

Rapid City Catholic School System

St. Thomas More Middle School Parent/Student HANDBOOK

Revised September 2023



Official school records are kept in the protection of the school unless a student transfers to another school and an official transfer slip, signed by a parent, is submitted to release records. The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 guarantees parents and guardians of students under the age of 18, and all students 18 years or older, the right to view records at any time in the Administrative Office. Parents are asked to make an appointment prior to such a visit. **(For a complete reading of the law refer to: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) @ <http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.htm>)**



Dear Parents and Students,

“What greater work is there than training the mind and forming the habits of the young?”
St. John Chrysostom

Welcome to St. Thomas More Middle School! In choosing the Rapid City Catholic School System, you have demonstrated a commitment to the values and philosophy of a Catholic education.

Our mission statement "**Developing Personal and Academic Excellence in the Catholic Tradition**" guides every aspect of our life at St. Thomas More Middle School. The following beliefs inspire our learning, teaching, and community growth:

About Students and Learning, We Believe that:

- Students learn in unique ways
- Students need to be challenged
- Students must invest in their education
- Learning is a life-long process

About Teachers and Teaching, We Believe that:

- Teachers are powerful role models
- Effective teachers are fair, flexible, and challenging
- Teachers must innovate, change, and grow
- Teachers require resources and support

About our Catholic Learning Community, We Believe that:

- The RCCSS is an active, responsible partnership among the Church/parishes, parents, students, faculty, staff, administration, and community at large
- All Catholics should have the opportunity for a Catholic education
- Everyone must be committed to excellence
- Schools must embody the Church's teachings and traditions
- Students must experience a safe and caring learning environment

Together, we can use these beliefs in a powerful and inspirational mission to guide our students' growth and education. On behalf of the faculty and staff thank you for choosing St. Thomas More Middle School!

With you in Christ,
Mary Helen Olsen
Principal

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****This handbook is subject to changes. An updated version with any changes can be found on the school website at rccss.org**

ST. THOMAS MORE MIDDLE SCHOOL
RAPID CITY CATHOLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

**“Developing Personal and Academic Excellence
in the Catholic Tradition”**

HISTORY

St. Thomas More Middle School, a sixth through eighth grade Catholic school, is accredited locally through the State of South Dakota and globally through Cognia®, which sets rigorous protocols and research-based processes for continuous improvement. In addition, St. Thomas More Middle School is an institutional member of the National Catholic Educational Association. St. Elizabeth Seton Elementary and Middle School was restructured into separate elementary and middle school entities in 2011. St. Thomas More Middle School enrollment continues to increase due to our dedication in assisting families in the formation of their children and serving as an educational center for the community and diocese.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

The RCCSS’s Board policy related to non-discrimination extends to students, staff, job applicants, the general public, and individuals with whom it does business and applies to race, color, national origin, ancestry, citizenship status, religion, sex, economic status, age, disability, or military status. The Board does not discriminate on the basis of legally acquired genetic information.

The Board does not permit discriminatory practices and views harassment as a form of discrimination. Harassment is defined as intimidation by threats of or actual physical violence; the creation, by whatever means including the use of electronic communications devices, of a climate of hostility or intimidation; or the use of language, conduct or symbols in such a manner as to be commonly understood to convey hatred, contempt or prejudice or to have the effect of insulting or stigmatizing an individual.

Employees or students who engage in discrimination of another employee or student shall be subject to disciplinary action, as applicable.

Permission, consent, or assumption of risk by an individual subjected to discrimination does not lessen the prohibition contained in this policy.

(BOD-1000-016)

Rapid City Catholic School System admits students of any race, religion, color, national and ethnic origin. Students are afforded all rights, privileges, programs, and activities available. Rapid City Catholic School System does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational and other school administered programs, or admission policies or scholarship (tuition assistance) and loan programs.

(BP-DISTRICT-2000-001)

NON-DISCRIMINATION ON BASIS OF SEX

The U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Civil Rights (OCR) enforces, among other statutes, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Title IX protects people from discrimination based on sex in education programs or activities that receive federal financial assistance.

Title IX states, in part: “No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.”

The Board ensures compliance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the regulations promulgated through the U.S. Department of Education and has promulgated policies and procedures accordingly.

(BOD-1000-015)

ADMISSIONS POLICY

The Rapid City Catholic School System does not discriminate on the basis of religion, race, sex, national origin, age (in accordance with South Dakota law) or physically impaired condition. However, St. Thomas More does follow a set procedure for admission in order to best match the gifts of the student with those of St. Thomas More.

Rapid City Catholic School System requires the following procedures be met for admission in addition to other RCCSS registration and admission criteria.

1. The admission process includes:
 - a. Admissions Director contact and initial communication;
 - b. Explanation of school programs, expectations and financial obligations;
 - c. A copy of all permanent records must be received prior to attendance;
 - d. Administrative interview;
 - e. Review transcripts/grade reports and other educational records with administrator to ensure proper placement and attention to any special needs;
 - f. Review registration process with Admissions Director;
 - g. Completion of registrations forms and payment of registration fees;
 - h. Formal acceptance and letter of welcome.
2. Admittance of a student is based on the balance of what is in the best interest of that student and what is in the best interest of the school community.
3. All new students to the school system must submit the following:
 - a. Copy of certified birth certificate;
 - b. Copy of immunization record or signed medical waiver.

(BP DISTRICT-2000-029)

REGISTRATION

Rapid City Catholic School System requires all students complete a registration form to begin the enrollment process.

1. Families with students currently enrolled in RCCSS will receive registration information in January of the current school year.
2. Registration fees will be assessed.
3. Application and fees must be submitted in accordance with the dates provided by RCCSS to reserve the potential student's place in the RCCSS.
4. Students are not considered registered unless the registration fee has been paid. Students of RCCSS employees are excluded from this (see number 6).
5. Students registering during the 4th quarter for both the current school year and the following school year will only be charged one registration fee. The registration fee charged will be based on the following school year grade level.
6. School employees have the option to include the registration fee into their monthly tuition payments. This option is limited to only school employees.
7. Summer child care registration is not included in this policy.
8. Registration will not be processed on delinquent accounts.

(BP DISTRICT-2000-003)

CONTRACT FOR SERVICES

Rapid City Catholic School System requires completion of the Contract for Services prior to accepting a student.

There are two primary reasons our Catholic School System has instituted this Contract for Services:

First, rigorous academics and a structured school environment require a full-year commitment in order to be most effective. Research shows that effective schools possess a “total environmental quality” within the school. This environment encompasses the school’s belief systems, values, cognitive structures and meanings. This school culture, or way of doing this, requires a yearly commitment from students for the bonding spirit that helps teachers to teach and students to learn.

Second, we strive to allocate and manage every dollar in a way that assures the viability of our school while bringing the maximum benefit to your child. Sound budgeting is the key to good stewardship. Our plans for staffing, purchasing of materials and supplies, book orders, room assignments, tuition assistance and many other budget areas are directly dependent upon the number of students enrolled in the school.

Subject to the provisions herein, the undersigned agrees to pay the tuition and fees as established by the Board for the 2023-2024 school year.

When students enroll for the year, we make our plans and commitments for the year. When a student or family chooses to leave the school, our annual commitments do not change. Request for adjustments or waivers of the parental agreement must be made in writing to the Board Finance Committee. The Board Finance Committee will research each request and make a recommendation to the full Board for final consideration. A waiver from the Contract for Services is considered justified by the Board for two serious circumstances:

1. If the family makes an unforeseen move from the community that prevents the student from attending the school, OR
2. If there is an unexpected medically diagnosed illness of the student and it is mutually agreed by the school officials and parents that the student’s needs can no longer be served by the school.

The Board retains discretion to waive the requirements of the parental agreement where it deems it necessary for the welfare of the school and/or the family involved.

If the Board does not waive the contract, the family has the option to start school as planned, continue to be enrolled, or exercise a contract buy-out. For the purpose of this policy, a contract buy-out is defined as payment of earned tuition calculated on a prorated basis and payment of a \$1000 per student buy-out fee.

Earned tuition will be calculated by dividing the tuition by the number of weeks in the school year times the number of weeks attended. For the purpose of this policy, a week attended is defined as a whole week or any part of a week the student attends class.

(BP DISTRICT-2000-009)

TUITION

The RCCSS Board of Directors shall approve and assess a per pupil tuition rate. The tuition rate shall cover the expenses necessary to educate the pupil.

1. The Finance Committee will recommend an annual budget to the RCCSS Board of Directors.
2. The annual budget will include per pupil tuition rate recommendations based upon per pupil budget expenses.
3. All pupils are assessed an annual tuition rate. The responsible party must abide by the RCCSS Contract for Services. Tuition payments will be made in accordance to procedures as listed below. Persons unable to meet these procedures must receive an exception from the Finance Committee of RCCSS:

- a. All relatives (includes step-parents) are eligible to remit tuition payments on behalf of the pupil.
- b. Payment of tuition shall be made according to the following:
 - i. **Option 1.** A discounted payment is offered if the discounted payment is made in full on or before July 15th of the current year. Failure to remit the discounted payment in full by July 15th will result in the loss of the discount. Failure to remit payment in accordance with this option requires selection of either Option 2 or Option 3 prior to beginning classes.
 - ii. **Option 2.** Two equal payments (no discount). The 1st payment is due on or before July 15th of the current year. The 2nd payment is due on or before December 15th of the current year. Failure to remit payment on or before July 15th of the current year will require selection of Option 3 prior to beginning classes. Failure to remit the second payment due on or before December 15th of the current year will result in interest charged.
 - iii. **Option 3.** Tuition is budgeted over 10 months (August-May). An ACH Monthly Payment Plan with direct withdrawal from your bank account on either the 10th or the 25th of each month is required. Missed payments will be assessed a \$20.00 late fee.
 - iv. **Option 4.** Tuition is budgeted over 12 months (June-May). An ACH Monthly Payment Plan with direct withdrawal from your bank account on either the 10th or the 25th of each month is required. Missed payments will be assessed a \$20.00 late fee. Failure to elect and participate in one of the approved payment plans will result in the student not being placed in a class.
- c. Students enrolling August 1st or later will pay their registration fee and at least the first month of tuition upon registration.
- d. New families electing Option 3 may only select the 10th of the month as a payment date. This restriction is lifted after the first year.
- e. A \$50.00 late registration fee will be assessed on all current year students who do not register by the returning student deadline.
- f. Failure to remit tuition may result in the following actions:
 - i. Adjusting ACH Monthly Payment amounts to pay remaining balance in full.
 - ii. Need for application for tuition assistance.
 - iii. A Finance Committee-approved individualized payment plan.
 - iv. Use of a third party collection agency.
 - v. Legal action.
 - vi. Denying student from participation in graduation activities.
 - vii. Disenrollment and termination of all services provided by RCCSS.

(BP DISTRICT-2000-002)

Financial aid forms are available upon request. Students on financial aid must demonstrate regular attendance, adequate academic performance and acceptable behavioral patterns.

WAITING LIST POLICY

If a class is full and a student is placed on a waiting list, the registration fee will not be collected. To be placed on a waiting list, the parent must complete the student registration form, and the tuition payment/parental agreement forms. When an opening occurs, families/students on the waiting list will be selected on a first come/first serve basis in order of application date.

Within three days of notification, the parent must pay the registration fee and tuition according to the option checked on the tuition payment preference form. If Option 2 was checked on the tuition form, a F.A.C.T.S. application must be completed and tuition brought current to the 10-month plan. Failure to do the above will result in the opening being offered to the next student on the waiting list. Any special considerations to the above policy must be approved by the Principal.

(BP DISTRICT-2000-029)

WITHDRAWAL

Families withdrawing a student(s) from the Rapid City Catholic School System must follow the school's withdrawal procedures.

1. Completion of the RCCSS withdrawal form.
2. Completion of an exit interview with the Principal or designee.
3. All books, materials, and equipment belonging to RCCSS must be returned.
4. All financial obligations must be satisfied.
5. Upon early withdrawal, a formal letter stating the reasons for withdrawal must be written to the RCCSS Board of Directors. The RCCSS Board Finance Committee will make a recommendation(s) to the full Board of Directors for consideration of a contract buy-out or contract waiver.
6. Upon completion of the above, student records and transcripts will be released.

(BP DISTRICT-2000-005)

PARENTS AS PARTNERS

St. Thomas More places great value on the involvement of parents in the educational process. We believe that parents are the primary educators of their children and serve as role models for the development of their child's life physically, mentally, spiritually, emotionally, and psychologically. Students are naturally eager to grow and learn. However, sometimes in the process of maturation new interests may cause them to lose focus. As this natural process occurs, the student needs both understanding and discipline to provide guidance and security. As partners in this process, we ask parents:

To set rules, times, and limits so that your child:

- Gets to bed early on school nights;
- Arrives at school on time and is picked up on time at the end of the day;
- Is dressed according to the school dress code;
- Completes assignments on time; and
- Has lunch money or a nutritious sack lunch every day.

To actively participate in school activities such as Parent-Teacher Conferences

To notify the school when the student will be absent or tardy

To meet all financial obligations to the school

To inform the school of any special situation(s) regarding the student's well-being, safety, and health

To complete and return to school any requested information promptly

To read school notes and newsletters and to show interest in the student's total educational process

To support the religious and educational goals of the school

To support and cooperate with the discipline policy of the school

To treat teachers with respect and courtesy in discussing student problems

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

At St. Thomas More, we strive to enrich our students' education and experiences through the Volunteer Program. Studies have shown that children tend to do better in school when their parents take an active role in their education, whether it be helping with homework or volunteering at school. Children feel a sense of pride when their parents are involved and visible throughout the school during the day, at evening functions, or even helping in small ways in the background. Volunteering is a good way to meet people, make friends, and network in our school community.

