

# **St. Thecla Parent and Student Handbook 2016-2017**

## **From the Principal's Desk**

The school policies and procedures contained in this handbook are intended to inform all parties responsible for the education of our students. Cooperation and effective communication between the school and home is important to ensure a quality education for each child enrolled at Saint Thecla School.

## **Mission Statement**

Saint Thecla is dedicated to elevating children to become our future leaders through scholarship, spirituality, and service. We live our faith . . . as we teach our faith!

## **Philosophy**

We believe:

- That the parents are the primary educators of their children
- That the faith life of each student should be nurtured emphasizing Catholic values
- That as a part of the Catholic Community of St. Thecla Parish we share a mission of service and stewardship
- In an all-encompassing curriculum that meets
- In encouraging creative thinking and problem solving skills
- That as a Catholic school we are preparing students to assume the duties of Christian citizenship
- In celebrating our students' God given talents through fine arts and athletic programs
- In our Lord's message to "love one another."

## **ADMISSION POLICY**

St. Thecla School is operated under the auspices of the Catholic Bishop of Chicago, a corporation sole, in the Archdiocese of Chicago. St. Thecla School admits students of any race, color, sex, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students in this school.

St. Thecla School does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, or national and ethnic origin in administration of educational policies, loan programs, athletic or other school administered programs.

*ARCHDIOCESAN POLICY 311, 312*

St. Thecla School is bound by all policies of the Archdiocese of Chicago and administrative guidelines from the Office of Catholic Education.

St. Thecla School accepts children whose parents seek admission for the purpose of religious and academic formation. Priority is given in the following order: to parishioners, transfer students from other Catholic schools, children of non-parishioners, and transfer students from public schools.

The Administration reserves the right to refuse any application based on financial delinquency, inadequate participation in the academic, social, or behavior standards, or lack of parental cooperation regarding school matters.

Children entering Preschool, Pre K, Kindergarten, or First grade must be their respective ages (Preschool 3, Pre K 4, Kindergarten 5, First Grade 6) by September 1 of the current year. Parents of students entering school for the first time must submit a birth certificate and a baptismal certificate.

Transfers, baptismal certificates, academic, and health records are required of all students who previously attended another academic institution. Verification of a physical examination is required of all students entering Preschool, Pre K, Kindergarten, and Sixth grade. Verification of a dental exam is required of all students entering kindergarten, second, and sixth grade.

Transfer students must also present official school records. Review of current academic standing may also be required prior to acceptance of registration. A personal interview with the principal may also be required. Proof of reception of sacraments must be presented, if applicable (i.e. Reconciliation, Eucharist, and Confirmation).

If a student has special needs, which cannot be met by the school, that child may be declined admittance. Any false statements or omissions by parents/guardians concerning the mental, emotional, physical, or behavioral health of the child, or regarding any mental, emotional, physical or health disability which could affect the child's ability to function within a normal school setting, shall be cause for dismissal from the school.

**Toilet Trained**

Children must be toilet trained prior to school entry. Accepting children wearing diapers or disposable pullups require that the program have a designated diapering area with an accessible hand washing sink (IL DCFS Licensing Standards 407.340). Accepting children who are not toilet trained compromises the license exempt status of our early childhood programs.

## **PARENT/GUARDIAN RIGHTS**

St. Thecla School maintains accurate cumulative records of each enrolled student. The school abides by established policies and guidelines of the Office of Catholic Education of the Archdiocese of Chicago regarding student records.

The Right to Inspect Parents/Guardians have the right to look at their child/ren's permanent record that includes: report cards, attendance records, birth and baptismal records, health records, accident reports, and certain biological information. Should a parent have a need to inspect the records, an appointment should be made through the principal.

The Right to Prevent Disclosure The school will not disclose information contained in a child's permanent record to third parties unless (1) a parent consents in writing prior to the disclosure, or (2) the information is directory information which a parent has not requested to be kept confidential, or (3) the information is requested by a school to which the child is officially transferring, or (4) the request for the information meets some of the limited circumstances, "Guidelines for Student Records."

The Right to Request Correction Parents/Guardians have the right to present evidence that the school should amend any part of the child's record which is believed to be inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of student rights. If the school decides not to change the record, the parent/guardian may insert an explanation into the record. Once the child reaches the age of eighteen, she/he obtains all of the above rights.

