

Grade 5 Transition 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:

Mr. Ian Stang, Principal
Mr. Mike Kelly, Vice-Principal
Mrs. Kristie McCullough, Vice-Principal

Mrs. Heather Weaver- 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 transitioning from Elementary to Middle School. This is a very exciting time, yet one filled with a bit of uncertainty, so we hope this handbook helps to ease your transition.

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 PowerSchool. Students in Grade 6 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 in Grade 6 currently include: 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. All novice and elite players are welcome to attend.

Academic Reporting and Communication:

All academic reporting takes place online through the PowerSchool portal. The portal can be accessed via the school website. Communication with the school can be done through the web page, email or telephone. Our web page (<https://www.staschool.ca/>) contains all 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 allows 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 the lunch recess.

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.rdcrs.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.

Counselling Services:

We are blessed to have two teacher-counsellors as well as two Family School Enhancement Counsellors (FSEC) at St. Thomas. Our teacher-counsellors offer universal supports to all students in our school as well as small group and one-on-one counselling. 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 counsellors. Please visit our counselling 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.



resources to help the less fortunate?

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

What the current Grade 6 students have to say about STA

"STA is so welcoming"

"I was worried about making friends but know I have a lot of friends that are in my class"

"Be yourself grade 5's"

"I was worried about how big it would be and being new, but now I'm not because it's just a square and everyone is nice to you"

"I was worried because I didn't know anyone, but now I know lots of people!!"

"I feel like I belong to the school"

"Trust your teacher because your teacher is the best"

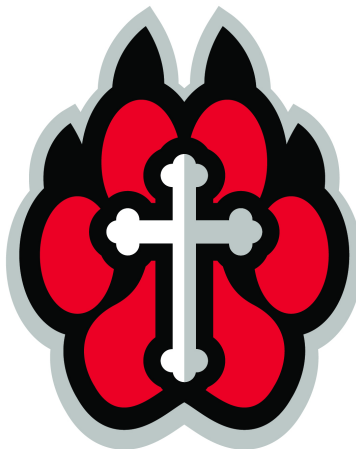
"Try your hardest on assignments. Be nice to everyone!"

"Everyone was very nice and welcoming. If you try your hardest on school work, it becomes a lot easier"

"I love the teachers, atmosphere, and the people"

"Don't be nervous. Make new friends from new schools!"

"Don't worry too much about the little things in life. Be YOU. Trust me you will love Grade 6, one of the best years of my life"



How can parents get involved?

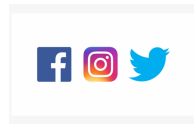
School Council

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

