



ST. THOMAS MORE

Catholic School

Student-Parent Handbook

2024-2025

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Dear Parents,

The purpose of this St. Thomas More Catholic School Handbook is to provide you with school policies, practices, schedules, phone book and the school calendar for the year.

As I welcome you to our parish school, I would like to share some thoughts with you about a responsibility you incur when you send your children here.

Catholic education is a ministry of the Church, and specifically of the parish community. The forms which education takes in St. Thomas More Parish can be found in the school and the religious education programs for children, youth, and adults. Our parish community provides these opportunities for Christian formation and Catholic education.

This ministry of education cannot take place effectively in a vacuum. Parental encouragement and participation is necessary for the wholesome development of a child. This encouragement and participation carries a parish dimension. The community that contributes in a variety of ways for the provision of Catholic education encourages parents to be active participants in the community of faith that provides generously for the needs of their children.

Active participation in the life of a parish can be observed in the following ways:

- Registration as a member of the parish community.
- Participation in the sacramental and liturgical life of the parish.
- Participation in the life and activities of the parish community.
- Contribution of time and talent to the development and maintenance of parish facilities and programs.
- Participation in parish programs designed for personal growth and development.
- Sharing in the financial needs of the parish through regular contributions in accord with true family means.

Our parish is privileged to share its educational ministry with you. Your participation and support in this ministry can only impact in a positive way the total spiritual and academic growth of your child. Let us work together for our children!

May God bless us all!

Jim McCollum, Principal

PARISH MISSION STATEMENT

As the family of God at St. Thomas More Parish, we are a Eucharistic Community of believers, called to live in faithfulness to the Gospel, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, in unity with our Pope and our Bishop. Nourished by his Body and Blood, we seek to offer worship to God as Jesus taught us, to pray for and serve one another in love, and to live in faith and humility following the example of Mary.

The Gospel is our hope. In the spirit of our patron, St. Thomas More, we strive to educate ourselves, our children and our neighbors in its witness and its power. We seek its justice, while serving the needs of the weak and deprived, in the name of the Risen Lord.

SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

St. Thomas More Catholic School provides students with a Catholic atmosphere to know, love, and serve God.

SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY

Each individual is created by God with a unique mind, heart, body, and spirit. St. Thomas More Catholic School, in partnership with the home, ministers to our children in developing his/her intellectual, spiritual, social, and physical potential.

Christ as the servant model guides us to know, love, and serve God. Through traditional education and the use of current technology, we emphasize the importance of acquiring foundational knowledge and critical thinking skills. We integrate citizenship and faith throughout the curriculum to develop responsible stewards who live Gospel values.

SCHOOLWIDE LEARNING EXPECTATIONS

The St. Thomas More Catholic School learning expectations flow directly from the School Philosophy. We strive to assist each child in the development of his/her potential socially, intellectually, spiritually, and physically

SPIRITUALLY

I will know, love and serve God Spiritually by engaging in a relationship with God through compassion, respect, justice, and valuing the dignity of life in keeping with the teachings of the Catholic Church.

SOCIALLY

I will know, love, and serve God Socially by striving to be a servant leader who respects the gifts of self, others and is a steward for all of God's creation.

INTELLECTUALLY

I will know, love and serve God Intellectually by developing my mind through being open to new ideas, strategies and practicing them with perseverance.

PHYSICALLY

I will know, love, and serve God Physically by recognizing myself as a child of God, developing a healthy lifestyle, and modeling Christ through positive sportsmanship and teamwork.

ADMISSIONS

No student will be refused admission to St. Thomas More Catholic School because of GENUINE INABILITY to pay. The Principal and the Pastor must approve partial tuition assistance. Parents contract a moral, if not legal, obligation to pay their tuition and other school bills. If they consistently fail to do so, the school may apply the following sanctions:

- Refuse to re-admit to school at the end of the first semester, any student whose tuition is in arrears.
- Refuse to re-admit to school in September, any student whose past bills are not paid in full.
- Refuse the transfer of records to a new school until all fees are paid in full.

New families apply directly to the Principal for admission. Kindergarten is the entrance to the school program.

PRESCHOOL ENROLLMENT

Enrollment for this program and its classes is based on the following guidelines:

- Children previously enrolled in the 3-year old program for consideration into the 4-year old program.
- Siblings of children presently enrolled in the school
- Children of registered and active members of St. Thomas More Parish
- Children of Catholic parents who are active in a parish other than St. Thomas More Parish
- All other students

The Early Child Care Program is operated on an 'Open Enrollment' system. Families and their children may register their children at any time by paying a non-refundable application fee and filling out the necessary paperwork. This fee is applied to tuition charges. Should enrollment exceed capacity, children will be placed on a waiting list and admitted when openings occur based on the enrollment protocols above.

KINDERGARTEN THROUGH 8TH GRADE ENROLLMENT

Students who have siblings in Kindergarten thru 8th grade are given priority for enrollment into St. Thomas More Catholic School. Enrollment in Preschool does not guarantee entrance into Kindergarten. St. Thomas More Catholic School being a parish school must place active parishioners wanting enrollment in Kindergarten before Preschool graduates. Registration takes place in March. Parents may begin to pre-register their children for Kindergarten beginning on the first day of school of the preceding year. For example: I have a child whom I want to start kindergarten in the academic year 2023-2024. I would be permitted to pre-register that child on the first day of school in the academic year 2022-2023.

Students are enrolled to St. Thomas More Catholic School according to the following list of priorities:

- Siblings of children presently enrolled in the school
- Children of registered and active members of St. Thomas More Parish who are enrolled in the St. Thomas More Catholic School Preschool program
- Children of registered and active members of St. Thomas More Parish
- Non-Catholics who are enrolled in the St. Thomas More Catholic School Preschool program

- Children of Catholic parents who are active in a parish other than St. Thomas More Parish
- All other students

While we generally have room for in-school families who wish to send a Kindergartener for the following year, there are a few requirements to ensure that a spot is held for your child:

1. **Write the child's name in the space provided on your family registration form** when registering for the year prior to when your kindergartener will be entering. For example, you want Susie to start kindergarten in the 2023 – 2024 school year. When completing your registration form for the 2019 – 2020 school year, be sure to put Susie's name and date of birth on the form where it reads: "Next year, I will be registering a child for the 2022 – 2023 school year."
2. Acquire a **Pre-admittance Form** (either from our website or in the school office) and submit it to the school office with the required fee in the month of September prior to the school year your kindergartener will be starting school. If you are unsure if your child will be ready to begin school, it is better that we have their name. You will be required to make a final decision at registration time the following spring. **IMPORTANT: if we have no knowledge that you have an upcoming kindergartener by October 1st of the previous year, we cannot guarantee that there will be a spot for your child.** Please do not assume that because we know your family, we know how old all of your children are!