St. Thomas More requests that all parents/guardians volunteer a minimum of 10 hours per school year. Volunteer opportunities include, but are not limited to, assisting teachers in the classroom, working on school fundraisers, doing clerical work in the office, assisting or designing after school educational opportunities such as National Catholic Math League, 8th Grade Etiquette Social, maintaining the Uniform Exchange, or driving/chaperoning for field trip experiences.

Individuals who volunteer for driving/chaperoning or volunteering in the classroom will be required to complete a Criminal background check and go through the SAFE Environment Training in accordance with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Volunteers must read and agree to “The Code of Conduct of the Diocese of Rapid City” and the “Sexual Misconduct Policy of the Diocese of Rapid City” which are found on-line at www.rccss.org. Volunteer drivers must have a proof of insurance form on file in the office.

(BP HR-3000-0020)

GENERAL INFORMATION

SCHOOL HOURS

Middle school class days are from 8:00am - 3:30pm. Students will be allowed into the building at 8:00am and should be picked up no later than 3:45pm or 15 minutes after dismissal. Breakfast is available at St. Thomas More High School starting at 7:30am.

All students must be out of the school building and off school grounds by 3:45pm unless they are under the supervision of a teacher/coach or are enrolled in After-School care. During regular school hours, all students are always to be in a supervised environment. After-School care is available from 3:30pm - 5:15pm for an additional fee. Students left at the school without supervision after 3:45pm will be taken to After-School care and parents will be billed for this service. School Office hours are from 7:30am to 3:45pm.

ATTENDANCE/ABSENCES

Attendance is extremely important for a quality education, and the Rapid City Catholic School System believes that absences and tardiness are a matter of concern for the student, the parents, the RCCSS Board, the administration, and the faculty.

1. The Rapid City Catholic Schools will abide by State of South Dakota statutes and Administrative Rules with regard to attendance.
2. Patterns of recurring absences are a cause for concern and will require an intervention by the administration, which includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - a. Parent Conferences
 - b. Tutorial Support
 - c. Student Contract
 - d. Probation
 - e. Suspension
 - f. Dismissal (Expulsion)
3. Perfect attendance designation requires “0”; absences and “0” tardies.
4. A parent or legal guardian must call the school office between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. for each day of absence:
 - a. Explanation for the absence can be provided via a phone call or email.
 - b. If necessary, calls may be left on the answering machine.
5. Administration excused absences and tardies. Excused absences and tardies include, for example:
 - a. Doctor and Dental Appointments
 - b. Emergencies (undefined)
 - c. Death in the Family
 - d. Illness or Injury

e. Religious Services

6. Parents/Legal Guardians should make every attempt to schedule medical/dental appointments before or after school hours.
7. Extensive absences, such as catastrophic illness, will be dealt with by administration on an individual basis. Documentation from physician may be required.
8. Tardy is defined as not present in the classroom at the designated time.
9. Truancy is a serious offense and may involve contacting law enforcement.
10. The Principals of RCCSS will send a letter(s) in accordance to the following:
 - a. Letter 1: 5 absences recorded.
 - b. Letter 2: 10 absences recorded.
 - c. Letter 3: 15 absences recorded.
 - d. Letter 4: 20 absences recorded.
11. Copies of the letters are included in the addenda to this policy.

(BP DISTRICT-2000-004)

If a parent/guardian wishes a student to miss school for any reason other than illness/emergency or school related activities and field trips (covered by the Parental Permission Form on file in the office), a **Parental Pre-Planned Absence Form** (see Appendix D, page 44) **MUST** be completed and turned into the office in advance of the absence. Please see page 17 for information regarding make-up work assigned during this absence.

TARDY PROCEDURE

Tardy is defined as not present in the classroom at the designated time. Being on time is a responsibility and a courtesy. A student entering a classroom after the class has begun not only creates a disturbance and detracts from the learning process, but he/she misses important information. We believe the education process includes teaching responsibility, courtesy and consideration for others. Therefore, students must learn to exercise the necessary planning and caution to prevent tardiness.

Homeroom bell rings at 8:00am to start the school day. A Period begins at 8:17am. A student will be counted tardy if they are not in the appropriate classroom at 8:17am, as well as by the beginning of each class period.

Unexcused Tardy Consequences

After the 5th unexcused tardy, parents will be notified.

After the 10th unexcused tardy, parents will be notified, and the student will be required to attend detention. After the 20th unexcused tardy, parents will be required to meet with the principal before the student will be allowed to return to class. If the problem persists, the student and his/her parents will be required to meet with the School Board to develop a plan of action. Excused tardies are under the discretion of administration.

EARLY DISMISSALS

In the event that a student must be dismissed early, a parent must contact the office with details. Parents will be required to sign out their child in the office. Any non-parent picking up a student must be pre-authorized by the parents, listed in the student's file, and will be required to show ID when signing out the student.

STUDENT ILLNESS

If your child becomes ill or seriously injured during school, an immediate effort will be made to call the parent or person indicated in the emergency file. In the event of serious injury or illness, and failure to reach a responsible party, the student will wait in the office and the principal or adult supervisor will exercise reasonable judgment with reference to contacting emergency service.

If a student is running a temperature, suffering from nausea/vomiting, or sneezing and coughing excessively, the student should remain at home until symptom free. If your child has a fever of 99 degrees without medication, use your judgment. If your child has a fever of 100 degrees or more with or without medication, they are required to stay home. Your child should be free from fever and/or vomiting for 24 hours before returning to school. If your child is coughing frequently or blowing their nose frequently, encourage proper disposal of tissues and frequent hand washing. Proper hand washing prevents the transfer of most germs.

St. Thomas More does have a certified nurse on staff on a part-time basis. South Dakota immunization guidelines for students are reviewed annually and students are required to meet those guidelines. A complete listing of immunization requirements can be found in the Appendix or on the website.

Prescription drugs and over-the-counter medicine should, whenever possible, be dispensed by a parent or guardian. **NO** medication will be dispensed without a signed Medication form on hand in the office and a bottle brought from home labelled with the students name and dosage to be given. St. Thomas More acknowledges that personnel have limited or no knowledge of administering medications to students. St. Thomas More can refuse to dispense medications to students. First aid materials are to be placed in a designated area, which should be known by all teachers. No student will be allowed to go home from school because of illness without first notifying the parents or his/her designee. Students who depend on medication to stay in school and whose parents cannot be present to dispense the medication will follow the following procedure:

1. Parents must bring medication to the school office with written instructions for dispensing the medication. A signed Medication Permission form for prescribed medications must also be included or on record. Forms are available in the office or see Appendix E.
2. Prescribed medication must be in a container provided by the pharmacy with a label that includes date, student name, doctor name and dosage.
3. Acetaminophen, Motrin, inhalers, etc., will be dispensed to students upon request, provided permission has been granted as indicated on the Medication Permission form or verbal permission is obtained from the parent.
4. The school will keep a log stating who received the medication, date, time, type of medication, and who dispensed the medication.
5. Medications will be kept in a supervised container except for special medications that a physician wishes a student to carry with him/her.

(BP DISTRICT-2000-041)

STORM DAY

RCCSS will cancel school and/or school activities if weather conditions have the potential to cause harm to the students. Weather conditions also relate to the ability of the parents' or designees' ability to safely transport students to and from school or school-related activities. The following guidelines are provided to facilitate communication during times of inclement weather:

1. **DO NOT** rely on the decision of the public school system.
2. The decision to cancel school and/or school-related activities is made by the Superintendent (if unavailable), then the Principals (if unavailable), then the Chairperson of the RCCSS Board.
3. Administration will attempt to make the decision to cancel school or school-related activities by 6:00am.
4. Administration will notify parents using the RCCSS School System Info app for mobile devices, the school website (www.rccss.org) and major media outlets. Please turn to one of the stations for the announcement and other pertinent information.
5. If there is no announcement about closing, **SCHOOL IS OPEN.**

6. The final decision concerning non-attendance on storm days resides with PARENTS. If the school remains open, parents should exercise their own judgment regarding conditions pertaining to their road, car, driving skill and other factors.
7. In the event that school closes during the day, parents must have a responsible person listed in the emergency information on file in the office. Please contact the office immediately when any names or numbers change.

NO STUDENTS MAY BE LEFT AT SCHOOL IN THE EVENT OF CLOSURE.

(BP DISTRICT-2000-037)

EMERGENCY OR DISASTER OPERATIONS

(Crisis Plan available for review in the St. Thomas More office)

- **In the case of a lockdown, no unauthorized person will be allowed to enter or leave the building.**
- During emergency situations or a school lock down - **STUDENTS will only be released to a parent/guardian or designee on the student emergency card once authorities and/or administration have declared it safe to release students.**
- **A STUDENT RELEASE STATION will be established**, when necessary, in an area that is accessible and in close proximity to the affected school. **All parents or designees will be required to sign out their child.**
- THE SCHOOL will be in contact with various local emergency services during any type of emergency.

We ask for family help and cooperation in the following areas:

- **DO NOT** call the school. Communication lines must remain open for emergency calls.
- **DO NOT** immediately drive to the school following an emergency. The school access route and street entrance areas must remain clear for emergency vehicles.
- Information will be available using RCCSS Mobile Device app, Plus Portals and/or the school website (www.rccss.org).
- Information will be available through local media.

(BP DISTRICT-2000-36)

MESSAGES & PHONE CALLS

The office phone is to be used to communicate messages to and from students. Students are not to use cell phones during school hours.

PARENT COMMUNICATION

Important information regarding STM MS and RCCSS can be found in the Wednesday Weekly. The Wednesday Weekly will be sent via email every Wednesday evening while school is in session. A calendar of school events and a lunch menu are also available on our website <http://rccss.org>; the RCCSS Mobile Device app, as well as the PlusPortals. PlusPortals allows parents to also see student grades. <https://www.plusportals.com/RCCSS>. Faculty and staff email addresses are located on the school website and PlusPortals.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Please advise the office with any change of address, email address, and/or phone number immediately to ensure continued communication with the school.

SENDING MONEY TO SCHOOL

Money sent to school should be turned in to the office and a receipt can be given stating payment purpose.

VISITOR PROCEDURES

ALL visitors, including parents/guardians, must check in at the office before entering the hallways and classrooms. Visitors will sign in on the Visitor Log, be given a visitor badge, and must sign-out when leaving at the conclusion of their visit.

Parent Visitors: Parents and guardians are welcome and encouraged to visit the classroom. All classroom visitations must be arranged and scheduled with the teacher in advance to ensure a proper time to visit that does not impede on the learning environment. If it is determined that a parent has become disruptive to the class or individual students, a conference with administration will be necessary before arranging future visitations.

Student Visitors: Permission for ALL student visitors must be granted by the Principal in advance.

Visitors to the Business Office: Visitors must enter through the Business Office door (adjacent to the outdoor volleyball court) and may not pass through school hallways to get there. Payments and other items for the Business Office personnel may be dropped off at the Main Office.

(BP DISTRICT-2000-045)

BRINGING FOOD INTO THE CLASSROOM

Daily Snacks - A designated amount of time will be provided each afternoon for students to eat a snack. Students are welcome to bring a healthy snack from home or to purchase an a la carte item in the Commons during lunchtime. Candy and/or soda is NOT permitted as a snack. Snacks should only be eaten during this designated time in the designated location provided by their teacher.

Treats - Any treats/food that is brought into the classrooms to share with others must be pre-arranged with the classroom teacher.

LOST AND FOUND

Lost and found articles are in a designated area near the school office. **Personal items brought to school should be clearly marked with the student's name.** Uniform items not marked with a name will be immediately donated to the Uniform Exchange. The remaining Lost and Found items will be donated/disposed of at the end of each quarter.

STUDENT DRIVERS

Students of RCCSS are allowed to drive to school if they hold a current South Dakota driver's license and have insurance coverage.

1. The St. Thomas More automobile permit includes the make and year of the vehicle, license number, and the signature of the parent/guardian giving the student permission to drive.
2. The permit includes all vehicles driven by the student on campus.
3. Students are not allowed to go to the parking lot during the school day without permission from the school office.
4. The vehicle may not be driven during the school hours without permission from the office, nor may a student take another student off campus without permission.
5. Driving on the school campus is a privilege and a responsibility.
6. Students agree to drive in safe, respectful manner at all times and agree to park properly in the designated area for their grade level.
7. If at any time a student demonstrates careless or reckless driving behavior or parks improperly, he/she may have driving privileges suspended or revoked.

8. Because of the need for safety and the number of young children on campus, there is a zero-tolerance for speeding or reckless driving.
9. Students, parents and staff are expected to maintain the campus speed limit of five (5) miles per hour and to adjust appropriately for weather conditions.

(BP STM MS-5000-007)

COUNSELING

The Counseling Department is available for the academic and emotional needs of the RCCSS community. Collaboration is encouraged among teacher, parent, child, and counselor, wherever deemed appropriate.

(BP DISTRICT-2000-034)

CHILD ABUSE POLICY

The Rapid City Catholic School System is committed to providing a safe and secure environment to educate students. The faculty and staff at St. Thomas More are required by law to report any suspected child abuse. *The Protection of Children from Abuse or Neglect* statutes of South Dakota Law will be strictly followed whenever we have reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been abused or neglected. Any school official who intentionally fails to make the required report is guilty of a Class I misdemeanor. Anyone who participates in making a report in accordance with the law and good faith is immune from any civil or criminal liability that may otherwise arise from reporting or from any resulting judicial proceeding even if the suspicion proved to be unfounded (SDCL 16-10-14).

