

St. Thomas Aquinas School



Volunteer Handbook 2018-2019



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Volunteer Handbook

I. Background information

Welcome

Volunteers are an important part of the school community and are valued for the contributions they make. Every effort will be made to ensure that the best possible use is made of volunteer services, and that volunteers understand their role in the school.

I. Philosophy

Mission Statement of the Educational Apostolate — Archdiocese of Dubuque

The mission of the Educational Apostolate of the Archdiocese of Dubuque is to promote lifelong faith formation which challenges individuals to:

- respond to God's continuous call for conversion to Jesus Christ
- form and be formed in Christian community life
- grow in knowledge of faith
- participate in liturgical celebrations and prayer
- collaborate in the Church's mission of evangelization

Mission Statement and Objectives of St. Thomas Aquinas School:

Mission: **To provide a world-class education in the spirit of Jesus.**

Objective I

St. Thomas Aquinas School will

- involve the lives of its students in the study and worship of God.
- involve the students in giving service to others.
- involve the students in initiating and experiencing Christian community.

Objective II

St. Thomas Aquinas School is committed to

- developing Christian respect for God.
- developing Christian respect for self.
- developing Christian respect for others.
- developing Christian respect for the world.

Objective III

St. Thomas Aquinas School is committed to

- meeting the individual needs of each student.
- recognizing the uniqueness of each student.

Catholic Atmosphere

Religious education at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School occurs in two major areas: the study of the Catholic faith and integrating faith experiences into the life of each student.

Besides classroom instruction in religion, liturgical and sacramental participation is part of our school program. Celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, all school liturgies, and opportunity to participate in Mass are part of the spiritual life of the school.

Spiritual Program

The spiritual program of the school recognizes that “to provide a sound academic program which includes emphasis on Catholic teachings within the atmosphere of Christian living” cannot be gained in the formal classroom only. The formal classroom learning is the beginning.

Every Christian has the responsibility to use one’s gifts for the good of the community and to minister as Jesus did. This is the core of the Christian life.

Volunteers are always invited to the school liturgies School Masses are at 8:30 a.m. on Fridays; however, if there is a holyday, Mass is celebrated on the holyday at 12:30 and not on Friday.

Liturgical Celebration — Students and teachers plan and participate in liturgies. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is provided during Advent and Lent.

Admission

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School will accept students of any religious conviction. However, as a student, everyone is considered a part of the total school community and will be included and expected to participate in all activities scheduled as part of the class day, and all required classes even those of a religious nature.

What can volunteers do? Some of things are:

1. Tell stories to children
2. Listen to children read
3. Conduct flash card drills
4. Provide individual review
5. Set up learning centers
6. Reproduce materials
7. Practice vocabulary with non-English speaking
8. Make instructional games
9. Prepare bulletin boards
10. Help with book fairs
11. Reinforce reading fluency

12. Assist with field trips
13. Help children with arts and crafts
14. Set-up experiments
15. Help young children with physical activities
16. Reinforce learning the alphabet
17. Reinforce recognition of numbers
18. Drill recognition of words
19. Help with handwriting practice
20. Drill spelling words

What can't volunteers do?

Volunteers CAN NOT teach. Teaching requires licensure by the State of Iowa.

Volunteer Duties

1. The volunteer arrives on time and performs the assigned task.
2. The volunteer respects and enforces school rules.
3. The volunteer remembers that the school exists for the students and treats all students with respect.
4. The volunteer asks for instructions and assistance when needed.
5. The volunteer adjusts to the teacher's way of doing things, following their directions at all times.

Protection of Minors

All volunteers shall receive a copy of the Policy for the Protection of Minors, Archdiocese of Dubuque, and must complete the required Virtus training.

Each shall sign an acknowledgment of receipt. Volunteers shall comply with the expectations of that policy. In particular they shall comply with the expectations for reporting. All cases of alleged, suspected, or known sexual abuse of a minor committed by any personnel of the Archdiocese and Archdiocesan entities while acting in their capacity as personnel of the Archdiocese and Archdiocesan entities must be immediately reported to civil authorities.