Custodial/noncustodial concerns The law holds that parents do not cease being parents when they no longer have custody of their children. St. Thecla School abides by the Buckley Amendment with respect to the rights of noncustodial parents. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, the school will provide the noncustodial parent with access to the academic records and other school related information regarding the child. Additionally, if there is a court order specifying that there is to be no information given, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the school with an official copy of the court order. It is also necessary to have proper names, mailing addresses, phone numbers, and work numbers for both parents when both have access and in the case of blended families. If a noncustodial or separated parent supplies the school with self-addressed, stamped envelopes, any items of parental interest will be forwarded. Because the school is not always aware of family situations, it is the responsibility of the divorced parents to let the principal know who is responsible for the financial obligations for the child(ren) and who may come to pick up the child in emergencies.

## **PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

VIRTUS Training and Background Check Onetime VIRTUS training and background checks are mandatory for each parent/guardian who has a child(ren) enrolled at St. Thecla School. All volunteers must also be VIRTUS trained. Training sessions are regularly held throughout the Archdiocese.

### Fundraising

Each family is expected to purchase \$2500 worth of consumer certificates each school year or pay a \$250 buyout. These certificates may be purchased at any time between August 15 and May 15 in any amounts that total \$2500.

# **CURRICULUM**

## Local Curriculum

In accordance with Archdiocesan policy, the faculty of St. Thecla School, under the direction of the principal, participates in the ongoing process of aligning the local curriculum with the Illinois State Standards, Common Core State Standards and the Archdiocesan curriculum guidelines.

## Religion

Our daily comprehensive program of religious education includes the following areas of study: sacramental/liturgical expression, Scripture, experience of prayer, values formation and clarification in the light of the Gospel, community service, historical, theological and doctrinal study of the Catholic Church and its application to daily life. Religion is taught as a daily subject and is integrated into the entire curriculum to form a total program of Christian education. Non-Catholic children are required to attend and participate in formal religion classes but may not receive the sacraments. As part of their religious formation, the students help prepare and participate in a weekly unit liturgy. The school celebrates a liturgy monthly. The Catholic philosophy of education is the basis of the entire curriculum. All Catholic parents are expected to actively practice their religion and to exercise their role as the primary teachers and role models for their children. This includes attending weekly Sunday Mass, receiving the sacraments, adhering to sound Catholic doctrine, and an awareness of the place of God and the Church in family life. The St. Thecla School religious education curriculum includes the study of values in family/larger community living, Catholic morality, human sexuality, AIDS, substance abuse education, and the dignity of life.

## Family Life

The RCL Benzinger Family Life Program is used in grades K – 8. This program is designed to provide children with a wholesome formation in Catholic moral virtues and a positive education in human sexuality. Parents will be able to examine the materials at the beginning of the school year and they will receive copies of the Parent Connection Magazine to go along with each lesson.

## Sacraments

RECONCILIATION - First Reconciliation is celebrated in second grade. Students in Grades 3-8 are afforded the opportunity to receive the sacrament throughout the year.

EUCCHARIST –First Eucharist is celebrated in second grade.

CONFIRMATION –Eighth graders receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. Service is an added component for this sacrament with preparation beginning in seventh grade. Students receive preparation through class work and home assignments for the reception of these sacraments. Parents are encouraged to assist the students in their preparation by attending the parent meetings and showing an interest in materials brought home.

## Program Design

St. Thecla School offers a core curriculum of religion, reading, mathematics, English, spelling, writing, social studies, and science that is organized around a blended-learning model. Physical education, fine arts, library, Spanish, and computer education are provided for grades Pre K 8. Time allotments for all subjects are scheduled following guidelines provided by the Office of Catholic Education. Curriculum materials are chosen from approved selections. Reading and mathematics instruction and curriculum are aligned to Common Core State Standards (CCSS) from grades Kindergarten – 8<sup>th</sup> grade. St. Thecla School implements self-contained classrooms from Grade Preschool (3) to Grade 5. Grades 6-8 are departmentalized with students moving from class to class.

St. Thecla School cooperates with local public school districts to provide families with special screening services for speech and other learning disabilities. When appropriate, the local public school district may provide such services at no cost. The school does not offer formal special education services.

Referrals to private agencies for counseling services or learning disabilities testing will also be made as deemed appropriate by school personnel, or at the request of the parent/guardian.

Costs for private referrals are the responsibility of the parent/guardian.