The Board will support any employee making a report of suspected child abuse or neglect until and unless it is determined that the employee was acting in bad faith in making the report.

(BP DISTRICT-2000-011)

RESTRAINT AND SECLUSION

The use of restraint or seclusion will be implemented in a non-discriminatory manner. Interventions authorized by this policy may be applied to any student enrolled in RCCSS (“the System”) and identified as exhibiting dangerous behavior only if such interventions are implemented in full compliance with this policy. If a student to whom restraint or seclusion is to be applied also has an Individualized Education Program, Behavioral Intervention Plan, 504 plan, or similar plan, those plans will be followed in an effort to avoid the use of restraint or seclusion.

The use of restraint or seclusion is prohibited in any situation other than when the child’s behavior poses imminent danger of serious physical harm to self or others and other available interventions are ineffective. The use of restraint or seclusion must be discontinued as soon as imminent danger has dissipated, such as when it appears the child has calmed down, e.g., the child’s breathing returns to normal, the child is no longer tense, or the child can express that he or she feels safe. Restraint or seclusion will not be used as punishment, reprisal, retaliation, a substitute for appropriate behavioral or educational support, a routine school safety measure, to force compliance with school personnel, to prevent property damage, or for the convenience of school personnel. The use of restraint or seclusion will be in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations.

Heightened attention and review by school administrators and behavioral experts will occur when restraint or seclusion is used more than once with an individual child, used multiple times within the same classroom, or used multiple times by the same school personnel.

(BP DISTRICT-2000-032)

RCCSS FOOD SERVICES

The RCCSS Food Service Department provides a well-balanced, nutritious breakfast and lunch program for students, staff and guests, which follow our Wellness Policy and the National School Breakfast and Lunch Requirements.

MEAL PRICES FOR 2022-2023

STM MS Lunch Program Pricing is as follows:

- Breakfast \$3.50
- Lunch \$4.50
- Double Meal \$4.50
- Extra Milk \$.50

“Doubles” are not available this year, but if there are leftover portions a student may go back for seconds. “A la carte” are available for purchase before and after school ONLY.

PAYMENTS AND CHARGES

It is encouraged that families use the online service for making payments to student accounts: www.myschoolbuck.com. Setting up an account is free and very easy. To set up an account, please request your child’s unique ID from either the school’s office or from the Food Service Director by emailing roxanndubois@rsscc.org.

All students have their own account. Viewing your child’s account at www.myschoolbucks.com to see their balance purchases and setting up low balance alerts is free. To make a payment online there is a small fee.

Payments can also be made by dropping off a check or cash at any RCCSS office.

Checks are payable to: RCCSS - LUNCH

Please put first and last names of all students on money sent to school.

We are not responsible for lost cash or checks.

All balances at the end of the year are rolled over with the student to the next grade. If the student is a senior, the balance will transfer to a sibling or be refunded to the family. If a student is not returning and tuition is owed, the lunch balance is added to the collection. For delinquent accounts, a payment plan may be set up if needed. This will be evaluated on a case by case situation

FREE AND REDUCED APPLICATION

Applications are available on the school’s website at www.rccss.org or in any of the RCCSS offices. This is a federally funded program and is a very vital part of our lunch program. If you feel that your family may qualify for free or reduced meals, please fill out the application as soon as possible and return it to the school office attention Food Service Director. If you have any questions regarding the Free & Reduced program or questions filling out the application please call Becky Merwin Food Service Director. Remember, *all information on the application is confidential and all students on the program are kept confidential.*

BREAKFAST/LUNCH INFORMATION

Breakfast: A meal includes 4 components: grains, fruit, meat/meat alternative and milk. Students are required to take 3 items for a complete meal. Students must choose a ½ cup fruit and a grain to make their meal complete.

Lunch: A meal includes 5 components; meat/meat alternative, grains, fruit, vegetable and milk. Students in grades PreK - 5th are served all 5 components. Students in 6th - 12th have the option of choosing what items they would like to make their meal. The daily menu and components are posted at the serving line. Students in grades 6th - 12th are required to take 3 components for a complete meal price and one of the three components must be a fruit or vegetable.

MENUS

School menus are posted monthly on our website and on the RCCSS app.

A LA CARTE ITEM

A la carte items (including a milk/water to accompany a sack lunch from home) are available for students to purchase. Students with negative balances are not permitted to purchase a la carte items.

LUNCH CARDS/ID NUMBERS

Every student is issued a lunch ID number that remains with them from year to year. In grades PreK - 8th grade each student is issued a lunch card. Cards are dispersed to the students prior to lunch and are collected by the Food Service Staff. After the cards are scanned they are returned to the classroom teacher.

NEGATIVE ACCOUNTS

If accounts go negative, the food service administration will send out emails or letters to families. If after a few attempts and no payment is received, the food service department will ask for the assistance of the school principals to contact the families for payment. In case of a negative balance:

- Students will not be denied a reimbursable meal. However, due to certain circumstances, parents may be contacted and asked to pack a lunch from home for their child.
- No a la carte items can be purchased, including doubles on meals.
- At the end of the year, report cards will be held and Parent Portals may be disabled until payment is received.

SPECIAL DIETARY NEEDS

It is required by the State of South Dakota to have on file a medical statement that is updated annually and signed by a Medical Doctor. If your child has any special dietary needs, you may pick this form up at the main office. Handwritten notes or statements signed by parents are not accepted.

COMPETITIVE FOODS

The National School Lunch Program does not allow competitive foods in the cafeteria when hot lunch is being served. Competitive foods consist of foods that have minimal nutritional value, including "fast food". This could consist of many food items; however, we are mostly concerned about pop and candy. Please do not send, or bring, pop and candy to the lunchroom for students to eat with their lunch. If anyone brings pop into the cafeteria during lunch, it will be removed. (THIS INCLUDES STUDENT'S SACK LUNCHES FROM HOME, PARENTS AND ANY GUESTS).

OUTSIDE FOOD

If you are bringing in outside food for your child to share with the class and the entire class will not be coming to the cafeteria for lunch, please inform the classroom teacher, the food service staff, and the office at least one week in advance.

JOINING YOUR CHILD FOR LUNCH

Parents are always welcome to join us for lunch. To ensure that we have prepared enough food, please call the office by 8:30am and tell us how many and what times you are coming. Please check in at the main office upon your arrival.

ACADEMIC INFORMATION

CURRICULUM

St. Thomas More strives to embrace the critical elements of the Catholic Middle School concept and to meet our vision of Developing Personal and Academic Excellence in the Catholic Tradition. The Center for Early Adolescence has identified seven developmental needs for students' ages between the ages of 10 and 15. St. Thomas More looks to these needs to provide guidance in curriculum development. Our curriculum focuses on providing the following needs:

- Positive interaction with adults and peers
- Structure and clear limits
- Competence and honest sense of achievement
- Creative expression
- Noncompetitive physical activity
- Meaningful participation in families, schools, and communities
- Self-definition

The curriculum is also mapped and aligned with South Dakota State Standards. The core curriculum includes: Religion, Grammar/Composition, Literature, Mathematics, Social Studies, Science, Physical/Health Education, Technology, and Foreign Language (French/Spanish). All students have daily Religion class and will study Sacred Scripture, Church History and Ecclesiology. Students can choose one enrichment option per semester from the following: Art, Band, Choir, Orchestra, Intro to Media, Foreign Languages, Yearbook, Philosophy & Logic, and Computer Science Discovery. Study Skills is by faculty recommendation. Enrichment courses are filled by order of grade level and then date of request submission. Requests are not guaranteed.

An emphasis is placed on team planning and shared decision making in both academic and co-curricular activities. Our middle school faculty members are certified to work with the unique development of students in this age group. A family perspective is maintained throughout the middle school program and parents are encouraged to take a meaningful role as partners with the school in the spiritual, academic, social, and service formation of their child. Service projects and other collaborative efforts are undertaken to enhance the development of connectedness with the community.

MATH PLACEMENT PROCESS

Starting in 7th grade, the ongoing practice is to differentiate math instruction. 7th grade placement is more about proficiency than grades. Grades include other factors such as effort. Maturity and mastery to succeed at more difficult math concepts, without having to spend excessive time on review, is essential.

Placement for Math classes are made with the following considerations:

- End of 6th grade course exam
- Academic maturity/Success in 6th grade class work
- ACT Aspire Data

Based on this information students are placed in 7th grade Math class (which is grade level math) or 7th grade Pre-Algebra (which is an accelerated Math class). Regardless of 7th grade Math placement, students who show aptitude and proficiency can move to Algebra in 8th grade, based again on the above criteria.

CREDIT BEFORE GRADE 9

Following the guidelines by the South Dakota Department of Education for Credit before Grade Nine, RCCSS will grant high school credit to a middle school student provided the following conditions are met:

- The student is enrolled in class at St. Thomas More Middle School.
- St. Thomas More currently offers Algebra I, French I, and Spanish I.
- The student passes the RCCSS End of Course Exam with a score of 85% or higher.

- The parent returns the signed Credit Acceptance form to the STM High School Counselor Department by the date of August 1st. Form is due prior to the start of high school.

End of Course Exam Procedure -

- The End of Course exam will be administered to the students in May. Specific dates will be communicated to the parents by email in the spring.
- The student must pass the EOC exam with a score of 85% or higher. If the student does not achieve this score, they may qualify for one retake option. In order to be eligible for a retake, a student must score at least a 70% on the first EOC attempt. The retake testing date will be held within a week of the initial EOC exam and will be communicated to the parents by email in the spring.
- Algebra I - Students are permitted to use a calculator according to “Appendix D Guidelines for Calculator Use” from the SD Department of Education Procedure Manual.

Credit Acceptance - Transcript Grades

For those who have passed the EOC exam, parents have the option to accept the high school credit. To accept high school credit, parents must return the Credit Acceptance form as stated above. If parents choose to accept the credit by retuning the documentation, semester one and semester two letter grades will be transcribed. The semester grade is determined by taking the average of the two quarters. These semester grades are factored into the student’s high school grade point average (GPA) and overall rank.

If a parent chooses to NOT accept the credit/grades and the student is enrolling at STM High School for 9th grade, the student will be placed in Algebra I, Spanish I, or French I.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT

Students attending RCCSS that have been determined eligible for special education services through the local public school district have no individual right to receive all the special education and related services that the child would receive if they were attending the public school. They are not entitled to an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) through the public school district.

Decisions about the services the student shall receive shall be made in consultation with the public school district.

For each special education student that has been enrolled in RCCSS by a parent or guardian, an individualized learning plan (ILP) shall be developed in conjunction with the local school district. The ILP must describe the specific special education and related services that will be provided.

There is no requirement that all of the services, accommodations, or modifications that a special education eligible student may need will be provided through an ILP or be available from RCCSS staff. The ILP shall specify what, if any, special education or related services will be provided at RCCSS. Additional services or modifications may, but are not required, to be provided by RCCSS staff. Private elementary school and secondary school teachers who are providing equitable services to parentally-placed private school children with disabilities are not required to meet the qualified special education teacher requirements.

References: 34 C.F.R. 300.137; 34 C.F.R. 300.138; ARSD 24:05:32:01.04; ARSD 24:05:32:01.05 and ARSD 24:05:32:03.01; ARSD 24:05:32:03.02

(BP DISTRICT-2000-033)

HOMEWORK

RCCSS supports homework assignments, which are given to reinforce the skills and lessons taught in class. Parent or guardian participation may sometimes be necessary for the completion of homework assignments and is encouraged, but it is important that students do their own work. St. Thomas More believes that the influence of parents/guardians with respect to homework is an essential element in the academic success of that student.

(BP STM MS-5000-012)

MAKE-UP WORK

School work missed because of an absence must be made up. It is the student's responsibility to turn in all assignments and schedule any test/quiz or any other class activity with the teacher in a timely and reasonable manner. If a student does not complete work in the allotted time frame, no credit will be given.

Illness - Students who are absent due to an illness will have the number of absent school days plus one extra day to make up the work assigned during the absence. For example, if a student was absent two days, he/she would have two days plus one; or three total days to make up the work. Work previously assigned before the absence is due upon return. For absences for illness that extend past 5 days, make up dates will be left to the discretion of the teacher, no less than above policy of number of absent days plus one.

All assignments are posted on Google Classroom daily. Parents may call the school office before 9:00am to request to pick up books and supplies between 3:30pm - 4:00pm that afternoon.

Pre-planned Absences/Personal events - Students who will be absent for pre-planned personal events (vacations, trips, appointments, etc) must stop at the office to pick up a Pre-Planned Absence Form and should meet with each teacher prior to the date to make arrangements. Projects and homework will still be due on scheduled due dates for work that is turned in online through Google Classroom or immediately upon return for work that is not.

Pre-planned Absences/School related functions - Students who will be absent for school-related functions (sports, fine arts, student council, etc) should meet with teachers prior to the date to make arrangements. Projects and homework will still be due on scheduled due dates for work that is turned in online through Google Classroom or immediately upon return for work that is not. Students DO NOT need to fill out a Pre-Planned Absence Form.

Unexcused Absences - All unexcused absences will result in zeros in the missed classes.

