



# School Handbook

**Mission, Policies, Procedures**

# Table of Contents

Foreword.....	3
Mission Statement.....	4
I. Admissions.....	4
A. Admissions Qualifications.....	5
B. Class Size Limits.....	5
C. Tuition.....	5
II. General Policies.....	6
A. Safe Environment.....	6
B. Background Checks.....	6
C. Privacy of Student Information.....	6
D. Attendance.....	6
E. Dress Code.....	7
i. Students Dress Code.....	7
ii. General Dress Code.....	7
iii. Corrective Actions for Students.....	7
F. Catechism Class Placement.....	8
G. First Communion.....	8
H. Confirmation.....	8
I. Medical Policies.....	8
J. Electronics Policy.....	8
K. Student Pick-Up.....	9
L. Participation in School Sponsored Activities.....	9
M. Media Policy.....	9
i. Social Media.....	9
N. Student Driving.....	9
O. Mass Attendance Policy.....	10
P. Alcohol and Drug Policy.....	10
i. Alcohol.....	10
ii. Alcohol Drugs and Illegal Substances.....	10
Q. Guest Speaker Policy.....	10
R. Community Service.....	10
S. Questions and Concerns.....	10
PARENTS & STUDENTS CONSENT FORM.....	11

## Foreword

Dear Saint Thomas Thien Catholic School Parents and Students,

Welcome to Saint Thomas Thien Catholic School, a growing ministry of Saint Joseph Vietnamese Parish serving the Vietnamese community here in Grand Prairie and surrounding cities. Thank you for choosing Saint Thomas Thien Catholic School; your choice has demonstrated a commitment to God, to ourselves as people of God, and to our children in their faith formation. In addition, the school also teaches the Vietnamese language, history, customs, and culture that are supportive and consistent with the teachings of the Catholic Church.

To be disciples of our Lord Jesus, we are called to do our part in proclaiming the Good News. Parents, teachers and assistants, and the pastor at our parish are all catechists, with unique roles and responsibilities to help people acquire and deepen their Catholic Christian faith. Our specific jobs at home or at the school may be different, but we share the same goal and objective, which is getting to know God and to love Him and serve others.

This edition of the School Handbook for St. Thomas Thien Catholic School was created for the purpose of codifying rules and regulations deemed essential to the mission of the school. The School Handbook is intended to allow for easier access for parents to review policies, offer guidance in decision making for the school, keep students and catechists safe, and make the learning experience more positive for both students and parents.


All policies included in this handbook are intended to follow the teachings of the Catholic Church and the policies of the Diocese of Dallas. The handbook will not supersede any rulings on policies made by the current Pastor of the St. Joseph Vietnamese Catholic Church nor the Diocese of Dallas. Guided by the Holy Spirit, all policies are subject to change on an annual basis if deemed to be beneficial to the students and parents, and to our Catholic faith.

In the spirit of cooperation, respect, and charity, all policies agreed to in this handbook should be honored by the Pastor, catechists, parents, and students. It is so important that we work together to raise our children so that they will become more faithful, hopeful, and loving towards God, family, and friends. After reviewing the handbook, you are asked to sign the signature sheet on behalf of yourself and your child per school policy. This form must be signed, dated, and turned in to your child's catechist teacher or to the school office by the indicated deadline. By signing this form, you, and your child(ren) pledge to comply with the school policies as stated in the handbook. For any further clarification, please do not hesitate to contact us.

The official handbook will also be posted on our school website at <http://www.tomathien.org> for your convenience. Please visit our website regularly throughout the school year to remain informed of the latest activities and information, including any revisions to the handbook.

The Pastor, the executive and administrative boards, teachers, and teaching assistants of Saint Thomas Thien Catholic School are grateful to God for His continued blessings, and we also sincerely thank you for your prayers, cooperation, and support so that our school may thrive and bear good fruits. May the Holy Spirit always guide all of us in our joint mission. May God bless you and your family.

Sincerely,



Rev. Francis Xavier Quyet V. Bui  
Pastor

## Mission Statement

Saint Thomas Thien Catholic School is dedicated to foster the growth of students in faith, love, and charity and to teach them the Vietnamese language, customs and culture in consistency and support of the Catholic faith.