St. Thecla School will permit released time for special services at the neighborhood public school. Modifications within the child's academic program at St. Thecla School will be considered upon recommendations resulting from any type of special educational testing done outside of the local school.

The Archdiocese also provides a testing service with a sliding fee scale. Consult your child's teacher for more information.

## **EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

### Athletic Program

St. Thecla Parish Athletic Advisory Council sponsors programs for students in Grades 4-8.

Sports include: football (grades 4-8), cheerleading (grades 5-8), volleyball (grades 5-8), basketball (grades 4-8), cross-country (grades 3-8), and softball (grades 7-8).

Biddy Basketball and Biddy Volleyball are offered to grades 1-3.

These and other sports are subject to the number of students participating and availability of coaching staff. Student athletes and parents are required to sign an Athletic Code of Conduct and abide by athletic eligibility standards, as stated in the Athletic and School Handbook.

### Parish Altar Servers

St. Thecla students may choose to offer their services to the parish as Altar Servers in Grades 5-8. Servers are trained by the parish and are assigned to daily parish and Sunday liturgies as well as other times they are needed.

### School Band

The St. Thecla School Band offers instrumental music education to students in Grades 4-8.

Individual or small group lessons are provided during school time for a family fee. The band has a cadet (beginner) and concert (experienced) level. The concert band practices twice a week.

The St. Thecla School Band performs Christmas and Spring concerts. They may also participate in contests.

### School Children's Choir

A St. Thecla student, Grade 3-8, may offer a service to the parish community by singing in the choir. Choir members practice one day a week.

### Scouting Programs

Boy Scout and Girl Scout programs are available dependent on the availability of leaders and the number of interested students.

### Student Council

The St. Thecla School Student Council exists to provide a link between the St. Thecla School student body and the principal. The Student Council works to develop leadership skills, promote good citizenship, and to advance the spirit and welfare of the student body. Student Council members and officers must maintain a "C" in all subjects and follow the St. Thecla Code of Conduct in order to be nominated and serve. Failure to comply with the requirements and responsibilities may result in the removal from office.

## **STUDENT PROGRESS**

### Criteria for Promotion

Each student must maintain satisfactory progress; which is defined as average or above average grades. This applies to the student with average or above average ability. Below average ability levels must be determined by a standardized outside assessment, and criteria for progress established. Progress, or lack of progress, is recorded by teachers. When lack of progress is documented, the following applies:

Tutoring will be recommended for students who are not working up to ability and are not making regular progress.

Summer school will be required for students with failing grades or having a "D" or "F" average over three trimesters in a subject. It will be recommended if, in the opinion of the teacher, the student would benefit from summer school.

Summer school may be required as a condition for promotion.

### Retention

The decision to promote or retain a student will generally be cooperative, made by parents, teacher, and administrator. Parents will be notified of the possibility of retention no later than midyear. The decision to retain a student will be made only if there has been an adequate evaluation and documentation indicating the student would most likely benefit from retention.

### Reports of Progress

Progress reports are used to advise parents of student progress between report cards.

Uniform reporting forms are used and designed for use in the Archdiocese and/or St. Thecla School. The report cards are distributed each trimester and signed indicating that parents have seen the report card. A failing grade cannot be given without prior notice to parents either through the progress report or by telephone. Final report cards are distributed if all financial obligations have been met.

First trimester Parent/Teacher conferences are scheduled in November. Attendance by a parent /guardian is mandatory. Students are encouraged to be present for conferences if requested by the parent and/or teacher.

A second conference may be scheduled/requested after the second trimester report card.

Report card grading system for Grades 38

A+ = 100, 99

A = 98, 97, 96, 95

A=94, 93

B+ = 92, 91

B = 90, 89, 88, 87

B=86, 85

C+ = 84, 83

C = 82, 81, 80, 79, 78

C=77, 76

D+ = 75, 74

D = 73, 72

D=71, 70

U/F = 69 and below

### Honor Roll

Academic Honors will be determined at the end of each grading period for students in grades 6 – 8.

First Honors – A student must have a grade point average between 3.7 – 4.0 in the following academic subjects: Religion, Reading, Spelling, English, Math, Science, Social Studies and Spanish. The student may not have a grade lower than a B in any subject area. In addition, the student may not have any check marks.

Second Honors – A student must have a grade point average between 3.2 – 3.69 in the following subjects: Religion, Reading, Spelling, English, Math, Science, Social Studies and Spanish. The student may not have a grade lower than a C in any subject area. Three or more check marks will eliminate a student from the Honor Roll.