ACADEMIC PROGRESS REPORT

Report cards are available on-line at the end of each nine week grading period. Parents and guardians can also access their student's current grades using Plus Portals (<https://www.plusportals.com/RCCSS>). Plus Portals is to be used as a communication tool for parents, students and teachers to monitor missing work, late work, and student progress in each individual class. Parents can also sign up for email notifications of grades. During the middle school experience, St. Thomas More hopes that parents will not only utilize this information, but will gradually help their child learn how to monitor their own grades and effort for future success in the academic arena.

Report cards and other student information are provided to parents/guardians. 6th through 8th grade students receive report cards at the end of each quarter. It is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the school with an official copy of a court order if information is not to be shared with parents/guardians. Student information will not be released to other parties unless written permission is obtained and is on file from the custodial parent/guardian.

Standardized testing is given to all middle school students in the spring. The Otis Lennon School Ability Test (OLSAT) is given to all 6th grade students. Benchmark reading comprehension, grammar, and math skills will be assessed throughout the year. Student keyboarding assessments will be given in 6th grade to ensure appropriate requirements are met.

(BP DISTRICT-2000-018)

HONOR CONCEPT

The principles of religion are integrated into all facets of the curriculum and life of the school. The St. Thomas More Middle School Honor Concept is based on the Ten Commandments and the principles of Saint Thomas More. Students, whose actions reflect negatively on St. Thomas More, will be referred to administration for disciplinary action.

(BP STM MS-5000-011)

GUIDELINES REGARDING CHEATING

Note: These are presented as “guidelines” to assist students in understanding what does/does not constitute a violation of the honor concept. The list is representative and does not include all examples. Teachers may have more specific information regarding how these guidelines pertain to their class or may have guidelines or restrictions that are stricter than these. In such cases the stricter guidelines apply. As always, the best guideline for students is to use common sense and follow their informed consciences.

HOMEWORK

The following are “**NOT**” permitted and “**DO**” constitute a violation:

- Having another person, including parents, do any portion of the work for you
- Copying or paraphrasing any portion of another student’s homework in your possession
- Comparing answers and then changing them
- Not counting a problem wrong when correcting your own or someone else’s paper
- Any changing of answers while correcting your own or someone else’s paper
- Copying answers while you are supposed to be correcting the assignment
- Changing an answer without changing corresponding work
- Plagiarizing material without citing source and giving credit to author

TESTS/QUIZZES

The following are “**NOT**” permitted and “**DO**” constitute a violation:

- ANY use of ANY unapproved assistance to determine answers - calculators, notes, books, other students, “cheat sheets”, “wandering eyes”, notes on hands, shoes, etc.
- Answers without corresponding work if required by teacher
- Answers from one test version found on another test version
- Sharing any test information not provided by the teacher to another student and learned by taking the test; e.g. - number and/or types of questions, details, length, etc.
- Making any comments or using gestures or “signs” during a test/quiz
- Using a “Key” or old test to study unless approved by teacher

GRADING SCALE

Letter grades are used in each course to denote student progress, attitude and ability to work to capacity. The grading scale is as follows:

A+ 100	C+ 84-85
A 95-99	C 79-83
A- 93-94	C- 77-78
B+ 91-92	D+ 75-76
B 88-90	D 71-74
B- 86-87	D- 69-70
	F 68 and below

An “I” for a grading period indicates that the student has not completed required work for the course. The work must be completed within a time frame agreed upon by the teacher and the student.

An “F” for a year-long grade results in no credit earned.

If the failure is in a course required by St. Thomas More for graduation, the student must make up the credit before graduation.

(BP STM MS-5000-001)

HONOR ROLL

St. Thomas More Middle School publishes the Honor Roll at the end of each quarter.

To qualify for the Honor Roll, a student must meet the following:

1. Have no failing grade.

2. A 3.0 grade point average on a 4.0 scale.
3. All courses use a 4.0 scale.
4. A student can reach three levels of achievement:
 - a. Honorifice 3.00 - 3.49
 - b. Cum Laude 3.50 - 3.74
 - c. Magna Cum Laude 3.75-3.99
 - d. Summa Cum Laude 4.00 and above

(BP STM MS-5000-002)

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent teacher conferences are scheduled for all students during the first and third quarters. The scheduled days will be sectioned into time slots and a limited number of parents will have the opportunity to sign up for each time slot. During the time slot, teachers will be available in the gym for parents to meet. Parent/Teacher Conferences are to be limited to 5 minutes per teacher. If more time is needed, it is suggested to arrange for an additional conference with the teacher at a later date.

Throughout the year, individual conferences may be requested by the teachers. If a student's work drops below the level at which he/she has been working or is capable of working, the teacher will notify the parents.

Parents are welcome to request a conference with a teacher or a group of teachers throughout the year. This meeting should be arranged in advance. At no time, should a parent by-pass the office and enter the classrooms for an impromptu meeting with a teacher without prior consent.

PROMOTION & RETENTION

Promotion or retention at St. Thomas More Middle School shall be based upon the individual needs of the student and shall take into consideration all conditions affecting the student.

The following items will be considered when promoting or retaining a student:

1. If a student is absent from any class 20 or more times, they
 - a. Will not receive credit for the class. A doctor's excuse will be the only exception.
 - b. Families will receive letters after 5, 10 and 15 absences.
2. Problems of promotion or retention shall be addressed by those most knowledgeable about the student:
 - a. the teacher(s),
 - b. the Administration,
 - c. the Principal,
 - d. the parent(s)/guardian(s),
 - e. the Counselor,
 - f. other available school and community services and agencies.
3. If conflicts concerning promotion and retention cannot be resolved otherwise, the RCCSS

School Board has the authority to make the final determination.

(BP STM MS-5000-003)

CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES & ATHLETICS

ACTIVITIES RULES AND REGULATIONS

For student participation in co-curricular activities at St. Thomas More Middle School, rules and regulations required by the State of South Dakota and specific rules and regulations approved by the RCCSS Board of Directors must be observed. The St. Thomas More activities governed by these rules and regulations include, but are not limited to: football, girls basketball, boys basketball, volleyball, wrestling, track, tennis, golf, debate, oral interpretation, Knowledge Bowl, cheerleading, drill team, band and choir competitions. The St. Thomas More Middle School student is expected to reflect Christian ideals, attitudes and values in his/her life, is expected to be a person of integrity, and stands for that which is right. The St. Thomas More Middle School student is expected to treat officials and opponents with respect and courtesy and demonstrates fairness in victory or defeat.

(BP STM MS-5000-008)

SOUTH DAKOTA HIGH SCHOOL ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATION RULES

The RCCSS follows all rules established by the South Dakota High School Activities Association.

The following are mandatory South Dakota High School Activities Association requirements for activity participation:

1. The student must not have reached his/her twentieth birthday.
2. The student must not have attended more than four first semesters and four second semesters of school in grades 7 through 12.
3. The student must not be a member of an independent or non-high school team, and not participate independently in a sport during the high school season in that same sport.
4. Annual physicals are required for participation in any STM sporting activity. The physical may be obtained for the ensuing school year after April 1st.
5. The student must bring the completed exam to the Activities Office.
6. The student must have insurance coverage through a family policy or purchase the school-designated plan. Verification of coverage must be on file in the Activities Office.

(BP STM MS-5000-009)

ACTIVITIES ELIGIBILITY RULES

St. Thomas More offers the opportunity for its students to participate in various clubs, sports or academic activities and leadership positions. A faculty member or approved community leader moderates each student organization as coach, advisor or sponsor. Students are encouraged to participate in a variety of activities to enhance the academic educational experience and to assist them in spiritual growth. Improved social skills, increased communication skills, stress on physical fitness and extended academic program is all reflected in participation in a well-rounded co-curricular schedule of activities. The St. Thomas More eligibility policy, like the curriculum, is strict and challenging. The eligibility policy is based on what is considered to be in the student's best interest; however, eligibility ultimately begins with and is the responsibility of each student. Because academics are foremost, a student must abide by the criteria outlined in the handbook if he/she has a failing grade in classroom curriculum.

(BP STM MS-5000-010)

ATHLETICS

St. Thomas More is a member of the South Dakota High School Activities Association. Therefore, our activities are sanctioned by that association and abide by the rules and procedures set forth by that association. Students who participate in the sanctioned SDHSAA activities are covered under the SDHSAA catastrophic insurance policy. St. Thomas More offers the opportunity for its students to participate in various clubs, athletics, academic activities, and leadership positions.

1. A faculty member or approved community leader moderates each student organization as a coach, advisor or sponsor.
2. Students are encouraged to participate in a variety of activities to enhance the academic educational experience. Improved social skills, increased communication skills, stress on physical fitness and an extended academic program are all reflected in participating in a well-rounded co-curricular schedule of activities.
3. According to the SDHSAA, the three major benefits of activities are:
 - a. Activities support the academic mission of schools. They are not a diversion, but rather an extension of a good educational program.
 - b. Activities are inherently educational, providing valuable lessons for many practical situations such as teamwork, sportsmanship, winning and losing, and hard work.
 - c. Activities foster success in later life. Participation in high school activities is often a predictor of later success in college, career and becoming a contributing member of society.
4. To maintain a safe environment within the school, no activity will be allowed to practice without a coach/advisor or a designated adult in a supervisory capacity.
5. The school reserves the right to discontinue any activity or practice if a supervisor is not present. Only supervised students may remain after school.

(BP STM MS-5000-013)

ATHLETICS - INTERSCHOLASTIC COMPETITION

The school offers interscholastic competition for 7th/8th graders in the following sports:

Boys: Baseball, Basketball, Cross-Country**, Football, Golf, Soccer, Tennis, Track**, and Wrestling**

Girls: Basketball, Cross-Country**, Dance/Cheer, Golf, Soccer, Softball, Tennis, Track**, Volleyball and Wrestling

*Students may also be asked to participate on the high school teams at the discretion of the high school coaches.

**6th Grade programs are offered

Middle School Athletic Objectives:

1. To keep the athletic program within the bounds of wholesome educational experiences.
2. To develop fundamental skills in sports included in our program.
3. To provide desirable athletic participation for as many boys and girls as possible. The System maintains a "no-cut" policy, which means that any student who wants to participate on an athletic team can do so, provided that student makes a full commitment to the activity and meets all eligibility requirements.
4. To develop good health habits and an appreciation of the physical and mental preparation required for skilled athletic performance.
5. To develop qualities of sportsmanship, sociability, self-control, cooperation, leadership and respect for rules.
6. To develop an interest in and an appreciation of an excellent athletic performance.
7. To provide a wholesome means of recreation for the student body, the faculty, the school families and general community.
8. To recognize shared responsibilities involving coaches, students, parents and teachers in a sincere effort to cooperate in providing extra-educational experiences in a Christian manner.

Playing Time: Every player in good standing shall play in every game.

Exceptions: A player may be held out of a game/activity/event for the following reasons:

1. Missing practice or not participating fully in practice

2. Grades that do not meet eligibility standards
3. Misconduct in the classroom, lunchroom, playground, or other school areas

(Participation in other co-curriculum activities will also follow these same exceptions.)

OTHER CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Students may also participate in non-athletic co-curricular activities, such as:

- Oral Interp
- Knowledge Bowl
- Debate
- Student Council
- Student Council
- Catholic Math League
- Drama Club
- Chess Club

ACTIVITY ELIGIBILITY POLICY

The St. Thomas More Eligibility Policy, like the curriculum, is strict and challenging. The Eligibility Policy is based on what is in the student's best interest; however, eligibility ultimately begins with and is the responsibility of each student. Because academics are foremost, a student must abide by the established criteria if he/she has a failing grade in the classroom curriculum.

(BP DISTRICT-2000-026)

1. Each Tuesday at the end of the school day, student academic progress is reviewed by administration. The administrator sends the Eligibility Report to the Activity Director who sends the Eligibility Report on to the CAS. The CAS will then notify the student they are on probation or are ineligible.
2. Eligibility assessments are done on a Wednesday to Wednesday basis; ineligibility is from Wednesday to the next weekly assessment review.
3. If a student has earned his/her first F, the CAS notifies the affected student that he/she is on academic probation until the next grading period. During the first academic probation, the student will be able to practice and participate in any activities contest.
4. If a student earns two or more F's in one eligibility period, the student is unable to compete in the co-curricular activity for that Wednesday to Wednesday period, but may continue to practice at the coach's/advisor's discretion.
5. If the student earns an F in the specific classroom curriculum for the second consecutive week, or has received an F from another class, the CAS notifies the affected student that he/she may practice, but will not compete in the activity until the next eligibility assessment period.
6. The teacher must give the student three graded opportunities to improve their F in the specific classroom curriculum. If the teacher is unable to provide the three graded opportunities, the student will become eligible for the next assessment period.
7. One day prior to any SDHSAA State-Sponsored tournament activity, a re-evaluation of the student's eligibility may be initiated. This re-evaluation is done between the principal and the failing subject area teacher.
8. The student may be assigned to an academic intervention program, which may involve peer tutoring, teacher assistance, and/or study skills instruction to be mutually determined by the student, teacher and principal. However, the academic intervention program is the student's responsibility.
9. Final decision on eligibility shall rest with administration.

*Demonstrated Effort will only be determined by the principal and/or teacher. Under no circumstances should the teacher be involved with the coach, the student, or the parents when determining demonstrated effort. The parents and/or student

need to schedule a meeting with the Principal if an issue arises. The Activities Director shall deal with the coach's awareness of probationary or ineligible students and enforcement of the Eligibility Policy.