# I. Admissions

## A. Admissions Qualifications

To be considered for admission, students must:

1. be at least 5 years old on or before September 1st of the school year\*
2. agree to be enrolled in Vietnamese class.
3. be a member of a family registered with the Parish of St. Joseph Vietnamese Catholic Church‡

\* - To encourage parents to volunteer as teachers at church and accommodate the needs of the school, parents agreeing to be teachers may enroll their child(ren) who are 4 years old by September 1st of the school year. The 4-year-old student(s) must repeat Kindergarten class the following year.

‡ - Exceptions to this policy are non-Catholic families who share values in our Mission Statement. Families who are not registered at other parishes are encouraged to register as a family of St. Joseph Catholic Parish. Families who are registered at other Vietnamese Catholic parishes are encouraged to enroll their children in their registered parish. Families can be members in only one Vietnamese Catholic Parish to reduce complications. However, there's no limit for families to be members of both Vietnamese and non-Vietnamese Catholic Parishes.

## B. Class Size Limits

Due to limited teaching facilities, the school reserves the right to limit the number of students admitted for any school year. This number shall vary annually, and roster spots will be given to “first come first serve basis.” In general, the order of preference is given as follows:

1. Returning students who had already been enrolled in the previous year.
2. Returning students who had not been enrolled in the previous year.
3. Catholic children of (non)-Vietnamese parishes
4. Catholic children of families not registered with any parish.
5. Non-Catholic children.

Should there be a limit, parents wanting to enroll their children after the roster has been tentatively filled will be placed on a waiting list in the order that they applied.

## C. Tuition

Tuition is required to be paid in full during registration. The use of tuition facilitates the sound financial operations of the school and helps maintain quality standards in classrooms, supplies, and learning materials for the students. Failure to pay promptly before the first day of school results in forfeit of the roster spot until financial obligations are met.

## II. General Policies

### A. Safe Environment

All catechists, volunteers, parents, and students must adhere to all policies and guidelines set by the Diocese of Dallas Safe Environment Program. Policies and guidelines must be followed and enforced not only during school hours, but at any event, gathering, or function in which the church or the school is associated.

Per Diocesan and state policies, all members of the church, if having suspicion of abuse or neglect of any minor, elderly or disabled person, must report to any local or state law enforcement agencies or the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.

To report suspected abuse or neglect of a minor, elderly or disabled person:

Contact the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (“DFPS”):

- **1-800-252-5400**  
Toll-free 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, nationwide.
- **[www.txabusehotline.org](http://www.txabusehotline.org)**  
Make your report through the DFPS secure web site and you will receive a response within 24 hours.
- In emergency situations, **call 911**, and then report to the DFPS.

Reports should reflect the reporter's belief that a minor, elderly or disabled person has been or may be abused or neglected or has died of abuse or neglect and should contain:

- The name and address of the minor or elderly or disabled person;
- The name and address of the person responsible for the care, custody, or welfare of the minor or elderly or disabled person; and
- Any other pertinent information concerning the alleged abuse or neglect.

For reports concerning an elderly or disabled person ONLY, also include:

- The nature and extent of the elderly or disabled person’s condition; and
- The basis of the reporter’s knowledge

### B. Background Checks

All catechists and volunteers of any capacity, including parent volunteers, must clear a criminal background check to be done by the Diocese.

### C. Privacy of Student Information

All personal information related to the student will be kept private from third parties not involved with the school. Only the Administrative Board and the student’s teachers will have regular access to individual student information as well as academic records and medical issues/allergies.

Only student names, parents’ names, and contact information may be disclosed to other parish ministries such as the Andrew Dung Lac Choir for recruitment or communication purposes. Academic records such as grades and medical issues/allergies are not to be released to anyone with the exception of the directors of parish ministries and school department for academic eligibility and health precautions.

### D. Attendance

Should a student expect to miss any school days, they must have their parent or guardian either 1) contact the teacher through any means at least 24 hours in advance, or 2) sign the Excused Absences sheet in the Teacher’s Office. Failure to do either of these actions will result in the student being counted as having an unexcused

absence. Parent volunteers who call parents of absent students do so only to check on the welfare of the students and make sure that the parents are aware of their child's whereabouts. Parent volunteers will not change the status of absences.