A = 4 B = 3 C = 2 D = 1 F = 0

### St. Thecla National Junior Honor Society

Students in grade 6 – 8 are eligible for membership in the St. Thecla chapter of the National Junior Honor Society. The St. Thecla faculty nominates them. To be eligible a student must maintain at least a 3.5 grade point average and exhibit high standards of character, leadership, citizenship and service. Students are required to complete a service project approved by the faculty advisor or principal. All acceptances, dismissals, rejections, probations, and rulings are at the sole discretion of the moderators.

### Testing Program

In addition to the regular classroom test/quiz schedule, St. Thecla School administers ACT Aspire Test standardized tests to grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 in the spring.

Vacations and medical appointments should not be scheduled when the standardized tests are administered.

### Graduation Requirements

The eighth grade graduation is contingent on certain requirements. In order to graduate from St. Thecla School, a student must have a passing GPA for the second and third trimesters.

Students must have achieved a passing grade on the Constitution of the United States examination, adhered to the school's code of conduct, be in good standing with student attendance, and has returned all school materials. Diplomas will not be awarded until financial obligations are paid in full.

## **ATTENDANCE**

### Absence

Students are expected to be in school, on time, daily, unless ill. Excessive absence affects academic progress and results in an inability to maintain adequate class standing necessary for promotion.

Parents are required to phone the office the morning of absence by 8:30 a.m. After 8:30 a.m. the school will contact you regarding your child's absence. An answering machine operates during non-office hours. The day following an absence, the parent/guardian must send a written excuse for the absence. This note is held by the homeroom teacher. It is the student's responsibility to see his/her teachers for any missed work or written communications that were distributed in his/her absence.

Good attendance is a factor in academic progress; therefore, vacations during the school year are discouraged. Parents planning vacations should consult the school calendar. Makeup work will not be available prior to the vacation. All assignments, projects, and tests are due within five days of returning to school.

### Tardiness

Students are expected to be in their classrooms ready to begin the day by 8:05. Students will be issued a tardy if they are not in their classrooms on time.

## **DISCIPLINE**

### Code of Conduct

As stated in the School Philosophy, St. Thecla is a Catholic community. A firm commitment toward individual responsibility by each student is necessary to establish an atmosphere conducive to Christian living.

It is expected that each student follows all established school rules and regulations as well as ordinary rules of courtesy, good behavior, and respect for themselves and others. The school reserves the right to deny attendance to anyone whose behavior is contrary to the teachings and ideals of the school or whose behavior or attitude is disruptive to the functioning of the student body. Our goal is to maintain a climate that is caring, safe, and conducive to learning. The rules and regulations contained in this Handbook cannot possibly cover every situation that arises. They are to be considered guidelines. The cooperation of students and their parents is essential. St. Thecla follows Archdiocesan policies regarding discipline, bullying, and harassment.

Teachers determine the specific behavior guidelines in their classrooms. Students are expected to:

Respect and obey authority

Treat others with respect

Respect the school's and others' property

Keep their hands to themselves

Use appropriate language, written or spoken

Follow the school policy of not chewing gum in or around school

### Bullying/Harassment

Saint Thecla School follows the Archdiocesan Bullying Prevention Policy below.

As Catholics we believe in the dignity and respect of each individual created in the image of God. Bullying is contrary to Gospel values and has no place in the Catholic school community. Bullying is: any intentional, repeated, hurtful act or conduct (physical, verbal, emotional, or sexual) including communications made in writing or electronically, occurring on campus or off campus during non-school time, directed toward another student or students, that has or can be reasonably predicted to place the student or students in an unreasonable fear of harm to the student or student's person or property cause a substantially detrimental effect on the student or student's physical or mental health; interfere substantially with the student or student's academic performance; interfere substantially with the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by the school.

**Bullying** can take many forms, including violence, harassment, threats, intimidation, stalking, cyber stalking, theft, public humiliation and retaliation for asserting or alleging an act of bullying.

**Cyber bullying** can include all of the above as well as the use of electronic tools, devices, social media sites, blogs and websites to harm a student or students with electronic text, photos, or videos.