All students are required to have a record of health, which includes an updated record of immunizations. If this matter is not in compliance, attendance must be refused and/or terminated.

KINDERGARTEN READINESS POLICY

Washington State Law requires that children must be five years of age by August 31st to enroll in kindergarten. Here are five primary components to help you know if your child is ready for kindergarten:

1. Physical well-being and social development
2. Social and emotional development
3. Approaches to learning
4. Language development
5. Cognition and general knowledge

On occasion, we have parents who feel their child is ready to start kindergarten before their fifth birthday. A request to admit a student before their fifth birthday will be considered only if there are openings available. Students with the appropriate age requirement will be given priority over **all** other determining factors; this includes the in-school family criteria. Should there be an opening, the following requirements must be completed:

- Child must be five by September 30.
- Child must be assessed by a qualified and recognized private source (the child's pediatrician is not sufficient)
- A written evaluation from the child's preschool teacher
- Child must participate in a pre-evaluation conducted by our kindergarten teacher, monitored and observed by our Principal, Assistant Principal, or staff member designated by the Principal.

Upon completion of the above requirements, a decision by the Principal and kindergarten teacher will be made. The school reserves the right to refuse admission based upon our professional evaluation that the child is not ready for kindergarten.

St. Thomas More Catholic School strongly discourages early admittance. Developmental studies demonstrate that a later maturation date far outweighs an early entrance. Students being considered for

early entrance should exhibit high academic skills **and** have strong social skills appropriate to a kindergarten community of learners.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

St. Thomas More Catholic School adheres to the Non-Discrimination Policy 5110.1 of the School Policies and Administrative Regulations, Catholic Board of Education, Diocese of Spokane, 1980.

St. Thomas More Catholic School will admit students of any race, color, sex, national, and ethnic origins to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities of St. Thomas More Catholic School.

St. Thomas More Catholic School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, national, and ethnic origins in administration of educational policies, admission policies, athletic, and other school administered programs.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

ARRIVAL TIME FOR STUDENTS IS between 8:20 a.m. (when supervision begins) and 8:25 a.m. (when the school doors open).

LEAVING SCHOOL GROUNDS in the afternoon is between 3:00 p.m. (when the school day ends) and 3:15 p.m. (when supervision ends).

Children who consistently **ARRIVE EARLY or LEAVE LATE** will be asked to participate in the Extended Care Program—regardless of grade level—unless a student has made specific arrangements with a teacher to arrive early or stay late for extra assistance.

STUDENTS SHOULD ALWAYS BE INSIDE THE “SAFETY SQUARE” BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL by the Main Entrance (south door). Safe behavior should be practiced respecting other students and the drivers of car pools. No game playing is allowed—this is a waiting area.

Supervision is necessary and required. Please, when you are picking up your children, once they are in your care they must remain with you and may not wander the property or play in any area of the school property that is not directly supervised by a staff person. This speaks specifically to playground areas where children will play while parents interact with each other or are doing volunteer work or meeting with a teacher. Students must remain under the direct supervision of their own parents/guardians.

PARKING LOT GUIDELINES

- Pull in, parking at a slight angle. **Pull all the way up to the white line.**
- Small, low profile (meaning height) vehicles in the front row.
- Large vans, large pick-ups, ideally in the third row.

Children are dismissed at regular intervals to **cross only in the crosswalk** and are to **proceed behind the parked vehicles** in their row to their vehicle.

Please pick up your children in the southern, **monitored** parking lot, which has the security of the teachers and staff. *The school warns parents and carpool drivers that other areas are not monitored and safety is highly questionable.*

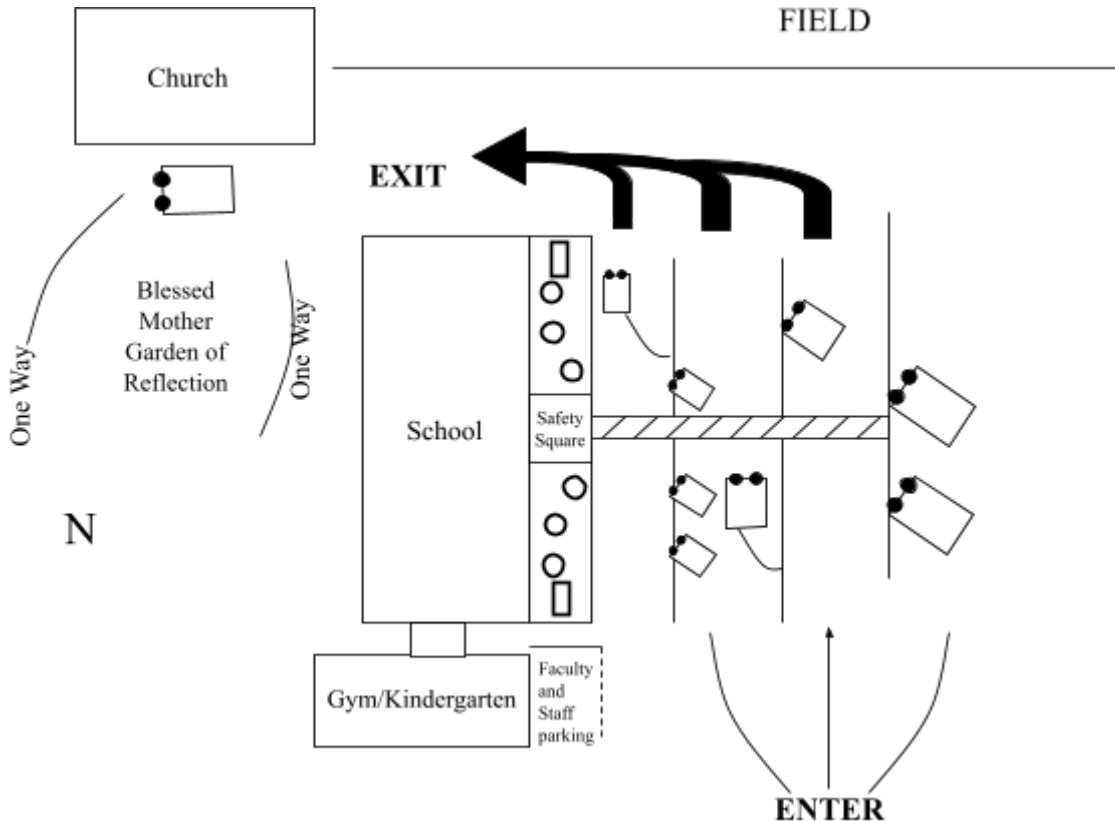
Please **pull forward into the exiting lane** (the lane in **front** of you) and exit to the east (your right) only.