Since the school only convenes once a week, and with other planned activities with the Church and holidays, there are a limited number of sessions for students to learn. Should any student miss more than six (6) school days, whether excused or unexcused, they will automatically be placed in Probation status the following school year. Teachers will determine whether the student is allowed to advance to the next grade level based on their grades, performance, knowledge, participation, and attendance, because they will have missed a significant portion of a curriculum that builds itself on previous weeks' lectures and material.

**Probation status:** Student violating Probation status by missing more than 6 school days will result in student not allowing to advance to next grade level, no exceptions. Parent/guardian meeting with the teacher and the principal will incur.

## E. Dress Code

### i. Students Dress Code

Students are required to wear the following:

1. For all students, blue polo with the school logo embroidered on the left chest.
2. For boys, khaki pants
3. For girls, khaki pants or uniform skirts

**Students are not supposed to wear anything other than the uniforms.**

The following are just some, not all, examples of clothes not to wear to school:

1. shorts
2. skirts that are shorter than arms length
3. any sleepwear
4. any type of hats, beanies, bandanas, or have the hood up on hoodies.
5. sagging pants
6. flip-flops, Heely's, and other shoes that cause distractions during Mass or class.

### ii. General Dress Code

The following rules apply to teachers, teaching assistants, and students, male and female, during school and school-sponsored activities.

1. Hair – Catechists' and students' hair must be neat, clean, well groomed, and a natural color. Any extreme and distracting hairstyles, as deemed the administrative staff or the principal, are not acceptable. This applies to both male and female students.
2. No visible tattoos.
3. No excessive jewelry that causes distractions or that can cause harm during physical activity.
4. Must be in adherence to the policy on proper attire for Mass.  
(Please see Diocese of Dallas Celebration of Mass – Proper Church Attire [Nov 2010])

### iii. Corrective Actions for Students

Students who violate any part of the dress code will have their names recorded by any teacher or volunteer, and their parents will be notified at the end of the day by the administrative staff or teacher.

Students who fail to wear the official blue polo will be required to change into spare uniforms provided in the teachers' office for the remainder of the day and to be returned at the end of the day.

Students who violate the pants policy will be required to change into spare sweatpants after Mass to be worn for the remainder of the school day and to be returned at the end of the day.

## F. Catechism Class Placement

The catechetical curriculum is built upon age-appropriate topics for each grade level. Each subject or teaching of the Catholic Church is important, and it builds upon earlier topics covered in the prior grades. Faith formation is a process, so it is very important that parents enroll their children in Religious Education classes each year. Under normal circumstances, students are placed in the respective catechism class according to their age if...

1. They have been enrolling continuously in catechism class throughout the years.
2. The teacher approves the student to advance to the next grade level.

Students not meeting this requirement will be placed one grade or more lower with respect to their grade level in public/private school according to their age so that they can learn about faith topics that they had missed. The school administrators will assign class placements.

## G. First Communion

Per parish bylaws, all parents of any student in preparation to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the Sacrament of the Eucharist must have an audience with the Pastor or his delegate before the student is approved to receive these sacraments.

## H. Confirmation

Per parish bylaws, all parents of any student in preparation to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation must have an audience with the Pastor or his delegate before they are approved to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation.

In the Sacrament of Confirmation, the baptized person is "sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit" and is strengthened for service to the Body of Christ. (Source: USCCB).

Confirmation for youth is a two-year program per the Diocese of Dallas policy. In St Thomas Thien Catholic school, grade 8 is pre-Confirmation class and grade 9 is Confirmation class. Students are required to complete the two-year program with no violation to attendance policy as detailed in section D in order to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation.

## I. Medical Policies

The safety and well-being of our students is our greatest concern and priority. All efforts will be made to monitor and guard students from potential harm and illnesses. If, however, in the unfortunate event that a student experiences sudden non-emergency illness such as stomach aches, vomiting, nose bleeds, etc., or non-threatening physical injuries, we will do our best to prevent further injury or illness. Basic first-aid care such as bandages, alcohol wipes, and cotton will be used appropriately. If needed, the parent of the student will then be contacted promptly; if no response is obtained, the emergency contact provided by the parent will be contacted.

