses and celebrations. The Mass celebrations are held at either St. Mary's Parish community or at St. Thomas.

Absences & Lates -All parents must call the school, **403-346-8951** during school hours or leave a message on the attendance line, 403- 346-8951 to report lates or absences. The school checks all unexcused absences by phone. If your child will be away for a long period of time, due to prolonged illness or family trips, please contact the school principal to make special arrangements. Students who arrive late in the morning or the afternoon must report to the office to sign in and to get a late slip. The subject area teacher and homeroom curriculum team has the responsibility of dealing with perpetual lates.

Cell Phones/Mobile Device

We consider student cell phones and mobile devices when used appropriately to be a useful learning tool. Part of our vision is to help students learn to use this tool in a productive manner as well as learning safe practices. Consequences will occur if a student's use of their cell phone/mobile device disrupts their or others learning or if they use it to harm others in our learning community. These consequences may include: confiscation of the phone/mobile device for the class or the day, detention, or in cases of extreme infractions suspensions or students not being permitted to bring the phone/mobile device to school. We ask parents & guardians to support us in our vision by avoiding contacting students during class time via their cell phones.

Closed Campus - Students must report to the Office to request permission to go home. Parents will be contacted by phone if your child is sick and needs to leave. Students leaving the school for appointments must report to the Office and have a parent sign them out before leaving. Student must sign in upon their return. **All students are expected to remain at school over the lunch break. Leaving school grounds is not permitted at any time. If you wish for your child to go home for lunch, the school office must have written parental permission.** The cafeteria provides hot entrees as well as snacks and desserts on a daily basis. Vending machines will only be available to students before and after school. All students will eat lunch in their homerooms.

Dress Code - Clothing is to be modest and respectful of a Catholic School. The following guidelines apply:

- ❑ Shirts that can be tucked in (no midriff showing) and no slogans that are deemed inappropriate for a Catholic school.
- ❑ Caps and hats are not allowed in school or at school functions.
- ❑ Shirts or tops must completely cover the shoulders and have a modest neckline and the back is not to be exposed.
- ❑ Shorts and skirts, there are no "short shorts" or mini skirts. The majority of the thigh needs to be covered.
- ❑ Students should not have any undergarments visible at any time; top or bottom.
- ❑ Students that do not comply with this dress code will be asked to change or call their parents to bring appropriate clothing.

****This code applies to all school functions.**

Gym Strip- All students are required to change for Physical Education and to wear indoor runners while in the gymnasium. Gym shorts and shirts will be available for purchase by students.

School Discipline - It is expected that students will behave in an appropriate Catholic Christian manner at all times. “**RESPECT**” is the key component. Teachers and Homeroom curriculum teachers handle discipline problems and concerns. The school relies on parents & guardians to work in team to ensure that consequences are a learning opportunity for the students. If the concerns become more serious or repetitive, the next step is being sent to the office. Close monitoring of discipline concerns by the administration and contact with teachers and parents should help to resolve these problems.

Appropriate standards of behavior will be enforced through:

Lunch Recess Detentions - Students will be asked to serve detentions during their lunch recess.

In-school suspensions - The student will be required to work in isolation for the remaining of a class period from which he or she has been removed. For more serious matters, in-school suspension may be part of a day to a maximum of five days.

Out-of-School Suspensions - These will always include contact with the home. Such suspensions state that we do not want the student to be a part of our school community for a period of time. This is our most serious consequence and could lead to a recommendation to the School Superintendent that said student be expelled.

Vandalism Students, who damage school property and/or perpetuate theft, must make good the cost of such damage or theft. Other school penalties will be included as appropriate. In resolving discipline concerns, the school staff will, when appropriate, contact parents.

School Telephone – Student are asked to use the phone in their homerooms. Emergency calls and request calls must be made in the office. Students' safety is very important. Students are not allowed out of class to answer calls **EXCEPT IN EMERGENCY SITUATIONS.**

School Fees - Information will be sent home in early September and due by September 30th.

Medical Concerns - Please inform the school of any medical concerns. Many of our staff are qualified in First Aid and can give treatment as needed. Medical concerns and accidents of serious nature will be reported to parents immediately. Medication will not be administered to students. A confidential medical concern booklet is available to all staff.

School Emergency Procedures – Emergency Evacuations, Shelter in Place, Hold & Secure and School Lock-downs take place on a regular basis. Should the school need to be evacuated and shelter found, we have access to St. Mary’s Church. Should we need to send all students home, we will use a Homeroom phone out plan and the public media to notify parents.

School Visitors - St Thomas is a closed campus. For the safety of all students and staff, please **check-in at the school office**, when visiting St. Thomas.

Theft- All personal belongings must be secured in the student’s locker. St. Thomas Aquinas School will not be responsible for any lost or stolen items. We request that students do not bring large amounts of money to school.

STUDENT EVALUATION

Evaluation - Teachers will inform students of their evaluation procedures at the beginning of the school term. Final marks are based on achievement through the year. Final examinations are to count for no more than 25% of the final grade. Interim reports to students will be provided throughout the school year.

Final Exams - Final examinations in the core academic subjects are held in June.

Note: Grade six and Grade nine students are required to write Provincial Achievement Exams (P.A.T.’s) in May and June.

Recommendations for exemption from one exam in grade seven or eight are based on the following criteria:

a. In each of the core subjects a minimum 80% in Mathematics,

Science, Language Arts, Social Studies, and Religious Studies in each reporting period.

b. Proper work habits must be demonstrated (diligence, assignments completed, as well as regular school attendance.)

c. Each student’s exemption will be reviewed on an individual basis;

d. Exemptions are optional and must be approved by the principal, parent and student. A student cannot exempt the same subject two years in a row.

Academic Awards

Honour Roll (selected after each reporting period) – In order to achieve honors standing for each term, a student must average 80% or better in the **Academic Core** subjects and achieve an overall average of 80%. No mark below 70% in all classes.

PARENTS

School Council - The Council consists of parents, staff members and the school principal. School Council elections take place at the first meeting of the new school year. The purpose of parental involvement is to assist in and contribute to enhancing the school environment. The Council meets regularly. All parents are welcome to attend the meetings. This council gives parents a chance to become more actively involved in their child's education.

Parent Involvement – Parent involvement is supported and encouraged. We believe that such involvement in the education process assists in increased student achievement and success. There are many opportunities for parents to play a significant role in their child's education. We would like to hear from you if you are interested in volunteering. All volunteers require a Criminal Record Check.

Power School – St. Thomas uses Power School to communicate academic progress. All progress reports and report cards are available to parents and students through this on-line program. Paper copies will be available upon request.