Demonstrated effort that a teacher may use to alert the principal that the student is eligible may include, but is not limited to, the following criteria along with good attendance, positive class participation and a positive attitude towards the classroom curriculum:

- Assessment in at least three graded assignments since last grading period
- Documented tutoring sessions
- Positive assignment record (homework completed and handed in on time)
- Supplemental education resources are being utilized (ex. Sylvan Learning Center)

BLUE PACKET/FEEES

A Blue Packet is required of every student involved in any activity for St. Thomas More. Blue Packets may be found on the school website; www.rccss.org or in the school office. The packet includes:

- Physical Examination Form
- Medical Consent/Proof of Insurance/Permission to Travel form
- South Dakota High School Activities Association Annual Parent/Guardian permit
- South Dakota High School Activities Association Annual Parent and Student Consent form
- Consent for release of medical information form (HIPAA)
- A fact sheet about concussions
- Alcohol/Drug/Vaping policy
- RCCSS Activities rules and regulations
- RCCSS Code of Conduct
- Policy for Inappropriate Behavior

Students involved in only Fine Arts activities do not need to include the Physical Examination from a doctor. Students involved in any athletic activity must complete the entire packet. In order to participate in an activity, the school must have a current Blue Packet on file and appropriate fees paid PRIOR to the first allowed practice/meeting.

ATTENDANCE REQUIRMENTS

- The student must be in attendance the morning of an afternoon activity or the afternoon prior to an all-day event unless a serious illness or emergency situation can be documented. A meeting with the principal, activities director, and coach, advisor, or sponsor will result from a violation and a consequence will be determined.
- Students do not need to fill out a Pre-Planned Absence Form for a school-sanctioned activity; **however they must meet with the teachers of the missed classes to discuss any assignments, class work, or tests that they will miss due to the activity prior to the absence.**

ATHLETIC TRANSPORTATION/FIELD TRIPS/OUTSIDE EDUCATIONAL TRIPS

Students represent their school and their family when away from school. Information pertaining to athletic activities, field trips, and other educational opportunities will be sent to parents. A signed parental permission slip must be obtained for each field trip or outside educational opportunity taken. To provide for the safety of our students, we require each driver to complete the Volunteer Driver's Form on a yearly basis and have taken the Safe Environment Training to fulfill Diocesan requirements. Students are to be transported by adult drivers only. They may not ride with other student drivers.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES & EXPECTATIONS

It is important that parents, students and all school staff work together to maintain a positive educational atmosphere. Courtesy and respect for all individuals and honesty towards others are expected qualities aligned with the Rapid City Catholic School System vision. All students are expected to cooperate with the spirit and policies of the school which are designed to foster mature development and personal responsibility. Each child deserves to be in an excellent and safe learning environment. St. Thomas More stresses positive and consistent support for appropriate behavior emphasizing inner discipline and self-control.

EXPECTATIONS

- **Mass Conduct:** Mass attendance is required. Mass is a time for prayer, introspection and personal spiritual communication. Students are encouraged to participate fully in Mass. Before and after Mass is time for silent reflection. Talking is inappropriate and disrespectful behavior.
- **Assembly Conduct:** Students represent St. Thomas More on all occasions and are expected to be courteous during any and all assemblies. Student attitude and behavior must reflect the high standards of St. Thomas More.
- **Academic Conduct:** Students should attend classes daily, be on time for class and have the appropriate learning materials. Students should exhibit a willingness to participate in learning tasks and additional enrichment activities.
- **Policies Adherence:** Students are expected to be in compliance with all Board approved school policies and the St. Thomas More Honor Concept at all times while in school, at school activities or on the way to or from school activities.
- **Appropriate Language:** Students will use appropriate language at school and at co-curricular activities. At all times, the student's behavior should be courteous and respectful to fellow students and adults.
- **Prohibited Substances:** Prohibited substances include tobacco, vaping, alcohol and/or drugs. Use of these products are illegal under age 18 and are serious health risks at any age. The building is a smoke-and drug- free building at all times. Student use of tobacco products is not allowed in the building, on the grounds, during activities, nor while representing the school.
- **Gum Chewing:** Gum on carpets, floors or school furniture is unsightly and expensive to remove. Moreover, gum chewing is distracting and hinders articulation. Therefore, gum chewing is not allowed.
- **Eating, Drinking, and Snacking:** Food and beverages are confined to designated areas.
- **Trash and Litter:** Students are responsible to dispose of garbage and trash in the appropriate trash containers.
- **Fine Obligations:** Fines for property damage or loss are important financial obligations. Failure to pay fines may result in report cards and/or diplomas being withheld. Excessive fines may lead to further administrative intervention and disciplinary action.
- **Cell Phones:** Cell phones may only be used during approved times without faculty permission.

The principal reserves the right to suspend a student from one (1) to five (5) days if the expectations are not being met.

(BP STM MS-5000-004)

STUDENT CONDUCT OF CHARACTER

Every student is entitled to an education offered in an orderly and safe environment. All students are expected to treat persons in the best Christian spirit of kindness and consideration.

The Student of Character:

1. Takes criticism willingly and accepts recommendations graciously.
2. Consistently exemplifies desirable qualities of behavior.
3. Upholds principles of morality and ethics.

4. Cooperates by complying with school regulations, policies and programs.
5. Shows courtesy, concern and respect for others.
6. Observes instructions and rules, punctuality and faithfulness, both inside and outside the classroom.
7. Has powers of concentration and sustained attention as shown by perseverance and application to studies.
8. Actively helps to rid the school of negative influences or environments.
9. Demonstrates honesty and integrity in every manner and complies with the Honor Concept at all times.
(BP STM MS-5000-005)

DISCIPLINE AND DUE PROCESS

Rapid City Catholic School System is committed to maintaining a positive educational atmosphere. Courtesy, respect, and honesty are expected. As a partner in the child's education, the parent will be a part of the disciplinary process.

Discipline in the RCCSS schools is critical to the provision and implementation of educational programs and services. The RCCSS Board and school administrators have the authority to deal with disruptive students and student misconduct. The RCCSS Board recognizes the importance of safeguarding a student's due process rights.

Due process is an established course for proceedings or other activities designed to safeguard the rights of the individual.

A student whose conduct may warrant suspension or expulsion shall be provided with appropriate due process. Due process, in the context of the administrative proceedings carried out by RCCSS school authorities, refers to the notification and hearing procedures established by the RCCSS Board.

Due process procedures shall be fair and apply equally to all. Fairly enforcing due process procedures involves:

- Adequate and timely notice and an opportunity to prepare a defense;
- An opportunity to be heard at a reasonable time and in a meaningful manner; and
- The right to a speedy and impartial hearing on the merits of the case.

The superintendent shall establish and maintain procedures for ensuring due process within the RCCSS.

1. Teachers will provide specific behavior expectations to students and parents. Expectations will comply with the intent of the mission and vision of the RCCSS. Principals will review all expectations prior to distribution.
2. The teacher will counsel students failing to meet the behavioral expectations.
3. Teachers will contact the parents/custodial guardian of students who fail to respond to teacher guidance to improve behavior.
4. Teachers may refer the student to the guidance counselor for intervention.
5. A student whose behavior is not improving or deteriorating will meet with the principal.
6. In the case of a severe or chronic problem, the student will be referred to the principal, who will notify the parents.
7. The principal may suspend the student for up to 5 days. The student may receive a grade of "O" in all subjects for all days involving out-of-school suspension.
8. Longer periods of suspension or a recommendation of expulsion are referred to the RCCSS Board for action.

A. Definitions. Terms used in this article mean:

1. “Expulsion”: The action of the Board that terminates a student’s membership in school for not more than 12 consecutive months.
2. “Long-term suspension”: The exclusion of a student by the superintendent or Board from a class or classes or from school for more than 10 but not more than 90 school days.
3. “Parent”: A parent, guardian, or person in charge of a student.
4. “Policy”: A rule, regulation, or standard enacted by the RCCSS school district board.
5. “Short-term suspension”: The exclusion of a student by a principal or superintendent from a class or from school for not more than 10 school days.

B. Short-term suspension procedure. If a short-term suspension from a class, classes, or school is anticipated because of a student’s violation of a policy, the principal or superintendent shall give oral or written notice to the student as soon as possible after discovery of the alleged violation, stating the facts that form the basis for the suspension. The student must be given the opportunity to answer the charges. If a student is suspended, the principal or superintendent shall give the parent oral notice, if possible, and shall send the parent or a student who is 18 years of age or older or an emancipated minor a written notice which provides information regarding the student’s due process rights. A student who is an unemancipated minor may not be removed from the school premises before the end of the school day without contacting a parent unless the student’s presence poses a continuing threat or danger, in which case the student may be immediately removed from the school and transferred into the custody of a parent or law enforcement.

C. Long-term suspension procedure. The superintendent must file a sealed, written report with the RCCSS Board by the end of the fifth school day following the first day of the long-term suspension and may request that a hearing be held before the Board. The report must include the facts of the situation, the action taken, the reasons for the action, and the superintendent’s decision or recommendation. The report must remain in the possession of the Board secretary or business manager, sealed and unavailable for review by individual Board members, until the time set for a hearing. The superintendent must send a copy of the report to the student’s parent or to the student if the student is 18 years of age or older or an emancipated minor at the same time the report is filed with the Board’s secretary or business manager.

1. If the superintendent finds grounds for a long-term suspension from a class or classes, the superintendent may exclude the student from a class or classes by using the short-term suspension procedure. The superintendent shall give a written notice to the student’s parent or to a student who is 18 years of age or older or an emancipated minor and may schedule a hearing. The notice shall contain the following minimum information:
 - a. The policy allegedly violated;
 - b. The reason for the disciplinary proceedings;
 - c. Notice of the right to request a hearing or waive the right to a hearing;
 - d. A description of the hearing procedure;
 - e. A statement that the student’s records are available at the school for examination by the student’s parent or authorized representative; and
 - f. A statement that the student may present witnesses.

If a hearing is requested, the superintendent shall give notice to the RCCSS Board of an appeal to the Board for a hearing. The superintendent shall set the date, time, and place for the hearing and send notice by first class mail to the RCCSS Board and by certified mail, return receipt requested, to the student’s parent or to a student who is 18 years of age or older or an emancipated minor.

If no hearing is requested or the hearing is waived, the action of the superintendent is final.

2. The student, if of the age of majority or emancipated, or the student's parent may waive the right to a hearing in writing to the superintendent. If the hearing is not waived, the hearing shall be held on the date, time, and place set in the notice unless a different date, time, and place are agreed to by the parties.
3. The RCCSS Board is the hearing board and shall conduct the hearing in the following manner:
 - a. The Board shall appoint a Board member or a person who is not an employee of the school district as the hearing officer;
 - b. Each party may make an opening statement;
 - c. Each party may introduce evidence, present witnesses, and examine and cross-examine witnesses;
 - d. Each party may be represented by an attorney;
 - e. The school administration shall present its case first;
 - f. The hearing is closed. A verbatim record of the hearing will be made and will be sealed;
 - g. Witnesses may be present only when testifying. All witnesses must take an oath or affirmation administered by the Board president or business manager;
 - h. Each party may raise objections; however, objections are limited to relevancy and scope of the question;
 - i. All relevant evidence must be admitted; however, unproductive or repetitious evidence may be limited by the hearing officer;
 - j. The hearing officer may ask questions of witnesses and may allow other Board members to question witnesses;
 - k. Each party may make a closing statement;
 - l. After the hearing, the Board shall continue to meet in executive session for deliberation. No one other than the hearing officer may meet with the Board during deliberation. The Board may seek advice during deliberation from an attorney. Consultation with any other person during deliberation may occur only if a representative of the student is present; and
 - m. The decision of the Board must be based solely on the evidence presented at the hearing must be formalized by a motion made in open meeting. The motion must omit the name of the student and must state the reason for the Board's action. The Board shall notify the student or the student's parents in writing of the decision. The notice must state the length of the suspension or expulsion.

The RCCSS attendance policy may not exclude a student from a class or from school for more than 10 days without providing due process procedures outlined above.

(BP DISTRICT-2000-008)

PROBLEM SOLVING

- If you have a question concerning discipline or curriculum assignments, first consult with your child's teacher.
- If information is needed, or the concern is unresolved, a conference may be scheduled with the Principal.
- For further action, a meeting with the Principal and all parties involved can be requested.
- If after following these steps the matter is still unresolved, a hearing with the Superintendent will be arranged through the Principal.
- If the matter is still unresolved, a hearing with an appropriate board committee, or the full board, may be arranged through the Superintendent. A board hearing will require at least a 2 weeks' notice.

PROHIBITION OF HARASSEMENT, INTIMIDATION AND BULLYING

The Rapid City Catholic School System is committed to maintaining a constructive, safe school climate that is conducive to student learning and fostering an environment in which all students are treated with respect and dignity.

Persistent bullying can severely inhibit a student's ability to learn and may have lasting negative effects on a student's life. The bullying of students by students, staff, or third parties is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated.

Bullying consists of repeated physical, verbal, non-verbal, written, electronic, or any conduct directed toward a student that is so pervasive, severe, and objectively offensive that it:

1. Has the purpose of creating or resulting in an intimidating, hostile, or offensive academic environment; or

2. Has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with a student's academic performance which deprives the student access to educational opportunities.

Any staff member observing or suspecting bullying toward another individual is required to report the issue to his or her building supervisor.

This policy is in effect while students are on property within the jurisdiction of the School Board; while students are in school-owned or school-operated vehicles; and while students are attending or engaged in school-sponsored activities.

RCCSS will act to investigate all complaints (formal or informal, verbal or written) of bullying. A formal complaint may be submitted to the building principal. Any student engaging in an act of bullying is subject to discipline pursuant to RCCSS's student discipline procedure.