Furthermore, we will abstain from giving any of our students any type of medications such as Advil, Tylenol, Motrin, etc. and prescription medications. Also, parents are to disclose any allergies or significant medical issues to their child's teacher. The information will stay confidential in accordance with the section *Privacy of Student Information*.

In the event that a student experiences a true medical emergency, Basic Life Support will be administered if applicable and emergency responders will be contacted promptly. Also, either the parents or emergency contact will be contacted immediately.

## J. Electronics Policy

The use of personal electronic devices is prohibited during Mass and during class time. Any electronics being used during these times will be confiscated and returned according to the following schedule:

- 1<sup>st</sup> offense: device will be returned at the end of class.



2<sup>nd</sup> offense: device will be returned at the end of the school day to the parent.

3<sup>rd</sup> offences: device will be returned only after having a conference with the principal.

Students may use personal electronic devices during the break times in between Mass and classes.

#### K. Student Pick-Up

Mindful of the students' safety and well-being, and out of consideration for the fact that all teachers and staff are volunteers and have family and other obligations, all students must be picked up within 30 minutes of the scheduled dismissal of students that day. All failures to do so will result in the following penalties:

1<sup>st</sup> offense: student name will be recorded and given a notice to the parents/guardian.

2<sup>nd</sup> offense: student name will be recorded, and the parent/guardian will be asked to volunteer at the school for one week.

3<sup>rd</sup> offense: parent/guardian will be required to have a conference with the principal to make accommodations for the timely pick-up of the students.

Parents should make proper prior arrangements if they won't be able to pick up their student(s) in a timely fashion. Repeated failures would not only result in penalties and inconveniences, but would cause negative effects on the student's energy, schoolwork, health, and self-esteem. We want the children to be well-attended and happy.

#### L. Participation in School Sponsored Activities

Students are encouraged to participate in school-sponsored programs and events. There are some basic qualifications to allow a student to participate. The student must maintain good grades in their faith formation and Vietnamese language classes. A current grade of 75 or above is acceptable to join. The programs and activities include but are not limited to various cultural festivals, academics contests, awards, and memberships in St. Cecilia Choir, St. Dominic Savio Altar Servers, and St. Luke Lector Ministry. All ministries and their directors expect the students to represent the school and the parish faithfully and positively.

#### M. Media Policy

Throughout each school year, St. Thomas Thien Catholic School takes photos, videos, and other types of media recordings of school and church events. These media may include images of students, but most will only be used for the purposes of awards and recognitions, educational and evangelical purposes, announcements, use on the school and church websites, and as mementos.

Occasionally, these media will be used for fundraising for charity or for the church, in which case parents may file a written request that any images or representations of their child not be used.

##### i. Social Media

St. Thomas Thien Catholic School recognizes the prevalence and impact of social media and encourages the use of social media to educate and evangelize. However, users must adhere to Diocesan policies on social media<sup>1</sup>.

Any teacher, volunteer, or student found in violation of any part of the diocesan Social Media policy will be disciplined and/or dismissed by the principal as warranted.

#### N. Student Driving

St. Thomas Thien Catholic School recognizes and accepts that the Texas Department of Public Safety may allow certain students of legal age to operate a motor vehicle. It is, therefore, acceptable for students, with legal permit or license, to drive to school and from school back home.

However, the school does not permit these students from driving off parish grounds for any reason other than for emergencies during school hours.

---

<sup>1</sup> Roman Catholic Diocese of Dallas Social Media Policy (Jan 2011)

St. Thomas Thien Catholic School and St. Joseph Vietnamese Catholic Church hold no responsibility and will not be held liable for any incidents involving vehicles driven by students at anytime and anywhere. The church and school also hold no responsibility and liability for any injuries to the driver or any passengers, whether they be students or not, anytime and anywhere.

#### O. Mass Attendance Policy

The mass is the center of our faith life. Students are to attend the 11:00 AM mass and sit together with their teachers and peers in their classes. That way students will have the opportunity to be guided and learn to understand the Order of Mass. Participation is essential to the formation and deepening of the students' faith, and it is required for all students at the 11:00 AM mass.

