

# **STA Handbook**



**ST. THOMAS**  
AQUINAS  
**MIDDLE SCHOOL**

### ***District 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.

### ***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** yourself and others
- Be punctual
- Come to class prepared
- Give your full attention and cooperation
- Complete all assignments fully and on time
- Contribute to the safe, caring and welcoming environment of STA

### **School Contacts:**

Mrs. Nicole Zimmerman, Principal  
Mr. Mike Kelly, Vice-Principal

Mrs. Tara Lawrance- Counsellor  
Mr. Leo Chauvet- Counsellor

**Phone: 403-346-8951**

**School Website: <https://www.staschool.ca/>**

**PowerSchool Parent Link: <https://powerschool.rdcrs.ca/public/home.html>**

## **St. Thomas Aquinas Introduction**

We are excited to welcome you to St. Thomas Aquinas Middle School, the home of the Saints. The purpose of this handbook is to answer many of the questions you may have about our school.

The Middle School years are an important time when students start to develop their self-image and make important decisions about their learning. As a Catholic School, we strive to create a safe, caring, and welcoming environment that stresses the importance of respect and dignity. We are proud to provide experiences that will help to further support students in their spiritual, social, emotional, physical, and academic growth.

### **Information**

#### **Core Classes:**

We offer all courses mandated in the Alberta Education Program of Studies. Our reporting periods are on a trimester basis, with live reporting on Schoology. Students will study: Religion, Language Arts, Math, Social Studies, Science, Physical Education, Health and Career and Technology Foundations classes. **The first five subjects comprise the Academic Core.**

#### **Career and Technology Foundations Classes:**

These classes provide students with the opportunity to explore their interests within various occupational areas and technologies. Through **CTF**, students may plan, design, create and implement solutions for relevant real-life problems. Students will have 2 different CTF classes per semester. Some examples of CTF classes offered are construction, foods, multimedia, babysitting, leadership, film studies, drama, design studies, and art.

#### **Ball Academy:**

St. Thomas is home to a unique Ball Academy experience for students who are interested in registering. Sport-specific training takes place two times per week. Middle school students will be taught and assessed by the St. Joseph's Ball Academy staff. Students will participate in the Ball Academy as a year-long option.

### **Academic Reporting and Communication:**

All academic reporting takes place online through Schoology. Schoology can be accessed via the school website. Communication with the school can be done through the webpage, email, or telephone. Our web page (<https://www.staschool.ca/>) contains all the important information related to our school. Each week our SMORE will come to your inbox with up-to-date information and activities for the upcoming week.

### **Lunch Hour:**

We are a closed campus, meaning students must remain at school over the lunch break. **If you wish for your child to go home for lunch, the school office must have written parental permission.** The students in Grade 6 and 7 eat, in their classrooms, at a different time from our Grade 8 and 9 students. There is an amazing cafeteria for the students to access. A monthly menu is placed on our school website and the students can either pre-order or order menu items the day of if they choose.

### **Technology:**

STA has many class sets of Chromebooks and other Maker technology such as laser cutters, vinyl cutters, 3D printers, and coding devices. All students complete mandatory Digital Citizenship modules throughout the school year, that allow them to bring their own personal devices to connect to the student network to enhance their learning experiences. Students have access to Google Apps for Education which includes email and Google cloud storage that can be accessed anytime, anywhere.

### **Cell Phones:**

Currently, our policy is cell phones need to be “off and away” during academic learning times. While they are working, teachers may allow students to listen to music, at their discretion. Students are allowed to be on their devices during lunch recess.

### **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, hats, bandanas, and headwear are not allowed in school or at school functions. (School administration may alter this guideline at their discretion - ie: Theme Days)
- 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.

### **Learning Commons:**

Students will use their ID card to sign out books from the Learning Commons. Students can also visit our Learning Commons virtually, through <https://destiny.rdcrcs.ca/> to reserve books. If a book or textbook is damaged beyond repair, a replacement cost will incur.

### **Extra-Curricular Activities:**

STA offers a variety of extra-curricular activities for our students. Some activities include cross-country running, volleyball, basketball, badminton, ski club, handball, track & field, health champions, band, music & choral. Competitive and non-competitive programs will be in place for all grade levels. Being involved in extracurricular activities provides students with further opportunities to enjoy the middle school culture.

### **Counseling Services:**

We are blessed to have two teacher-counselors as well as two Family School Enhancement Counsellors (FSEC) at St. Thomas. Our teacher-counselors offer universal supports to all students in our school as well as small group and one-on-one counseling. Our Family School Enhancement Counsellors support the social, emotional, and mental wellness of students and families within their home, school, and community through early intervention and prevention. Family School Enhancement Counsellors work alongside school counselors. Please visit our counseling website for further information: <https://sites.google.com/rdcrs.ca/sescounsellingsite/home>

### **Positive Student Recognition Program- Circle of Courage:**

*The Circle of Courage® is a model of positive youth development based on the universal principle that to be emotionally healthy all youth need a sense of belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity. This unique model integrates the cultural wisdom of tribal peoples, the practice wisdom of professional pioneers with troubled youth, and findings of modern youth development research.*

Students are recognized both weekly and monthly by their classroom teachers for exhibiting traits of the Circle of Courage. Once a month, students who are nominated by their teachers are recognized at each grade level with a certificate and choice of a small

prize, for demonstrating positivity and achievement of one of the areas of the Circle of Courage.

### Belonging

- How are students helping their peers feel connected and respected?

### Mastery

- In what ways are students demonstrating their gifts from God?

### Independence

- How are students taking responsibility for their own learning and advocating for their learning needs?

### Generosity

- In what ways are students donating their time or resources to help the less fortunate?

## How can parents get involved?



### **School Advisory Council (SAC)**

The Council consists of parents, staff members, and school administration. 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**

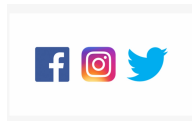
Parent involvement is supported and encouraged. We believe that such involvement in the education process assists in increased student achievement and success. There are many opportunities for parents to play a significant role in their child's

education. We would like to hear from you if you are interested in volunteering. All volunteers require a Criminal Record Check.

### **Stay informed on Social Media**

Our school is very active on social media. Follow us to find out information about events in the school and activities in our school community.

Facebook, Instagram, Twitter: @StThomasRD



# **Welcome to the home of the Saints**