Backing up or turning around is dangerous and therefore prohibited.

Please, if you are at school for a meeting or are going to be longer than 15 minutes, park in the lower parking lot located to the west of the lunchroom.

If someone other than yourself is picking up your child(ren), please notify the office and familiarize them with this procedure.

Your cooperation is greatly appreciated and it is for the safety of all the children. We realize there are days when more vehicles arrive than on others. We will try as hard as possible to get every car in and out safely, but there may be delays now and then. Please be patient. (Diagram is not to scale)



ATHLETIC PROGRAM

ELIGIBILITY FOR ATHLETICS / EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

RATIONALE

Participating in an athletic/extra-curricular activity for St. Thomas More Catholic School is considered a privilege for every student. St. Thomas More Catholic School sponsors several activities each academic quarter for students and encourages all 1st - 8th graders to participate.

Participation in the St. Thomas More Catholic School athletic/extra-curricular activities requires that students meet all eligibility requirements throughout the season and positively represent the school that supports their participation.

Activities include:	Football, Tackle & Flag Boy's Basketball Baseball Cross Country / Track & Field	Volleyball Girl's Basketball Softball Cheerleading (8th graders only)
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STM ACADEMIC POLICY REGARDING PARTICIPATION IN SPORTS / EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

The Athletic Program in Elementary Schools of the Spokane Diocese is directed by the Diocesan Athletic Council. Each student participating in the program is expected to adhere to the policies as outlined in the Diocesan Athletic Handbook. The Handbook can be found on the [Diocesan website](#).

Students of St. Thomas More Catholic School participating in any area of the extracurricular activity programs must meet teacher expectations and maintain passing grades in each academic subject. Teachers will notify the Athletic Director if a student is not meeting expectations or is academically unsuccessful. It then becomes the Athletic Director's responsibility to inform the respective coaches of the player's ineligibility until such time as the required expectations are met and/or academically successful grades are reported as passing. An exception may be granted only by a full review by Principal, Teacher, and Athletic Director.

2. STUDENT AND PARENT CONDUCT

All students participating in athletics representing St. Thomas More Catholic School must recognize that their sportsmanship, Christian actions, and language are reflective of St. Thomas More Catholic School and Community. Students/Parents displaying actions contrary to the highest sportsmanship, valued Christian actions, or acceptable language will be suspended from St. Thomas More athletics until a review by the Principal and Athletic Director is completed. Further participation guidelines will be set for each individual incident.

3. UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT

St. Thomas More furnishes all uniforms for boys and girls sports sponsored by the Athletics Fee, except for Cheerleading. Due to the nature of the activity, Cheerleaders are responsible for purchasing their own uniforms. The student-athlete is responsible for the proper care and maintenance of each uniform checked out to them during the sport season. Students are liable for the loss of equipment due to misuse and/or negligence.

All uniforms will be worn for games and team photos only.

4. PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS

State and Diocesan Policy requires that each student participating in the athletic program must have a valid physical examination. Physical exams are valid for a 2-year period. Proof of this physical, with a doctor's signature, must be on file with the Athletic Director.

5. OTHER FORMS

Each student-athlete must have an Athletic Participation Form as well as a Concussion Form on file with the Athletic Director. These forms must be submitted yearly.

6. ATTENDANCE

Students are encouraged to fully participate in the St. Thomas More Athletic program whenever possible.

Those students who indicate a desire to participate in an athletic sport and begin practices for that sport are responsible for their commitment to the program. Once a season starts, the team, coach, and school depend on each person to maintain their commitment to the sport. Should a student wish to terminate his/her affiliation with a sport, a conference will be held with the student, coach, parents, and Athletic Director for verification.

7. PARTICIPATION

All students participating in extracurricular activities for St. Thomas More Catholic School are required to attend all scheduled practices, meetings, and games. If a student is unable to attend one of these, the coach or Athletic Director must be made aware of this prior to the scheduled event whenever possible. A student must be in attendance at school on the day of a game or practice to participate in that game or practice. If a student will be absent for an extended length of time, a week's notification for the coach is recommended.

The time demands for an extracurricular activity at St. Thomas More are high. The 5th & 6th grade teams should anticipate 3 - 5 hours each week of practice, not including game or meeting times. The 7th & 8th grade teams should anticipate 5 - 10 hours each week of practice, not including game and meeting times.

COACHES

One of the primary goals of the athletic program at St. Thomas More Catholic School is the development of the student, both in mind and body adhering to Christian principles in its entirety. The formation of healthy student attitudes is dependent upon the model displayed by the adults responsible for program direction and supervision. The ethics and sportsmanship of the players, coaches, and other associated participants with the game must be exemplary and beyond reproach. Everyone participating must conduct himself/herself so that he/she is a credit to the sport and to St. Thomas More Catholic School.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF A COACH

1. Prospective coaches will have to fill out the required forms and complete a Code of Conduct/VIRTUS training prior to coaching for St. Thomas More Catholic School. This includes a Washington State Patrol Background Check.
2. Coaches will comply with the meaning and the spirit of the playing rules. Purposely ignoring or willfully violating rules will not be tolerated.
3. Coaches will show respect for the decisions of the umpires/officials, the efforts of their opponents, and the efforts of their own team. They will conduct themselves so as to dignify the game.
4. Coaches will provide a consistent inspection of all equipment, with an emphasis on safety, and report to the Athletic Director any recommendations for corrective action.