Supervision of Volunteers

The principal is responsible for the total school operation. Thus, the principal supervises all who serve in any capacity in the school. Thus volunteers report directly to the principal.

Confidentiality

In the course of your volunteer work at our school, you may learn confidential information about students or teachers. You are expected to keep this information confidential in any setting inside or outside the school, just as you would wish your own privacy rights to be respected.

School Day

Students are to arrive by 8:05 A.M. Classes begin at 8:10 A.M. and dismissal is at 3:20 P.M. To provide security for the building, all doors will be locked at 8:20 a.m. Entrance to the school then is through the north door by the office only. Security cameras are in place at the Dubuque Street Entrance (Office), the East entrance, the South entrance and the parish center entrance (Preschool). One must push the door buzzer to be identified via the camera in order to be allowed entry by the school/parish secretary.

Early Dismissals, School Closing and Late Start Procedures

St. Thomas Aquinas School follows the Webster City School District regarding school closings as the result of inclement weather. When the weather is questionable, listen to KQWC radio station or TV channel KCCI (channel 8) for official announcements. By providing the secretary with an email address or cell phone number, an email or text is also sent out to parents and staff.

Discipline

In order to provide and maintain an atmosphere which permits the orderly and efficient operation of the school and which encourages learning and helps students to develop a Christian code of personal conduct, school rules and regulations are in effect.

Unacceptable student behaviors include, but are not limited to:

1. Personal injury (bullying, fighting, calling names)
2. Refusal to comply with a direct command from a person of authority
3. Vandalism

Consequences include, but are not limited to:

- In-school suspension
- Suspension from school for a definite time

Corporal Punishment, Restraint, and Physical Confinement and Detention

State law forbids school employees from using corporal punishment against any student. State law also places limits on school employees' abilities to restrain or confine and detain any student. If you have any questions, please ask the principal.

Health and Safety

The school office secretary and teachers know the health and safety procedures for STA. If a child is injured or needs attention, you should notify the supervising teacher. There should always be a teacher supervising students at all times. As a volunteer, you should never be alone supervising students.

Abuse

In compliance with School Laws of Iowa and AFFC/ACSB 4116.30a any certificated or licensed employee of St. Thomas Aquinas School who has a reasonable belief that a child under the age of 18 has been abused by a person responsible for the care of the child, as defined by law, shall report the suspected abuse verbally to Department of Human Services (DHS) within twenty-four hours and follow the verbal report with a written report on appropriate forms.

Employees will not commit acts of physical or sexual abuse, including inappropriate and intentional sexual behavior, toward students.

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School is committed to protecting all students from all types of abuse. If you believe that a student is suffering from any type of abuse, please contact the principal or Kim Hermsen, Superintendent of Schools, so that this can be reported to trained investigators. This policy is in compliance with Iowa Code 280.17, School Rules of Iowa 281-102.1— 15 (280) and AFFC/ACSB 4116.30a & AFFC/ACSB 4116.30b.

AIDS / Blood Borne Diseases

Children diagnosed as having any blood borne pathogen disease, or with laboratory evidence of infection with a blood borne pathogen associated virus (HILV-III/LAV) and receiving medical attention may attend classes in an unrestricted educational setting in accordance with AFFC/ACSB 5141.2.

Alcohol/Drug Policy

The St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School Board develops guidelines that are in accordance with AFFC/ACSB 5144 and AFFC/ACSB 5144.1 on student responsibility and discipline.

Asbestos

Federal regulations and AFFC/ACSB 7113 require us to inform you that there is asbestos in the St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School building. A certified asbestos inspector has inspected the building and all the asbestos found has been sealed and encapsulated. The most recent inspection was conducted in 2013. A required six-month periodic surveillance is conducted the school custodian.