This policy may not be interpreted to prohibit civil exchange of opinions or debate protected under the state or federal constitutions if the opinion expressed does not otherwise materially or substantially disrupt the education process or intrude upon the rights of others.

In accordance with our Christian ideals, St. Thomas More strives to provide a safe environment for all individuals. Threats made against the physical or emotional well-being of any individual are taken very seriously. This policy prohibits any verbal, physical, or visual conduct on the part of an individual(s) that has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive educational environment. This policy extends to inappropriate behavior at school, including school grounds, parking lot, school-sponsored activities, field trips or co-curricular activities outside of the school building. St. Thomas More will investigate all complaints and will endeavor to handle each complaint in an expeditious, professional manner to respect the rights of all parties concerned.

Students making such threats (seriously, in jest, online, or electronically) face detention, suspension, and/or expulsion. Engagement in online blogs such as, but not limited to, MySpace®, Facebook®, Twitter, Snap Chat, etc. may result in disciplinary actions if the content of the student's blog includes defamatory comments regarding the school, the faculty, other students or the school community.

(BP DISTRICT-2000-007)

COMPUTER AND INTERNET USE

The School District's information technology resources, including email, Intranet, RCCSS website, online Portal access and internet access, are provided for educational purposes. Adherence to the following policy is necessary for the continued access to the district's technological resources.

St. Thomas More students have access to the Internet. Training and proper supervision will be provided by staff, teachers, and/or advisors. It is essential, however, for all users to recognize their responsibilities in having access to vast services, sites, systems and people. All students are required to abide by the Computer Use Agreement Policy. Students are ultimately responsible for their actions in accessing network or global services during school hours. Both the selection and use of materials must be consistent with the mission of the Rapid City Catholic School System. It is understood that the student will abide by all rules and expectations written, implied, or expressed orally by administration, teachers, or staff. It is further understood that failure to do so may result in suspension from, or a permanent loss of, computer and Internet privileges and any necessary disciplinary action.

Internet Protection

The school has installed multiple internet filters for student protection while at school; however this protection does not cover the student's device at home. In addition, parental protection controls installed directly on the device can make it difficult for students to access some programs at school. It is requested that for protection at home, instead of installing protection on the device itself, parents consider protection for the home internet router. (Options include OpenDNS, CloudFlare Gateway, and Circle)

(BP DISTRICT-2000-023)

STUDENT ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY & ACKNOWLEDGEMENT IT

Student/Account holders must...

1. Use technology devices for educational use as directed by instructional staff.
 - Other uses of devices are at the discretion of RCCSS staff.
2. Respect and protect the privacy of others.
 - Use only assigned accounts.
 - Not view, use, share, or copy passwords, data, or networks to which they are not authorized.
 - Not distribute private information about others or themselves, such as addresses or phone numbers.
3. Respect and protect the integrity, availability, and security of all electronic and digital resources.
 - Observe all network security practices, as instructed and as posted.
 - Report security risks or violations to a teacher or network administrator.
 - Not destroy or damage data, networks, hardware, or other resources that do not belong to them, without clear permission of the owner.
 - Conserve, protect, and share these appropriate resources with other students and internet users.
4. Respect and protect the intellectual property of others.
 - Not infringe copyrights. (Including illegal copies of music, games, movies, or other digital property.)
 - Not plagiarize and always properly cite sources of all information.
5. Respect and practice the principles of community.
 - Communicate only in ways that are kind and respectful (speech that is inappropriate for class is not appropriate to use online).
 - Report threatening or discomfoting materials to a teacher.
 - Not intentionally access, transmit, copy, or create material that violates the school's Code of Conduct (ex: pornographic messages, threatening, rude, discriminatory, or other communications that are meant to harass - cyber bullying).
 - Not intentionally access, transmit, copy, or create material that is illegal (ex: obscenity, stolen materials, or illegal copies of copyrighted works).
 - Not use the resources to further other acts that are criminal or violate the school's Code of Conduct.
 - Not send spam, chain letters, or other mass unsolicited mailings.
 - Not buy, sell, advertise, or otherwise conduct business, unless approved as a school project.
 - Not share the Wi-Fi password with others, without the permission of RCCSS staff and use Wi-Fi only on approved devices.

Consequences for Violation

Violation of the above policy regarding ALL technology devices (laptop, Chromebook, cell phones, smart watches, tablets, etc.) will result in the following consequences:

- 1st Offense - Device will be turned into the office, parents will be notified, and student may pick up his/her item at the end of the day.
- 2nd Offense - Device will be turned into the office; parents must visit the office in person to pick up the item.
- 3rd Offense - Device will be turned into the office; parents must pick up the item in person; student may turn in the device to the office each morning upon arrival for 5 school days **OR** the device may remain at home.
- Any further Offense - Device will be turned into the office, a meeting will be held between the principal, the parents and the student, to develop a Plan of Action regarding the student's future technology device privileges.

(BP DISTRICT-2000-024)

STUDENT OWNED DEVICES

All Students will need to provide their own laptop computer. Students will also need access to the internet at home. Students may purchase a device with the following criteria on their own, purchase a Chromebook through RCCSS, or lease a Chromebook through RCCSS.

Minimum Device Requirements:

- **Google/Chrome Device:** Dual Core 1.6 GHz Processor; 2 GB RAM; Minimum 3-hour battery life; prefer at least 1 USB Port; No internal storage is necessary if student uses Google Drive.
- **Windows Device:** The above requirements are acceptable; however, 4 GB RAM and 128 GB hard drive are recommended to avoid performance issues. Windows 8 or newer operating system.
- **Apple Device:** Any MacBook running current operating system is acceptable.

All devices should have a minimum of a 5-hour battery life expectancy.

*Not acceptable for classroom use, without permission of the instructor: Nooks, Kindles, Kindle Fires, Samsung Galaxy, Android devices (RCAs, Polaroid, etc), iPads, iPods, iPhones, smartphones, smart watches.

Supervision and Monitoring

Authorized school employees and network administrators monitor the use of information technology resources to ensure that users are secure and in conformity with this policy. Administrators reserve the right to examine, use, and disclose any data found on the school district's information networks in order to further the health, safety, discipline, or security of any student or other person, or to protect property. All uses of RCCSS technology resources are considered property of RCCSS and are not considered private. Administrators may also use this information in disciplinary actions, and will furnish evidence of crime to law enforcement.

Responsibility for Devices

Student purchased devices (*including devices purchased through RCCSS*)

- Neither the schools, nor the district, may be held liable for the loss, theft, or damage to personal property.
- Students are to keep their devices secure at all times and not loan them to others.
- The classroom teacher has the authority as to when devices can and cannot be utilized.
- Parents are responsible for maintenance and repair.

School - Leased devices

- Parent/Guardian must complete a rental agreement form
- Maintenance of school-leased devices will be covered by the district IT department.

Email Address

All students, grade 6 and above, are provided a RCCSS email address. ***This email is to be used for educational purposes only.*** RCCSS uses G Suite for Education provided by Google. G Suite is compliant with the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998 (COPPA). Parents/guardians give permission for their child to be assigned a personal email address and other applications offered through Google's G Suite for Education during the school year registration process.

Passwords for student emails must be changed regularly system-wide. Students should never use a RCCSS email address to set up a new device/Chromebook, because during a system-wide password change, the device will be locked up and will require to be reset to factory settings to rectify the problem.

(BP DISTRICT-2000-024)

ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY (AUP) INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

St. Thomas More students have access to the Internet. Training and proper supervision will be provided by staff, teachers, and/or advisors. It is essential, however, for all users to recognize their responsibilities in having access to vast services, sites, systems and people. All students are required to abide by the Computer Use Agreement Policy. Students are ultimately responsible for their actions in accessing network or global services during school hours. Both the selection and use of materials must be consistent with the mission of the Rapid City Catholic School System. It is understood that the student will abide by all rules and expectations written, implied, or expressed orally by administration, teachers, or staff. It is further understood that failure to do so may result in suspension from, or a permanent loss of, computer and Internet privileges and any necessary disciplinary action.

(BP DISTRICT-2000-025)

Internet Protection

The school has installed multiple internet filters for student protection while at school; however this protection does not cover the student's device at home. In addition, parental protection controls installed directly on the device can make it difficult for students to access some programs at school. It is requested that for protection at home, instead of installing protection on the device itself, parents consider protection for the home internet router. (Options include OpenDNS, CloudFlare Gateway, and Circle)

TELEPHONE USAGE AND CELL PHONE POLICY

Students can use the office phone during school hours with permission. Students will not be called to the phone in the middle of class time except in case of emergency. Students will be called down during the final 3 minutes of the class to receive messages.

Student's current/in-use cell phones will be collected at the beginning of the school day and stored in the student's homeroom classroom under the supervision of the homeroom teacher. All cell phones, or any other communication device, must be turned off for storage. Emergency use of the cell phone may be allowed with direct permission from the homeroom teacher.

Violations regarding cell phone usage, including, but not limited to:

- Using a device without faculty permission.
- Turning a cell phone on at any time during the school day without permission.
- Not turning in their cell phone at the beginning of the day.
- Using a face/non-working/decoy phone to turn in while keeping working phone on person.

If a student is found in violation of this policy, the 'Consequence for Violation' applies

Consequences for Violation

Violation of the above policy will result in the confiscation of the cell phone and the following will be enforced.

- 1st Offense - Cell phone will be turned into the office, parents will be notified and student may pick up his/her item at the end of the day
- 2nd Offense - Cell phone will be turned into the office, parents must pick up the item at the end of the day.
- 3rd Offense - Cell phone will be turned into the office, parents must pick up the item at the end of the day; student may turn in the phone to the office each morning upon arrival for 5 school days OR the cell phone may remain at home.
- Any further Offense - Device will be turned into the office, a meeting will be held between the student, parents, and principal to develop a Plan of Action regarding the student's future cell phone privileges.

SMART WATCH USAGE POLICY

Smart Watches (Apple Watch, Fitbit, etc) are permitted to be worn at this time; however internet, telephone, and texting capabilities must be turned off during the school day. If a student is found to be using his/her smart watch in these ways, the 'Consequences for Violation' applies.

SCHOOL DANCES

St. Thomas More Middle School expectation for dress, appearance and behavior at dances is the same as for all other St. Thomas More classes, activities, and functions: respectful, safe and Christian. It is the responsibility of parents to see that students meet the St. Thomas More standards of dress and appearance for all school dances and activities.

The following procedures and requirements are provided to assist students and parents/guardians to meet these standards:

1. General:

- a. Students are to arrive within the first half-hour of the beginning of the dance and are expected to stay until the last half-hour of the dance.
- b. Students leaving the dance may not return.
- c. Provocative, erotic, and moshing-type dancing is prohibited.
- d. Each dance will be chaperoned and the chaperones will be expected to intervene and take appropriate action to maintain St. Thomas More rules, standards, guidelines and procedures.

2. **Semi-Formal Dances:** Students are recommended to dress as follows:
- Females - dress, skirt and top, or dress slacks and top
 - Males - shirt, coat and tie, shirt and tie, shirt and sweater and dress pants
 - Shirts tucked in.

3. **Items not allowed:**
- Any clothing that would make a student conspicuous, provocative, or immodest.
 - Any top that is too tight, low-cut, reveals mid-drift, or reveals underwear.
 - Baggy pants or pants worn to reveal underwear.
 - Cargo type clothing.
 - Chains, hats or caps.
 - Inappropriate jewelry, inappropriate items used as jewelry, or any jewelry used in body piercing such as nose, navel, tongue, lip or eyebrow.

4. **Hair and Grooming for All Students:**
- Extremes in haircuts or colors are not allowed.
 - All clothing must be neat, clean and in good condition.
 - All students must be well-groomed.

(STM MS-5000-006)

DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY/VANDALISM

Students whose actions intentionally, or by failure to exercise caution, cause damage to property will be responsible for the replacement value of the item damaged and will be referred to administration for disciplinary action, if necessary.

(BP DISTRICT-2000-021)

BOOK DAMAGE

Students are expected to make restitution for damaged/lost textbooks, library books, or workbooks. Lost workbooks are the student's responsibility; a new one will need to be purchased at the student's own expense.

(BP DISTRICT-2000-021)

INAPPROPRIATE ITEMS

Items that are misused for a purpose other than what they were intended for will be collected and returned to the student's parents. Equipment for playground use, such as basketballs, footballs, or soccer balls, is permitted.

LOCKERS

Each student will be assigned a locker. Combination locks may be used, but combinations must be given to the student's homeroom teacher. Under certain conditions, school personnel have the right to remove locks and/or search lockers.

Students should never enter another students' locker without specific permission from administration.

SCHOOL UNIFORM CODE

RCCSS believes uniforms support the academic excellence of our students. Students shall abide by the uniform code listed in the school handbook. Continued or repeated violation of the dress code will necessitate disciplinary action by the administration.

(BP DISTRICT-2000-042)

PERSONAL APPEARANCE: While we have no specific grooming guidelines, students are expected to be clean, neat, and well groomed. Fads and extremes in hairstyles, hair color, make-up, jewelry, and other aspects of personal appearance are not acceptable. **All hair colors must be within natural hues.**

UNIFORM VIOLATIONS: Students who do not meet all of the uniform standards will be allowed to rectify the problem during period A without penalty. Options include borrowing from the Uniform Swap Shop, borrowing certain

items from the office or calling home to change clothes. If the student does not meet the uniform requirements during A period, he/she will receive a violation and will still need to rectify the situation. Students will also receive a violation for chronically un-tucked shirts or when a uniform is not worn in the intended purpose. Repeated uniform violations will result in a detention.