5. Coaches will have a "TEAM PACKET" at every event where coaching takes place. A "TEAM PACKET" includes:
 - (a) The names of all members
 - (b) Emergency information for each member
 - (c) Accident Report FormsThe Athletic Director will furnish the "TEAM PACKET".
6. All coaches must be First Aid/CPR certified.
7. Coaches will have a First Aid Kit at every event where coaching takes place. The Athletic Director will provide a First Aid Kit for each team.
8. Coaches will be aware of the physical condition of each participant in an activity that may affect their participation.
9. Coaches will establish and maintain discipline and control of his/her student athletes at every athletic event.
10. Coaches will provide opportunity for the participation of all players.

CHOICE OF COACHES

Prospective coaches for the Athletic Program at St. Thomas More Catholic School shall not be contacted and/or selected by the Athletic Director until the Athletic Director has consulted with the Principal. Because coaches are leaders and teachers of our young people, knowledge of the physical and mental development of children, as well as experience in athletics, will be given strong consideration in the selection process.

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance is required of all students per the school laws of the State of Washington. In addition, St. Thomas More Catholic School believes that 20 or more absences within a year is considered to be detrimental to academic achievement and may be grounds for non-passage to the next grade level.

Parents are strongly encouraged to schedule dental/medical appointments for their child outside regular school hours.

Voice Mail (Extension 313) will receive sick calls. Parents are asked to call in by 8:30 a.m. if their child is sick and will be missing school. If parents know **in advance** their children will not be in attendance, they should notify the teacher, and arrange for make-up work. If there is no message left or call made to the school office and your child is not in school, the school will call to verify that the child is absent with permission.

A long-term family trip would necessitate a conference with the teacher and/or Principal.

At St. Thomas More Catholic School we see continuous school attendance as an important part of a child's development. It is expected that each student will attend school at scheduled times, except for illness or family emergencies.

For **EXCUSED ABSENCES** (3 days or less), a student will be given a minimum of 2 days to make up schoolwork.

For **EXTENDED ABSENCES** (4 or more days), the student is required to meet with the teacher immediately upon their return to school to develop a "contract" with the teacher for satisfaction of the missed work. Parents & students are responsible for ensuring that all "contract" assignments are completed on time, and are handed in within one week.

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES will necessitate a call to the home for an explanation.

CHILDREN RETURNING TO SCHOOL AFTER AN ABSENCE must have a note signed by a parent, guardian, or doctor explaining the reason for the absence. It is understood that teachers will continue to present new materials while students are absent. Ultimately the parents/students are responsible for the level of understanding that students have of the subjects covered during an absence.

There is a direct correlation between prompt and regular attendance in school and academic success.

TARDINESS:

Students shall be considered tardy for class if they are not in the classroom by 8:35 am. Disciplinary measures for tardiness is individually handled within the classroom. Should a student be consistently tardy, the issue may be turned over to the Vice Principal. The school wishes to assist parents in the behavioral educational of their children. The principal and the parent will determine if a tardy issue would be improved through the use of detention. The primary goal is to educate children of the need for punctuality and discipline for developing a strong work ethic about promptness. The school will work with parents for improvement of excessive tardy. Ultimately, students who are continually tardy may suffer lower grades due to missing work that will not be accepted because of a student being tardy.

CAR POOLS

SEAT BELTS

- Kindergarteners are required to ride with their own parent or on the bus.
- Drivers of car pools may drive ONLY the number of children in their car as there are seat belts.
- Drivers, with the exception of parents, must be 25 years old or older.
- In leaving from the school for after-school activities, students will be permitted to be in a car pool ONLY where there is one seat belt per person.
- Seat belts are to be buckled BEFORE the children are taken anywhere.

INSURANCE

We recommend to parents that they be assured the drivers of their children have adequate insurance.

CHEERLEADING

ATTENDANCE

Cheerleaders are to attend all 7th /8th football and basketball games. If a girl misses more than 3 games during the year for any reason except illness or attendance at her own sport, she is removed as a cheerleader. Absentee excuses should be given to the Coordinator.

The girl's first responsibility is to the sport that she may be involved in through the school. If her game conflicts with a cheerleading time, she should attend her game first.

COORDINATOR DUTIES

- Supervise practices.
- Attend games or delegate adult supervision.
- Check attendance of cheerleaders at games.
- Consult and inform the Principal and Athletic Director if there are any problems.

ELIGIBILITY

All 8th grade girls are eligible to be cheerleaders.

UNIFORM

Cheerleaders are responsible for their own uniforms. The Principal and Coordinator must approve the style before they are made or bought.

CLASS SIZE

Class size in kindergarten and first grade will be limited to 25 students. The class size can be extended to no more than 30 but at least one teacher aide will be assigned to assist the teacher in the classroom with direct student contact once the class is 26 or more. Second, third, and fourth grades will be generally limited to 28 students. Fifth through eighth grades will be limited to 30 students. Exceptions may occur in grades two through eight when multiple-child families are enrolling or for the acceptance of Exchange Students. In either case, when exceeding class size norms, specific concern will be given to the make-up of the class, the number of children that a family is trying to enroll in the school, and the behavioral and academic abilities and needs of the student(s) enrolling and the student composition of the class.

CODE OF CONDUCT/ VIRTUS

The Diocese of Spokane requires that all who volunteer in any of the diocesan schools or churches be required to do the following:

- ✓ Participate in a Code of Conduct/VIRTUS training workshop put on by the Diocese
- ✓ Renew, on a yearly basis via the internet, the Code of Conduct/VIRTUS training
- ✓ Have a Washington State Patrol Background Check

Below are the guidelines that all volunteers are required to follow as published by the Diocese of Spokane. The entire Code of Conduct/VIRTUS policy can be found at the [diocesan website](#).

COMPLAINTS OR SUGGESTIONS

In order to facilitate good communication and trust among all of us, PLEASE, if you have a suggestion or complaint, take it immediately to the person who is involved, whether it is the teacher, Principal, or Pastor. Human beings tend to be much more receptive if they receive the information directly instead of 'through the grapevine.' If you do not receive satisfaction, then please present your "stand" to the next level of administration.

COMMUNICATION

The weekly "NewsNotes" are available by logging into your family Sycamore account and clicking on the "Documents" tab, or by clicking the link in the email which you will receive weekly. NewsNotes are generally posted to Sycamore by 7:00pm on the first school day of each week.

In addition, a reminder email will be sent to notify parents of communication updates, billing notifications, hot lunch accounts and much more.