Chemical Right to Know Law

The Chemical Right to Know Law requires that all schools in the nation prepare a list of chemicals that are known to be present in their buildings and to maintain material safety data sheets (MSDS) on them. The law further states that all chemicals are to be appropriately labeled, storage areas are to be posted for the hazardous chemicals, and employees that work with the chemicals are to be trained in the safe handling of these chemicals. The school is also to acquaint the local fire department with the location of hazardous chemicals in the school. If you want to know what chemicals are used in the school and where they are stored, please contact the principal.

Lead in the Drinking Water

During 1991 all schools of the Archdiocese were tested for lead in the drinking water. The test results indicated the lead levels were below the established safety levels.

Water was again tested locally in September of 2016. Test results indicated levels were below the established safety level. Copies are available in the principal's office.

Radon Testing

During 1991 all schools of the Archdiocese were tested for radon. The test results indicated the radon levels were below the established safety levels. Based upon these results and the rules of the Iowa Department of Public Health no additional testing for radon needs to be done at this time. The lower level of the school facility was tested in 2014 and again in December of 2016. All tests were within normal ranges.

Safety Drills

Announced and unannounced drills are conducted at various times during the year in accordance with Iowa codes. Students are expected to leave in an orderly fashion, without talking, according to the directions of the teacher and return the same way. State law requires four tornado drills and four fire drills each year.

Field Trips

1. All school rules are in force.
2. Chaperones are to stay with their assigned group.
3. Supervision is both mental and physical. Be sure that attention is always on the students.
4. We hope you enjoy the outing, but we are grateful for your remembering that your first responsibility is the safety of the students.

Copy Machine

The copy machine in the office is to be used only by designated staff personnel.

Copyright

It is the policy of the educational programs governed by the Archdiocesan Catholic School Board (AFFC/ACSB #2510) that all employees, volunteers, and students will abide by the federal copyright laws. Employees, volunteers, and students may copy print or non-print materials allowed by:

1. copyright law
2. fair use guidelines
3. specific licenses or contractual agreements
4. other types of permission

Employees, volunteers, and students who willfully disregard copyright law are in violation of Archdiocesan policy, and are doing so at their own risk and assuming all liability.

Desks

A staff member's desk is his/her own private space. Therefore, please do not use another's desk or its contents without permission.

Volunteer Working Area

Please complete your volunteer work in the appropriate place, which will depend on what kind of volunteer work you are doing. If helping a teacher during school hours, please follow the directions given by that teacher, working in the classroom or a room that is not occupied such as the teacher's lounge. We appreciate you being considerate of the work that is taking place in the school offices. Due to the busy and confidential work in those offices, you are asked to follow the teacher's direction in working elsewhere, such as a staff room, faculty room, or lunchroom.

Lights

Lights should be shut off when offices and rooms are not in use.

Equipment

1. No equipment or supplies are to be bought or sold without authorization of the Administrator/designee and processed through the office.
2. No equipment or supplies are to be taken from the building except when needed for a school sponsored activity.
3. No volunteer is to promise the use of or lend equipment or supplies to any person outside the school staff. All such requests are to be referred through proper channels.

Fire and Tornado Drills

Unannounced drills are conducted at various times during the year in accordance with Iowa codes. Students are expected to leave in an orderly fashion, without talking, according to the directions of the teacher and return in the same way. State law requires four tornado drills and four fire drills each year.

A sign indicating fire exits is displayed in a prominent place on each floor.

1. If you notice smoke or a fire, pull the alarm and notify the Office immediately.
2. The fire alarm sound indicates that you should leave the building at once, utilizing the evacuation plan located in each room.
3. Please carry car keys in case the fire department wants vehicles moved.

Lost & Found

Materials which are found may be taken to the Office.

Supplies

Supplies are available in the supply closet by the office. They are to be requested when they are needed. These supplies are to be obtained by the staff involved.

School's Right to Amend

The school reserves the right to amend the handbook; volunteers will be notified promptly of any changes.