Belts and socks are kept in the office for students to borrow; however students may only borrow one of each item from the office at a time. Students who do not return items promptly may lose borrowing privileges.

GIRLS:

- Lands’ End A-line skirt or skort in STM Blue Plaid, navy or khaki Chino - worn no more than 2” above the knee
- Lands’ End Pleated skirt or skort in STM Blue Plaid, navy or khaki Chino - worn no more than 2” above the knee
- Lands’ End navy or khaki Chino pants or shorts - STM emblem optional
- Lands’ End polo shirt w/STM emblem in solid navy or solid white (short, long sleeve) - worn tucked in
- Lands’ End Oxford shirt w/STM emblem in solid white or blue (short, long sleeve) - worn tucked in
- Bike shorts or leggings **MUST** be worn under skirts - Solid navy, black, white or grey; **NO** logo/cut-outs/designs/mesh
- Socks or tights - Solid navy, black, white or grey without logo or design - are required unless wearing dress flats
- Button-front cardigan or sweater vest in solid navy

BOYS:

- Lands’ End navy or khaki Chino pants or shorts - STM emblem optional
- Lands’ End polo shirt, solid white or navy w/STM emblem (short, long sleeve) - worn tucked in
- Lands’ End Oxford shirt, solid white or blue w/ STM emblem (short, long sleeve) - worn tucked in
- Socks, solid white, gray, black, or navy without logo or design, are required
- Sweater vest in solid navy



****Additional Uniform Regulations:**

- School-designated STM uniform sweatshirt only, collared uniform shirt must be worn underneath
- Brown or black belts are to be worn through pant or short loops at all times
- No hoodies or jackets should be worn in the classroom
- Undershirts worn under uniform shirts must be *solid* white, grey, black, or navy only
- **Shoe Policy:** Closed-toed and closed heel shoes are required. Sandals, open back shoes, boots, or shoes with a heel over 2” may not be worn. Snow boots may be worn outside only
- PE UNIFORM: Designated STM t-shirt, STM gym shorts and athletic shoes

****OUT OF UNIFORM GUIDELINES****

Students will be expected to wear clothes that are clean, modest and respect the values of our Catholic school.

COMFY FOR A CAUSE DAYS: Students are welcome to wear comfortable clothing for a monetary donation to the specific charitable cause. (\$3.00 minimum donation) Appropriate pants include: sweat pants, joggers, athletic pants, athletic shorts (at an appropriate length), jeans (no excessive rips, skin cannot be seen through rips). Shirts may include: sweatshirts, hoodies or any appropriate shirt of choice. Girls may wear leggings with tunic-length shirts. Costumes and pajamas are prohibited. Shoe policy still applies.

DRESS-UP DAYS: *GIRLS:* Appropriate, tasteful slacks or dresses/skirts (no more than 2” above the top of the knee). Leggings may not be worn as pants. Shoe policy still applies with the exception that fashion boots worn below the knee will be allowed. *BOYS:* Dress pants with a collared shirt is preferred. No jeans or t-shirts.

SPIRIT SHIRT DAYS: Only students who purchased the 2023-2024 Spirit Shirt fundraiser shirt may wear the designated t-shirt and blue jeans in good condition (no excessive tears, no skin showing through tears). The 2023-2024 Spirit Shirt days are: 8/25, 9/1, 10/13, 11/9, 12/5, 1/5, 2/2, 3/1, 4/5, & 5/3.

ADDITIONAL SPIRIT DAYS: Students may wear jeans in good condition (no excessive rips, skin cannot be seen through rips) and a shirt that supports our school community. Shirts can include STM co-curricular activity wear. Students may also wear appropriate jeans with a regular uniform shirt.

ADDITIONAL OUT-OF-UNIFORM DAYS: Students will be expected to wear clothes that are clean and modest and respect the values of our Catholic school. Additional specifications may be made, as needed.

- **Uniforms MAY be purchased through Land’s End School Uniforms. The STM school code is #900031980.**
Chino pants/shorts from other companies are allowed provided they are the same shade as the Lands’ End Khaki color - STM emblem is optional.
- Gently used uniforms are available in the “PTO Uniform Swap Shop” for a free-will offering. This is located in the Middle School gym and is open during office hours or by appointment.
- **PE uniforms can be purchased in the MS office.** (T-shirt:\$12, Shorts: \$15)

ABUSE OF ALCOHOL OR DRUGS

POLICY /STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

- A. Providing a safe, orderly, and Christian school community is integral to our Catholic school vision. Alcohol and/or other drug use/abuse interfere with a student's ability to learn and function responsibly in the school setting in the community. Substance abuse presents a serious health and social problem in our society. In partnership with parents, our schools have a central role in establishing patterns of behavior related to a healthy lifestyle. This necessitates the identification, prevention, intervention, treatment and aftercare of alcohol and/or other drug use/abuse as related to the school community.
- B. The Rapid City Catholic School System facilities (St. Elizabeth Seton Elementary, St. Thomas More Middle School, and St. Thomas More High School) and associated grounds are drug free zones. No student shall possess, use, transfer, conceal, sell, attempt to sell, deliver or be under the influence of alcohol, illicit drugs, narcotics, or dangerous chemical substances that affect physical or psychological functions or impact, in any way, the school community, nor possess paraphernalia specific to the use of alcohol and/or other drugs. A chemical substance may include alcohol, marijuana, inhalants (paint, glue, solvents, lighter fluid, etc.) and any other controlled substances as defined by South Dakota law.
- C. This policy is in effect for all school-sponsored activities on property owned, leased, rented, utilized or maintained by the RCCSS, at all school activities on and off campus as well as travel to and from those activities, and all school vehicles and any vehicle parked on school property.
- D. Compliance with this policy and all procedures is mandatory for all students enrolled at any RCCSS school. A student who uses prescription drugs authorized by a licensed physician or over the counter medications in the prescribed manner does not violate this policy if the student conforms to the stated prescription and appropriate school policies.
- E. If the conduct of any student who appears to violate this policy is brought to the attention of an administrator, teacher, or staff member, action will be taken in accordance with this policy and accompanying procedures.
- F. The RCCSS Board maintains a zero-tolerance policy regarding the use of alcohol and drug, illicit drugs, narcotics and other dangerous or illegal chemical substances. In keeping with the principles that guide our school community of peace, justice and love, it is the intent of the RCCSS Board that an important goal in processing a violation of this policy is to provide support and facilitate assessment and any necessary treatment for a student while still assuring a safe, orderly and healthy school community for others.

DISCIPLINARY SANCTIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES

- A. The following procedures will be used in dealing with possession, use, or being under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, narcotics, dangerous or illegal chemical substances. State and federal regulations regarding special education students will be followed.

First Offense:

1. The administration will notify the parent(s)/guardians(s) and schedule a conference.
2. The administration shall suspend the student for up to ten (10) days in compliance with student due process procedures.
3. The administration shall notify available law enforcement authorities.
4. The administration shall refer the student to a counselor.
5. The suspension of a student who completes a substance abuse assessment from a certified or licensed addiction counselor or a licensed physician trained in chemical dependency and recommended program, if any, will be commuted to three (3) days, provided the assessment and program are completed, unless good cause is shown to and approved by the administration, within twenty (20) school days. Fees for this assessment and treatment are

the responsibility of the student and family.

Upon receipt of appropriate authorization, the agency or professional will notify the school administration in writing that the student has been evaluated and to comply successfully, completed any recommended treatment program.

Second Offense:

1. The administration will contact the parent(s)/guardian(s) and schedule a conference.
2. The administration shall notify available law enforcement authorities.
3. The administration shall suspend for ten (10) days in compliance with student due process procedures.
4. A long-term suspension hearing shall be scheduled before the school board pursuant to due process rules for long term suspension. The administration will recommend to the school board that the student be suspended for ninety (90) school days. The ninety (90) day suspension for a second offense may be reduced to ten (10) school days if the student completes an accredited intensive prevention or treatment program. Fees for this assessment and/or treatment are the responsibility of the student and family.

Subsequent Offenses

1. The administration will contact the parent(s)/guardian(s) and schedule a conference.
 2. The administration shall notify available law enforcement authorities.
 3. The administration shall suspend for ten (10) days in compliance with student due process procedures.
 4. An expulsion hearing shall be scheduled before the school board pursuant to due process rules for expulsion. The administration will recommend to the school board that the student be expelled for one year.
- B. Distributing (supplying free or selling) alcohol, illicit drugs, narcotics, dangerous or illegal chemical substances (all occurrences):
1. The administration will contact the parent(s)/guardian(s) and schedule a conference.
 2. The administration shall notify available law enforcement authorities.
 3. The administration shall suspend for ten (10) days in compliance with student due process procedures.
 4. A long-term suspension hearing shall be scheduled before the school board pursuant to due process rules for long term suspension. The administration will recommend to the school board that the student be suspended for up to ninety (90) school days.
 5. A second offense for distributing alcohol or drugs shall result in an expulsion hearing being scheduled before the school board and the administration will recommend the student be expelled for one year.
- C. Consequences for Vaping/E-Cigarette-related Infractions
- The following protocols are specifically for instances when it has been determined that a student is in possession of or using e-cigarettes on campus or school property, regardless of the substance contained within the device.
1. The administration will contact the parent(s)/guardian(s).
 2. Students will receive an automatic suspension pending investigation and determination of the substance within the vape/e-cigarette device.
 3. Students may be placed on a contract, as determined by the circumstances of the incident, the determination of the substance, and the decision of the administration.

4. Students may be required to complete an educational curriculum on the dangers of vaping/e-cigarettes.

Note: Should a family refuse the recommended professional treatment, (including random drug testing), the school may permanently dismiss the student from RCCSS.

(BP DISTRICT-2000-015)

Reference(s): Legal authorities guiding this policy and procedures include: SDCL §§ 13-32-4; 13-32-4.2; 13-32-4.3; 22-42-19; 26-11-5.1; and Public Law 101-226 (Drug-Free School and Communities Act of 1989).

See also DISTRICT 2000-030

Adopted: June 27, 2023

TABACCO FREE SCHOOL SYSTEM

POLICY /STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Rapid City Catholic School System recognizes its duty to promote the health and safety of students on school property and during school-sponsored activities.

The use, possession, or promotion of tobacco on school system property by students is prohibited. RCCSS students are prohibited from using or promoting tobacco at school-sponsored activities off school property. Students participating in school activities are also subject to such rules as may exist pursuant to an applicable activity code of conduct. For the purposes of this policy:

1. “Tobacco” means any substance or item, in any form, containing tobacco and electronic nicotine delivery devices (vape/e-cigarettes), which may not contain tobacco;
2. “School property” means all school-owned, rented, or leased buildings, grounds, and vehicles;
3. “School-sponsored activity” means any planned, organized, endorsed, or supervised activity involving RCCSS students or staff that occurs either before, during or after regular school hours;
4. “Promotion” means the use or display of tobacco-related clothing, bags, lighters, or other material that is designed to encourage the acceptance or use of tobacco.

The following protocols are specifically for instances when it has been determined that a student is in possession of or using tobacco as defined herein or the use of vape/e-cigarettes on campus or school property, regardless of the substance contained within the device.

In all instances, RCCSS shall contact parents/guardians. A student in violation of this policy, first offense, the student will be suspended for the remainder of the school day. Students may also be placed on a behavior contract and/or may be required to complete an educational curriculum on the dangers of any substance or item, in any form, containing tobacco and electronic nicotine delivery devices (vape/e-cigarettes), which may not contain tobacco, as determined by the circumstances of the incident, and in the judgment of the administration. Students violating this policy on subsequent occasion(s) during the school year shall be subject to disciplinary action pursuant to RCCSS policy.

(BP DISTRICT-2000-015)

Policy STM MS-5000-005

Adopted: August 28, 2023

WEAPONS POLICY/ILLEGAL POSSESSION

Schools should be an example of what is required regarding the observance and respect for law in society at large. Schools also must be highly conscious of the health, safety, and welfare of students, staff, and the public.

State and federal laws as well as Board policy forbids the bringing of dangerous or illegal weapons to school or school sponsored activities. Any weapon taken from a pupil shall be reported to the pupil's parents. Confiscation of weapons will be reported to law enforcement. Appropriate disciplinary or legal action or both shall be pursued by the principal.

A dangerous weapon is defined as any firearm, air gun, knife or device, instrument, material, or substance, whether animate or inanimate, which is calculated or designed to inflict death or serious bodily harm. Look-alike weapons, which are items that resemble or appear to be weapons, also are prohibited.

No firearms are permitted on any school premises, school vehicle or any vehicle used for school purposes, in any school building or other building or premises used for school functions. Exceptions would be weapons under the control of law enforcement personnel, starting guns while in use at athletic events, firearms or air guns at fire ranges, gun shows, authorized supervised school training sessions for the use of firearms, and the ceremonial presence of unloaded weapons at color guard ceremonies as identified by state law. Any violations shall be reported to local law enforcement authorities.

Any student bringing a firearm to school, except as provided by law, shall be expelled for not less than twelve months and will be referred to law enforcement authorities. The superintendent shall have the authority to recommend to the school board that this expulsion requirement be modified on a case-by-case basis. For the purpose of this portion of this policy, the term "firearm" includes any weapon that is designed to expel a projectile by action of an explosive, the frame or receiver of any such weapon, a muffler or silencer for a weapon, or any explosive, including any poison gas.