CONFERENCES

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

These are held for the parents of all students at the time of the 1st quarter report cards, with optional conferencing in a following quarter.

PRIVATE CONFERENCES

The Principal and/or teacher are available for a two, three, or four-way conference. Please show your courtesy by scheduling an appointment beforehand. "Drop-in conferences" are usually not productive.

STUDENT CONFIDENTIAL CONFERENCE

All students will be listened to when they request a confidential conference. Please ask the teacher or Principal regarding a convenient time for a meeting.

DISCIPLINARY CODE

By registering at St. Thomas More Catholic School, a student and their parents/guardians understand and agree to pursue the educational objectives and practices as stated in this handbook and to observe the school's [Respect and Protect Behavioral Policy](#).

DISMISSAL TIMES

STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCE DAYS

The improvement of student learning requires a considerable amount of staff planning time. It also includes maintaining communication with parents. The Catholic schools in the diocese are allotted a certain number of in-service days for parent-teacher conferencing and staff development. Mandatory Conferences are held after the first quarter, and optional scheduled conferences for the second quarter.

EMERGENCIES

Parents will be notified if their child needs to be sent home due to an emergency, bad weather, illness, etc. If we are unable to contact either parent, the office will call one of the "Emergency Contacts" given us by the parents on the registration form. Please keep the office apprised of any necessary updates to this information.

PARENT PICK-UPS

Parents coming for students during school hours must identify themselves at the School Office before the child will be released. No pupil can be released to anyone else's custody, unless it is verified in writing.

APPOINTMENTS

Parents are asked to make all medical and dental appointments outside of school time, if at all possible.

LEAVING SCHOOL PROPERTY

Students will not be permitted to leave the school grounds without written parental permission, nor will they be permitted to leave for lunch at any location except their own home.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

A crisis is an event, or series of events, expected or unexpected, that affects one or more persons and may or may not involve the entire school or community. A crisis may require the immediate response of the school crisis team and could require emergency response personnel. The response plan is designed to protect staff and students during an emergency. This plan entails practice drills similar in nature to the current fire drills that take place on a monthly basis.

1. There are five basic procedures that staff can utilize in the initial response to various incidents:
 - **Drop, Cover, and Hold** (earthquake, explosion, roof collapse, structural failure)
 - **Evacuation** (bomb threat, fire, hazardous material incident, gas leak)
 - **Shelter In Place** (air pollution alert, toxic exposure, severe weather)
 - **Lockout-** (unknown situation, person on property, advisement by Local Authorities)
 - **Locks, lights, out of sight-** (Active threat on property)
2. The Crisis Team Leader should be notified immediately of any crisis situation.
3. The Crisis Team Leader identifies the nature of the crisis, who/what is involved, and what immediate or emergency response is required.
4. The Crisis Team Leader activates the School Crisis Plan
5. If determined necessary by the Crisis Team Leader, Emergency Services may be contacted.

SCHOOL CLOSURES AND EMERGENCY EARLY DISMISSAL

- If for some reason the school needs to close, parents will be notified utilizing several methods. You will receive an automated phone call, a text message, and an email. For this reason, it is extremely important that we have your current contact information. Information will also be posted on our public and private websites, as well as notification sent to local media. Occasionally, we will test the emergency notification system. During tests, we only utilize the text message and email methods.
- Only under extreme circumstances will children be dismissed from school early once school is in session.

EXTENDED CARE

Extended Care is a program offering before and after school care for our children. Morning care is 7:00 - 8:25 a.m., and after school care is from 3:00 - 6:00 p.m. Contact the Extended Care Supervisor for further information.

FAMILY DIRECTORY

A family directory with phone numbers and addresses is available on Sycamore. You must be a registered member of the school to access this information as it requires a username and password.

FIELD TRIPS

DRIVERS

Field trip drivers, with the exception of parents, must be 25 years of age or older. There are many documents that we need, required by the diocese, in order for a parent to be a volunteer driver. Please contact the school office for copies of these documents. These documents must be updated each school year.

PERMISSION SLIPS

It is Diocesan Policy that written permission slips be required for each field trip. A phone call to or from home will not give satisfactory permission. Permission slips are sent home with your child prior to any outing.

BEHAVIOR

Any student who manifests a lack of respect for safety rules at any time will be denied permission to go on the field trip.

SEAT BELTS AND AIR BAG SAFETY

There may NEVER be more children in a car than seat belts, and no child under the age of 12 should be allowed to sit in the front seat of a vehicle with a passenger side air bag. Kindergarteners are required to ride with their own parent.

GROOMING

UNIFORM

Students are expected to be in UNIFORM at all times beginning the first day of school. The only exceptions are those “casual” dress days that are granted with permission of the Principal.

MAKE-UP

MAKE-UP, including eye liner, eye shadow, and colored lip-gloss are not permitted.

JEWELRY

Catholic devotional necklaces are permitted but jewelry, bracelets, earrings (with the exception of stud earrings) are not. Anything worn that presents a distraction or calls undue attention and is determined to interfere with the academic environment is not permitted and will be removed.

CLEANLINESS

All students are encouraged to take pride in how they dress by always being NEAT, CLEAN, AND WELL-GROOMED. Dress in general may not be distracting and must be clean and free of holes,

HAIR

Hairstyles and color that found to be a distraction to the academic environment and unrest in the classroom are not allowed.

HOMework

Homework is for the purpose of enrichment or reinforcement of previously taught concepts, as well as to encourage good study habits.

As a rule of thumb:

Students in grades 1, 2, 3, 4 should spend 1/2 hour on homework each evening.
Students in grades 5 & 6 should spend 1 hour on homework each evening.
Students in grades 7 & 8 should spend 1 1/2 hours on homework each evening.

If a student does not have written homework, he or she should be encouraged to use the time in reading activities.

We ask the cooperation of the parents in seeing that students are given adequate time and a conducive environment in which to do it.

Children should note the homework assigned before they leave school. They should look over the material and if they find that they do not understand it, they need to go to the teacher **BEFORE** they leave school that day.

Homework that is received on time will be given full credit.

ILLNESS AND INJURY

MINOR ACCIDENTS

These are treated (wash & cover) by the teacher, playground supervisor, or school secretary. Incidents involving bleeding will be treated by the designated First Aid team, which includes the Principal, Vice-Principal, Playground Supervisor, Athletic Director, and Secretary. Parents will be contacted if their child incurs a head injury.