#### P. Alcohol and Drug Policy

##### i. Alcohol

Although the Diocese of Dallas permits the service of beer and wine during church/school events<sup>2</sup>, St. Thomas Thien Catholic School does not permit the use of alcohol during any events coordinated solely by the school. This extends not only to students and catechists, but also applies to parents and other parishioners who attend these events.

##### ii. Alcohol Drugs and Illegal Substances

St. Thomas Thien Catholic School prohibits the use, distribution, or display of any drugs and other illegal substances at anytime and anywhere. Violation of this policy at the parish will result in the contact of local authorities, the parents of the student, and immediate expulsion/suspension from the school.

#### Q. Guest Speaker Policy

All visiting speakers whether lay or clergy and religious, must be cleared by the Diocese according to the proper protocol.

*(Please see Diocese of Dallas Visiting Speaker Requirements [Nov 2010])*

#### R. Community Service

The school, in conjunction with St. Thomas Teens, will make every possible effort to provide the opportunity for our catechists and our students to participate in monthly community service projects to nurture social justice and evangelize.

In order to aide catechists with making time for community service, all community service opportunities shall be announced no later 30 days before the scheduled date of service.

#### S. Questions and Concerns

To better serve the needs of the parents of our students, we welcome any comments or concerns regarding our quality of teaching, environment, safety, spirituality, and other areas. Should a student, parent, or parishioner wish to express their concerns, they are welcome to come to the teacher's office and request to talk to the Executive Board and the Principal. Should they not be immediately available, the parent can leave a written note in the Letters Box and will be contacted soon thereafter by either the principal or a representative. Should any question or concern not be resolved, then a meeting with the Executive Board and Principal would be recommended.

All questions/concerns and subsequent resolutions shall be recorded.

---

<sup>2</sup> Roman Catholic Diocese of Dallas Policy on Alcohol Service for Church/School Events (Nov 2010)



PARENTS & STUDENTS CONSENT FORM  
ĐƠN ĐỒNG Ý CỦA PHỤ HUYNH VÀ HỌC SINH

**SIGNED FORM MUST BE TURNED IN BY SEPTEMBER 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024.  
ĐƠN ĐÃ KÝ PHẢI ĐƯỢC NỘP TRƯỚC NGÀY 15 THÁNG 9 NĂM 2024**

*I have read and agree to follow the school policies and code of conduct as stated, including the policies relating to attendance, dress code, and use of electronic devices. I understand that the school guidelines may be amended as necessary in order to provide a safer and better learning environment for students, and I agree to comply with any and all amendments.*

*Tôi đã đọc và đồng ý tuân thủ các chính sách và quy tắc ứng xử của trường như đã nêu, bao gồm các quy định liên quan đến việc đến lớp, trang phục và sử dụng thiết bị điện tử. Tôi hiểu rằng các hướng dẫn của trường có thể được sửa đổi khi cần thiết để cung cấp một môi trường học hành an toàn và tốt hơn cho học sinh, và tôi đồng ý tuân thủ mọi sửa đổi.*

Parents/Guardians Printed Names  
Tên của phụ huynh/người giám hộ

Parents/Guardians Signatures (at least one must sign on behalf of all)  
Chữ ký của cha mẹ/người giám hộ (ít nhất một người đại diện phải ký)

Date  
Ngày

**All students grade 3 and above must sign.  
Tất cả học sinh lớp 3 trở lên phải ký.**

Student's Printed Name  
Tên học sinh

Grade  
Lớp

Student Signature  
Chữ ký học sinh

Student's Printed Name

Grade

Student Signature

Student's Printed Name

Grade

Student Signature

Student's Printed Name

Grade

Student Signature

### MEDICAL ISSUES

Nếu học sinh có những dị ứng hoặc vấn đề sức khỏe cần được quan tâm, như thuốc men, đồ ăn, v.v., xin quý phụ huynh cho Trường Thánh Tôma Thiện biết để có thể giúp các em tốt hơn:

*If the student has any allergies or health conditions that need attention, such as medications, foods, etc. please inform us at Saint Thomas Thien Catholic School so we can better support the students:*

---

---

---

---