(BP DISTRICT-2000-010)

SEXUAL MISCONDUCT STATEMENT

The Rapid City Catholic School System strongly disapproves of and does not tolerate sexual misconduct of any kind. All employees, students and volunteers must avoid offensive or inappropriate sexual behavior at school and are responsible for assuring that the schools are always free from sexual misconduct.

This statement prohibits (1) sexual advances; (2) requests for sexual acts or favors, with or without accompanying promises, threats or reciprocal favors or actions; (3) other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature directed towards or among employees, students or volunteers when such conduct has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive school environment; and (4) any inappropriate sexual behavior or conduct between students on school property or at a school sanctioned activity.

The laws of South Dakota pertaining to reporting and confidentiality in matters of abuse, neglect, and sexual misconduct will be fully observed.

Examples of prohibited conduct include, but are not limited to, lewd or sexually suggestive comments, offensive language or jokes of a sexual nature; slurs and other verbal, graphic or physical conduct relating to an individual's gender; or any display of sexually explicit pictures, greeting cards, articles, books, magazines, cartoons, or notes; physical assaults, such as rape, sexual battery, molestation; intentional inappropriate touching to another person's body.

Copies of the "Code of Conduct of the Diocese of Rapid City" and "Sexual Harassment Policy of the Diocese of Rapid City" are available in the office for review or on the school website.

(BP DISTRICT-2000-006)

Title IX - RCCSS Student Handbook Notice

RCCSS does not discriminate on the basis of sex in any education program or activity that it operates, including admission and employment. RCCSS is required by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and the regulations promulgated through the U.S. Department of Education not to discriminate in such a manner. Inquiries about the

application of Title IX to RCCSS may be referred to RCCSS's Title IX Coordinator, to the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights of the Department of Education, or both.

The Board designates the following individual to serve as RCCSS's Title IX Coordinator:

Bullying and Harassment Specialist/Title IX Coordinator
Molly Rausch
424 Fairmont Blvd,
Rapid City, SD 57701
(605) 348-1477
mrausch@rccss.org

Any person may report sex discrimination, including sexual harassment, at any time, including during non-business hours. Such a report may be made in person, by mail, by telephone or by electronic mail, using the contact information listed for the Title IX Coordinator, or by any other means that results in the Title IX Coordinator receiving the person's verbal or written report.

ADMINISTRATIVE INTERPRETATION OF POLICIES

The administration of Rapid City Catholic School System reserves the right to interpret rules and policies of this handbook as individual situations and needs arise. Such interpretations will be made based on the following principles: all questionable and enabling behavior must be addressed and confronted for the good of the individual; when there is a conflict of interests, the common good shall prevail. Additionally, from time to time, circumstances arise in which current policies and practices need modification or in which no policy or practice exists. In these cases, the spirit of a Catholic school guides us to ensure the dignity of each student and individual in our community.

As a member of the Rapid City Catholic School System community, you will be expected to follow the guidelines outlined in this handbook. These rules have been established to help ensure that all students at St. Thomas More Middle School are provided with an educational environment, which fosters "Academic and Professional Development in the Catholic Tradition."

APPENDIX A

6TH GRADE VACCINATION REQUIREMENTS

South Dakota Department of Health administrative rules require both the Tdap (Tetanus, Diphtheria, Pertussis) and MCV4 (Meningococcal ACYW) vaccines for 6th grade students. The requirement is a result of legislation passed in 2016 adding meningococcal infection to the list of diseases specified in South Dakota Codified Law 13-28-7.1 for which DOH can require vaccination for school entry in South Dakota.

Any child entering school or an early childhood program in this state, shall, prior to admission, be required to present to the appropriate school authorities certification from a licensed physician that the child has received or is in the process of receiving adequate immunization against poliomyelitis, diphtheria, pertussis, rubeola, rubella, mumps, tetanus, meningitis, and varicella, according to recommendations provided by the Department of Health. The Department of Health may modify or delete any of the required immunizations. As an alternative to the requirement for a physician's certification, the child may present:

Certification from a licensed physician stating the physical condition of the child would be such that immunization would endanger the child's life or health.

The Department of Health may promulgate reasonable rules, pursuant to chapter 1-26, to require compliance and documentation of adequate immunization, to define appropriate certification, and to specify standard procedure.

The Rapid City Catholic School System does not permit a religious exemption for immunizations. Failure to complete necessary immunizations may result in exclusion from school until the requirement is met. Exclusion from school for failure to complete health requirements does not exempt a child from mandatory school attendance under RCCSS policies. Truancy procedures will be followed.

PROCEDURES

The Registered Nurse of the RCCSS shall verify all students meet the state requirements. The requirements for immunization protection are strict. No student will be admitted who has not submitted acceptable evidence of having received or in the process of receiving the minimum immunization requirements.

APPENDIX B

ABSENCE LETTERS

THE FOLLOWING IS A STANDARD ATTENDANCE LETTER/EMAIL THAT WE SEND TO EVERY STUDENT THAT HAS MISSED 5 OR MORE DAYS.

Dear Parent(s):

In reviewing attendance records it has come to my attention that NAME has been absent 5 or more days so far this year. Sometimes, parents/guardians do not realize the total number of days missed. Repeat or excessive absences, whether they be consecutive or not, may have a negative effect on an individual student's performance, skills, and progress.

I have enclosed a copy of your student's current attendance. Please review the reasons for these absences with your child and plan an approach that might contribute to a more consistent attendance record in the future.

I encourage you to call my office at (605) 348-1477 if you have any questions, or wish to discuss this concern further. I would be happy to schedule a time to meet with you. Please let me know if there is anything that I need to be aware of regarding the absences that your child is experiencing.

It is my intent to do whatever I can to help you with the education of your child. Students who do not make the necessary academic progression may be retained in the current grade. However, there would be a meeting with the parents/guardians prior to the student being retained. Let us know if we can help you in any way.

THE FOLLOWING IS A STANDARD ATTENDANCE LETTER/EMAIL THAT WE SEND TO EVERY STUDENT THAT HAS MISSED 10 OR MORE DAYS.

Dear Parent(s):

In reviewing attendance records it has come to my attention that NAME has been absent 10 or more days so far this year. Sometimes, parents/guardians do not realize the total number of days missed. Repeat or excessive absences, whether they be consecutive or not, may have a negative effect on an individual student's performance, skills, and progress.

I have enclosed a copy of your student's current attendance. Please review the reasons for these absences with your child and plan an approach that might contribute to a more consistent attendance record in the future.

I encourage you to call my office at (605) 348-1477 if you have any questions, or wish to discuss this concern further. I would be happy to schedule a time to meet with you. Please let me know if there is anything that I need to be aware of regarding the absences that your child is experiencing.

It is my intent to do whatever I can to help you with the education of your child. Students who do not make the necessary academic progression may be retained in the current grade. However, there would be a meeting with the parents/guardians prior to the student being retained. Let us know if we can help you in any way.

THE FOLLOWING IS A STANDARD ATTENDANCE LETTER THAT WE SEND TO EVERY STUDENT THAT HAS MISSED 15 OR MORE DAYS.

Dear Parent(s):

According to our attendance records, NAME OF STUDENT has been absent from school 15 or more days this year.

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of the number of days your student has missed from school so far this year. The laws of the State of South Dakota require that persons having control of children between the ages of six and sixteen have a legal responsibility to ensure that such children attend school on a regular basis.

It is my intent to do whatever I can to help you with the education of your child. Students who do not make the necessary academic progression may be retained in the current grade. However, there would be a meeting with the parents/guardians prior to the student being retained.

I have enclosed a copy of your student's current attendance. Please review the reasons for the absences and plan an approach that might contribute to a more consistent attendance record in the future. Please contact me as soon as possible at (605) 348-1477, to arrange for a conference to resolve any issues.

THE FOLLOWING IS A STANDARD ATTENDANCE LETTER THAT WE SEND TO EVERY STUDENT THAT HAS MISSED 20 OR MORE DAYS.

Dear Parent(s):

Our records indicate that NAME has missed twenty or more days of school this school year. As per our previous correspondence, a student who does not make the necessary academic progression may be retained. A meeting may be needed prior to the last day of school to present factual, documented, information regarding your child's absences. Please call me, Mrs. Olsen, as soon as possible to set up a time for a meeting to resolve any issues.

South Dakota codified law states that persons having control of children between the ages of six and sixteen have a legal responsibility to ensure that such children attend school on a regular basis. If you do not ensure that your child attends school, you may be subject to a misdemeanor crime.

Improved attendance for the remainder of the year will benefit the student academically. Please maintain all pertinent records, medical or other, regarding your child's absences for presentation if a meeting is necessary to determine academic progression. I am requesting that a note from a doctor or nurse validate any and all medical absences from this date on.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact me at (605) 348-1477.

APPENDIX C

TARDY LETTERS

THE FOLLOWING IS A STANDARD ATTENDANCE LETTER/EMAIL THAT WE SEND TO EVERY STUDENT THAT HAS BEEN TARDY 5 OR MORE TIMES.

Dear Parent(s):

St. Thomas More Middle School believes that tardiness is a matter of concern for the student, parents/guardians, faculty, and the administration. The purpose of this letter is to inform you of our concern for the number of days your student was tardy for school or class so far this year. Our records show that NAME has been tardy 5 times.

Poor attendance could adversely affect school progress. When a student is tardy, they miss classroom experience that cannot be recaptured. In addition, the student may have difficulty completing work with the same level of achievement had the student been present for the whole lesson.

Please review the attached attendance history with your child. If you have any questions, or if I can in anyway be of help to you, I would be happy to schedule a time to meet with you.

Thank you for your support in your child's education.

THIS IS A STANDARD ATTENDANCE LETTER THAT WE SEND TO EVERY STUDENT THAT HAS BEEN TARDY 10 OR MORE TIMES.

Dear Parent(s):

St. Thomas More Middle School believes that tardiness is a matter of concern for the student, parents/guardians, faculty, and the administration. Our records show that NAME has been tardy to school or class 10 times thus far during this school year.

Being on time is a responsibility and a courtesy. A student entering a classroom after the class has begun, not only creates a disturbance and detracts from the learning process, but the student misses important information. We believe the education process includes teaching responsibility, courtesy, and consideration for others. Therefore, students must learn to exercise the necessary planning and caution to prevent tardiness.

Please review the attached attendance history with your child. Per the middle school handbook, students who have been tardy to school or class in excess of 10 times are required to attend detention. Detention will be held at TIME on DATE in the middle school office.

If you have any questions, or if I can be of help to you in any way, I would be happy to schedule a time to meet with you.

Thank you for your support in your child's education.

THIS IS A STANDARD ATTENDANCE LETTER THAT WE SEND TO EVERY STUDENT THAT HAS BEEN TARDY 20 OR MORE TIMES.

As of this date, our records show that NAME has been tardy for school and/or class 20 times. St. Thomas More Middle School believes that absences and/or tardies are a matter of concern for the student, parents/guardians, faculty, and the administration. The purpose of this letter is to inform you of our concern for the number of days your student was tardy for school so far this year.

Poor attendance could adversely affect school progress. When a student is tardy, they miss classroom experience that cannot be recaptured. In addition, the student may have difficulty completing work with the same level of achievement had the student been present for the whole lesson.

I must also inform you that according to the school district policy, students who have excessive absences from school, either excused or unexcused, may be retained.

Please review the attached attendance history with your child and schedule a time to meet with me to develop a Plan of Action.

Thank you for your support in your child's education.

APPENDIX D
ST. THOMAS MORE MIDDLE SCHOOL
PRE-PLANNED ABSENCE FORM

Student's Name: _____ Homeroom: _____

Dates Missed: _____

Parent Signature: _____

Pre-planned absence instructions:

- Student should obtain form and visit with each teacher at the minimum of 2 days prior to absence.
- Assignments will be posted on Google Classroom and **it is the students' responsibility to turn those assignments on the assigned due date or immediately upon their return.** (Unless specific arrangements have been made with the teacher(s)).
- Teachers should initial that they have visited with this student. Notes, reminders, or specific instructions can be given or the field may be left blank.
- Parent/Guardian signature is required.
- Student will bring this **completed** form to the office before they leave.

Period	Class	Notes/Reminders/Specific Instructions	Teacher's initial
A			
B			
C			
D			
E			
F			
G			
H			

APPENDIX E
Rapid City Catholic School System
MEDICATION PERMISSION FORM

Date: _____ Phone: _____ Alternative Phone: _____

Student: _____ DOB/Age: _____ Class: _____

*We encourage medications be administered outside of school whenever possible.

*RCCSS employees have limited or no knowledge of administering medications.

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE PARENT OR GUARDIAN
(All areas MUST be completed, where applicable)

Name of Medication: _____

Reason for Medication: _____

Instruction (dosage, form, time schedule, duration): _____

Restrictions, precaution, and/or important side effects: _____

Physician's Name

Physician's Phone Number

I give permission for (Child's Name) _____ to receive the above medication at school according to school policy.

I understand that all medications shall be provided by me as parent/guardian in the container showing the name and telephone number of the pharmacy, student's name, physician's name, medication name, dosage, and time to be given, along with all special instructions concerning administration of the medication.

I understand that it is the responsibility of the child to come to the office to take his/her medication.

I release RCCSS, its board, staff, and volunteers from all liability for injury or adverse consequences resulting from the administration of the above medication to my child.

Date

Signature/Relationship

***Medications will not be given until this form is completed in its entirety and returned to school.**
***This form applies to all medications, including over-the-counter medications (i.e. Tylenol, Advil, etc)**
***Any changes to this request must be made in writing.**
***Medication Permission Forms must be renewed annually.**