MAJOR ACCIDENT OR ILLNESS

The parents are notified immediately. Children are not sent home unless someone is available to care for them. This is why it is very important that you give us **2 alternate names and phone numbers** to call at registration time as emergency contacts.

RETURNING TO SCHOOL

Once children have returned to school after an illness, they are expected to participate in all play activities indoors and outdoors. Please do not ask us to keep your child indoors as we do not have supervision in the individual classrooms at recess time. A child who is not well enough to go outdoors should be kept at home. Health guidelines suggest that children should be kept home for the first two days of a cold. Also a child should not be in school if he has had a fever within the past 24 hours.

INSURANCE

A student insurance and accident plan is available to the students. Information regarding this optional plan will be included in the first NewsNotes of the school year.

INTERNET AND COMPUTER USAGE POLICY

With your permission, your child has the opportunity to use the computers and/or access the Internet St. Thomas More Catholic School. Access to the Internet, which includes other information systems, will provide opportunities for students to communicate with students, colleges, and organizations from around the world. Internet is a system that links smaller computer networks, creating one that is large and more diverse. The Internet allows your child, through electronic connection, to reach out to many other people, share information, learn concepts, and carry out research. These are significant learning opportunities that help prepare students for the future.

Be aware, however, that with this opportunity comes responsibility. It is essential that you and your child read, discuss and understand the enclosed Acceptable Use Policy, school procedures, and other materials. When your child is provided access to the Internet, which includes a personal password, it is imperative that school procedures and rules are closely followed. Inappropriate use of this educational tool will result in the student's loss of privilege to use electronic information systems and the possibility of disciplinary action, if deemed appropriate. Parents/guardians/custodians, you are legally responsible for your child's actions!

Internet Access in Grades K through 2 is obtained through direct teacher observation and participation with the children as a whole. Grades 3 through 8 will access the Internet individually, in-groups, and in

whole class opportunities. Both parents and students should sign the Internet Access Contract while **parents only** need to sign for students in Grades K through 2.

Please stress to your child the importance of using only his/her password and keeping that information strictly confidential. This means your student should not use another student's password nor share his/her own with them. Your child is responsible for any activity occurring with his/her password.

St. Thomas More Catholic School has established procedures/rules regulating the materials students may research on electronic information systems, but please be aware there are unacceptable and controversial materials/communications on the Internet that could be accessed by your child. Students are under direct supervision, but just as we are not always immediately cognizant of materials they bring to class, we cannot filter all material posted on Internet connected computers all over the world.

Safeguards within our Internet Service Provider and within our own network are firewalls to stopping the majority of offensive material, but firewalls are not 100% foolproof. Therefore, please visit with your child(ren) about the use of the computers, the network, and the Internet before signing these documents.

If you decide to provide your child the opportunity to access electronic information systems, please sign the [Acceptable Use Policy](#) and return it as soon as possible.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this information, please contact your child's teacher or the school office.

LUNCH

SACK LUNCH

Children should bring a sack lunch each day. The child's name should be clearly marked on the sack or lunch pail. Children going home for lunch need a written permission for each time, unless they go home daily. In that case, one note at the beginning of the year will suffice.

HOT LUNCH

A hot lunch alternative is available for the students on Monday-Friday. Prices and menu will be made available to you at the beginning of the year and month. The school has instituted a pre-pay Hot Lunch Account program. Information is forwarded to parents prior to the hot lunch program beginning.

MILK

White milk and chocolate milk are available every day and are to be paid for in advance. Please call the school office for the current price of milk.

MASS AND OTHER LITURGIES

One day a week our students have the opportunity to participate in the Prayer of the Church, whether it is the celebration of the Eucharist, Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer, Rosary, etc. These days are scheduled to celebrate feasts of Saints or a particular season of the Church year. These celebrations are noted on the Monthly Calendars, as well as on our web page. You are invited and encouraged to participate in these liturgies with your children. They are "deepening of faith and knowledge moments" for all of us.

MEDICATION

In accord with this directive, St. Thomas More Catholic School will dispense prescription medication only after [the appropriate form](#) has been completed in the school office. The school secretary will document each time prescription medication is dispensed.

All prescription medication must be in a container labeled by a Physician, Dentist or Pharmacist and brought to school by the child's parent or guardian. The label shall include student's name, Physician or Dentist's name, name of medication, dosage, and time of day to be taken.

Very frequently, our students come to us with a request for Tylenol or other pain reliever. The office is not allowed to dispense this medication by law without a doctor's written consent. If your child suffers often from headaches that require medication, you must consult with your doctor. **No non-prescription medicine will be given by phone request.**

If your child needs non-prescription medication for a limited time, you may complete [the appropriate form](#) from the office, and send the medication in its original container. The school secretary will dispense per your doctor's directions.

Thank you for your cooperation with these regulations, which exist for the safety and protection of your child.

MOVIES

Movies shown at St. Thomas More Catholic School will be instructional in nature or central to the subject area. They will reflect the values taught in a Catholic School. Teachers will observe the recommended rating standards with responsible accountability.

PLAYGROUND SUPERVISION

There is a supervisor on the playground as well as 1-2 parent volunteers during lunch recess. If you have volunteered to work lunch recess duty, you do so in lieu of a fee. The following are guidelines for the parent volunteers. Please be familiar with these before your assigned days. A schedule of playground supervision will be made available, as well as written on the weekly newsletter.

- Please be on the playground no later than 11:35a and plan to stay until 12:45p. Upon arrival, please check in with the playground supervisor.
- If for any reason you cannot make your assigned day, find a sub and call the school office to notify them of the change.
- Never leave the playground during duty without notifying the playground supervisor.
- If a child is injured and ANY blood is present, that child MUST be cared for by a designated First Aid Team member (Principal, Vice-Principal, Playground Supervisor, Athletic Director, and Secretary). For your own protection, NO parent volunteer may treat a wound where blood is present.
- In case of serious injury (possible broken bone, loss of consciousness, etc.) **DO NOT MOVE THE CHILD**, stay with the child, and send someone to find the playground supervisor. She/He will be able to contact the proper authorities.
- Students are not allowed to go into the school building at any time during recess.

PROGRESS REPORTS

Progress Reports are **required** at approximately the 4-week and the 6-week mark of each quarter for Grades 4-8. This can fluctuate depending on holidays and the ending of quarter dates. You will be asked to view and verify your student's Progress Report.

Parents in grades 4 and up can view their student's progress at any time on Sycamore, once assignments and grades have been posted. Classroom assessments will be varied and assessments will be consistently and regularly posted for all core subject areas in a reasonable and appropriate time frame. Teachers are required to assess students regularly and with challenge to provide for a true reflection of their students'

aptitudes. There is flexibility and reasonableness, certain subjects may never have a project and/or test, but they will have Homework and equivalent quiz level assessments.

Sycamore has very useful Family and Student Apps for your IOS and Android devices. If you have difficulty accessing your child's assignments, please call the school office. Students as well as parents are encouraged to view their assessments regularly and discuss concerns with their respective teacher(s).

REPORT CARDS

Quarterly report cards are created on Sycamore at the end of each term. The first quarterly report card will be given to the parents at the Parent-Teacher Conference. Report cards for the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th quarters are available on Sycamore under your student's documents. You will be notified via email when these documents are posted. Parents are encouraged to discuss these reports with their children and to work cooperatively with teachers in their efforts to help students reach their potential. The school abides by the provisions of the Buckley Amendment. Thus, non-custodial parents will be given access to the academic records and the information regarding the academic progress of their children, unless there is a court order specifically stating that the non-custodial parent is denied access to such information.

If a child is to be retained, parents will be contacted for a conference and a discussion will take place to determine what is best for the child.

The Grading Scales can be found on the next page.

School Grading Scales

The grading scale for grades 4-8 is:

- A = 94%-100%
- B = 86% - 93%
- C = 76% - 85%
- D = 70% - 75%
- F = 69% and below

The grading scale for grades K-3 is:

- E = Exceeding grade level expectations
- M = Meeting grade level expectations
- W = Working toward grade level expectations
- N = Not meeting grade level expectations

SCHOOL DAILY SCHEDULE

7:30 a.m.	Parish Mass (optional)
8:25 a.m.	School doors open.
8:30 a.m.	Students must be in classroom or marked tardy.
8:35 a.m.	Classes begin
11:30 a.m.	Lunch Break grades K - 4
12:00 p.m.	Lunch Break grades 5 - 8
12:15 p.m.	Classes resume grades K - 4
12:45 p.m.	Classes resume grades 5 - 8
3:00 p.m.	Dismissal for all grades

SYCAMORE

The School utilizes an SIS (Student Information System) called Sycamore. Sycamore is a secure password-access-only website that includes a wealth of information. Some of the things you will find here are: yearlong calendar, weekly NewsNotes and other important documents, family contact information, classroom homepages including current homework assignments, grades, financial information, and more. We also have a public website—www.thomasmorespokane.org—for non-registered individuals who might be looking for information about our school. You will be directed from time to time to utilize Sycamore, so you may want to keep your username and password in a convenient location. If you lose this information, call the school office.

TUITION POLICY

Tuition is a major source of income for St. Thomas More Catholic School, along with the Parish subsidy. Since the School operates on a very tight budget, receipt of tuition payments is essential. Tuition billing is collected through and is based on the payment schedule you choose in the FACTS Tuition Management System. Payments will be auto-deducted from the account or credit card you placed on file with FACTS. **New families** entering St. Thomas More Catholic School (the kindergarten through 8th grade program only) must make their first payment, called the “New Family Fee”, upon registration. This fee is **non-refundable** and will be applied toward fees and tuition. Following are the tuition payment plans from which to choose in FACTS: 1 payment (annual) ; 2 payments (semi-annual); 4 payments (quarterly); and 10 payments (monthly).

If you have any questions regarding tuition, please call the bookkeeper (466-3811, x201) or if circumstances impose financial concerns, please call the Principal (466-3811 x315). No student will be refused admission to St. Thomas More Catholic School because of GENUINE INABILITY to pay. Partial tuition assistance must be approved by the Principal and the Pastor. The total tuition cost to parents is far below the actual cost to the School and Parish. We therefore feel it is important for you to be aware that **ST. THOMAS MORE PARISH** is providing a large commitment for school support. Therefore, we ask that you be generous in your **SUPPORT OF OUR PARISH**. Parents contract a moral, if not legal, obligation to pay their tuition and other school bills. If they consistently fail to do so, the School may have to apply the following sanctions:

- Refusal to re-admit to school at the end of the first semester, any student whose tuition is in arrears.
- Refusal to re-admit to school in the following school year, any student whose past bills are not paid in full.
- Refusing the transfer of records to a new school until all fees are paid in full.

UNIFORMS

Uniforms are worn by all students at St. Thomas More Catholic School every school day unless the Principal pre-approves an alternate dress for a particular day. Plaid uniform skirts, skorts, and jumpers may be purchased through Elderware, or acquired from the school Uniform Exchange room.

The uniforms of St. Thomas More are in response to parental request and therefore, uniform supervision is first and foremost the responsibility of the parents. Please observe the following guidelines:

1. If a student cannot arrive at school in complete uniform, a note must accompany them explaining the reason why a uniform is not worn.
2. If a student arrives at school not in uniform for legitimate reasons, they must wear dress clothes, NOT jeans.
3. P.E. clothes are acceptable ONLY during P.E. class, at which time they are highly recommended. All students need a pair of "PE use only" tennis shoes.

GIRLS

- Blouses are plain white, long or short sleeve, with a collar.
- Plain white or red polo shirts. Shirts must be of adequate size and length, fitting properly and not causing a distraction in appearance.
- Collars include Peter Pan, sport, or standard.
- Ruffles and trim are *not* acceptable.
- School plaid or black shift jumper, skirt, or skort. Skirt length must be **a maximum of 3" above the knee**. The hem of the skirt must be even all the way around.
- Pants or cords must be black, with no striping or distracting insignia.
- Walking shorts (not short shorts) must be black & may be worn from the start of school until November 1, & from April 1 through the end of the year for students in grades K – and year-round for students in grades 5-8 (with the possible exception of Mass days). **(Exception: If the temperature is expected to be above 75 degrees students may choose to wear shorts for that day only)** Shorts must be **between 4" below and 3" above the knee**.
- Tights or leggings must be solid white or black and worn under skirts. Yoga pants or leggings cannot be worn as pants.

BOYS

- Shirts are plain white short or long sleeved with a collar.
 - Plain white or red polo shirts. Shirts must be of adequate size and length and not causing a distraction in appearance.
- Collars include sport or standard.
- Pants or cords must be black with no striping or distracting insignia
- Yoga pants or leggings cannot be worn as pants.
- Walking shorts (not short shorts) must be black & may be worn from the start of school until November 1, & from April 1 through the end of the year for students in grades K – 4 and year-round for students in grades 5-8 (with the possible exception of Mass days). **(Exception: If the temperature is expected to be above 75 degrees students may choose to wear shorts for that day only)** Shorts must be **between 4" below and 3" above the knee**.

ALL STUDENTS

- T-shirts are not allowed under any circumstances unless pre-approved by the Principal.
- Sweaters are black or red with v-neck, pullover, or cardigan, without striping or distracting insignia.
- Sweatshirt/Hoodies/Fleece - **only the approved S.T.M. sweatshirt/hoodies/fleece may be worn in the classroom.**
 - Sweatshirts/Hoodies/Fleece must have a school logo or solid red or black. More uniform restrictions may occur on Mass days.
- Shorts must be uniform dress shorts of an appropriate length.
- Shoes with laces need to be tied at all times.
- Students must have gym shoes that will only be worn in the gym and may be stored in the classroom.
- Jeans are not allowed under any circumstances unless pre-approved by the Principal.

- Clothing should be clean, free from tears, holes, shredded, written on, or drawn upon.
- Students who are found to be out of uniform or whose appearance is not acceptable will be given an acceptable uniform from the Uniform Exchange for the remainder of the day, and may receive a conduct reminder or detention for repeated non-compliance.

UNIFORM EXCHANGE

There are various sizes of used uniforms, shirts, blouses, pants, sweatshirts, etc., which are kept at the school. You may buy these at a minimal cost or exchange them for different sizes from what you have. The school is usually open 2 weeks before the first day of school between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. You may also come in during the school year.

VISITORS

Parents are welcome to visit St. Thomas More Catholic School and classes any time, provided they have previously called to make arrangements. Parents, as well as all persons not enrolled as students, must identify themselves at the School Office before entering the class area of the building.

Parents picking up a child for whatever reason during the normal course of a school day (other than regular before and after school times) must check in at the School Office and sign the student out. Your child will then be called to the office by staff and will be released to the parent from the office.

VOLUNTEERS

PARENT VOLUNTEERS are a much **NEEDED AND VERY WELCOME** enrichment to our St. Thomas More Catholic School program. We ask each of you parents to examine your particular interests and talents and offer your services to the school. All volunteers must complete the Code of Conduct/VIRTUS requirements as laid out by the diocese. For more details on this see the “Code of Conduct/VIRTUS” section in this handbook.

Of special importance is your assistance in the classroom as a **TEACHER HELPER**. This gives you additional opportunity to become involved in your child's education.

Our fundraisers contribute over \$130,000 to the operating fund of our school. These remarkable efforts by generous parent volunteers and benefactors have kept our tuition low and in fact, one of the lowest in the city.

We have recommitted to the two existing fundraisers for the coming year. The Fund Run in the fall and the Auction and Dinner in February.

The Fundraisers are very important financial supports for our school, but WE ALL AGREE that they do more than just raise money. They are an intricate part of building the community of faith here at St. Thomas More Catholic School. The fundraisers have an absolute need for all of the families to be involved not only monetarily but also with their physical presence. An hour or two of your valuable time affords us all a chance to be Christ for one another.

We reaffirmed each of these fundraisers for their specific diversities that allow for everyone to take part in whatever way they can contribute. It is in this spirit of the value of **VOLUNTEERS** that we seek to involve all of you in helping to staff these fundraisers and activities that fuel our school. “Many hands make light work,” that is never more appropriate than in the task of raising and educating our children in the spirit of Jesus Christ. This is a very fundamental stewardship issue that teaches our children by our example what is really important in our lives.

We ask our families to prayerfully consider what they have to offer to the children and the community at St. Thomas More. We all have a part in our parish school. Please actively join us this year and help us to build the city of God.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

The following are brief descriptions of the volunteer opportunities that are listed on the registration form, as well as the anticipated time commitment involved. All of the times listed are approximations, and most areas are quite flexible in hours and time spent. Thank you for all that you do for our school!

Accelerated Reader Store: There are 2 ways to help out the Accelerated Reader Program. One is to volunteer in the A.R. Store selling items to children who have earned points through reading books. Volunteers are asked to commit to a 2-hour shift once per month. The other way to lend a hand to A.R. is to help in distributing rewards to the students in grades 6 – 8. This is roughly a 1-hour commitment once per month.

Library help: An offer to help staff our school Library is an offer of about 1 – 2 hours per week.

Teacher Aide: This is a very flexible volunteer opportunity. The time commitment varies with each teacher, so if this is an area that interests you, please speak with the teacher involved for more information.

Field Trip Driving: This one is fairly self-explanatory. Teachers send home a request for drivers when they are needed. Of course, times and days vary.

Help serve hot lunch Monday-Friday: This opportunity involves assisting in handing out lunch to our students, and you are asked to give of your time from 10:45 am – 12:30 pm on a Monday through Friday approximately once per month.

Room Parent for grade(s): There are 2 – 3 Room Parents for each class. The Room Parent coordinator will contact you a few times during the school year to ask you to assist in various functions—mostly classroom party planning. Please indicate for which grade(s) you wish to volunteer.

Coaching (please identify grade/sport): Coaching is a great way to get to know the students. Feel free to volunteer to coach even if you don't have children at that particular grade level. Time commitment is variable, although there are some requirements for the grades 7 & 8. (Please address any questions to the Athletic Director)

Other: Maybe you have a special skill or work somewhere that the students would benefit from visiting...perhaps you own a business that could help with some of our fundraisers...or maybe you can see some other need that you could fill that we just haven't thought of...

PLEASE NOTE:

All volunteers are required by the Diocese of Spokane to complete a Diocesan Code of Conduct/VIRTUS class (one session, approximately 1 - 1½ hours in length) or complete the yearly renewal online after taking the class, as well as complete the required paperwork for our staff to run a Washington State Patrol background check. Several opportunities will be made available to you at the beginning of the year to attend one of these classes.