**Bullying acts or conduct described above can include the following:**

**Physical** which includes, but is not limited to, punching, poking, stalking, destruction of property, strangling, hair pulling, beating, biting, spitting, stealing, pinching, and excessive tickling;

**Verbal** which includes, but is not limited to, name calling, teasing, taunting, gossip, and threats whether in person or through any form of electronic communication and the Internet;

**Emotional** which includes, but is not limited to, intimidation, rejecting, terrorizing, extorting, defaming, humiliating, blackmailing, rating/ranking of personal characteristics such as race, disability, ethnicity, perceived sexual orientation, manipulation of friendships, isolating, ostracizing and peer pressure;



**Sexual** which includes, but is not limited to many of the emotional acts or conduct described above as well as exhibitionism, voyeurism, sexual propositioning, sexual harassment and abuse involving actual physical contact or sexual assault.

No student shall be subjected to bullying: during any school sponsored education program or activity, while in school, on school property, on school buses or school vehicles, at school bus stops waiting for the school bus, or at school sponsored or school sanctioned events or activities through the transmission of information from a school or home computer network, or other similar electronic school or home equipment.

All members of the Catholic school community, parents/guardians, teachers, staff, administrators and others, are expected to work together in preventing bullying and promoting Gospel values in a Christ centered environment. Students are expected to participate in age appropriate educational programs developed by the school that address bullying and teach respect for all.

Bullying by a student or students may result in suspension and/or expulsion from the school.

#### Search

In accordance with state safety guidelines, all property of the school, including students; desks and lockers, as well as their contents, may be searched or inspected at any time without notice. Authorized school personnel have an unrestricted right to search these structures as well as any containers, book bags, purses, or articles of clothing that are left unattended on school property.

#### Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is unwanted and unwelcome sexual behavior that interferes with a person's life and/or creates an uncomfortable environment. It includes a broad range of behaviors including sexual remarks and jokes, suggestive looks and gestures, touching and other kinds of physical contact.

Sexual harassment by one employee to another, by an employee to a student, by a student to an employee, or by one student to another is unacceptable. Employees or students who engage in any type of sexual harassment will be subject to appropriate discipline, including suspension and/or dismissal.

Retaliation in any form against an employee or student who exercises his or her right to make a complaint under this policy is strictly prohibited, and will itself be cause for appropriate disciplinary action.

Any employee or student who knowingly makes false charges against an employee or student in an attempt to demean, harass, abuse, or embarrass that individual shall be subject to the sanctions for misconduct set forth above.

St. Thecla School seeks to create a Christian environment permeated by Gospel values of love, compassion and justice. All members of the school community are expected to demonstrate respect for themselves and one another. Any form of sexual harassment is in direct opposition to our school's philosophy and values and will not be tolerated. Students who experience any form of sexual harassment are asked to bring the problem to the attention of a teacher or the principal.

### Lunchtime Guidelines

Students must:

Remain seated and raise their hands for assistance

Use proper manners and not throw food

Leave only under the direction of the supervisor

Eat food only in the lunchroom and dispose of all trash

Remain in the designated parking lot/play area

Play with approved playground equipment

Keep their hands to themselves

Line up when the bell rings

The lunch supervisors' directives are to be respectfully followed immediately by students at all times. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary action. All incidents are to be brought to the attention of the lunch supervisor immediately.

### Behavior Outside of the Regular School Day

St. Thecla's Code of Conduct is expected of students at any time or place they represent St. Thecla School. This includes athletic events and parish activities. Unacceptable behaviors reported to the principal may result in appropriate disciplinary action.

Parents are expected to supervise their children at all school sponsored functions. Children will not be permitted to attend these activities unless accompanied by an adult.

### Consequences

Correction/Warnings in Classrooms – Students failing to follow school rules will receive verbal reminders, corrections, or warnings. These are the first techniques used by the faculty to remind students of the rules.

Detention – A detention is a designated period of time that a student must spend at school before or after the regularly scheduled school day. Parents will be notified of this detention and required to sign and return the detention notice the day before the detention will be served. Parents will be notified by phone if a student does not return a detention notice. The detention will still be served as scheduled. Failure to serve a detention will result in a second detention. A detention is given at the discretion of the teachers and administration. Depending on severity of the infraction, warnings need not be issued.

Suspension – Suspension is the isolation of the student from some or all school activities.

Suspensions are designated as In-school or Out-of-school.

For an In-school suspension, the student will be required to report to school during normal school hours, but will be separated from his/her ordinary classes and be expected to complete class work. Parents are expected to supervise Out-of-school suspensions that are served away from the school. A Suspension is given at the discretion of the administration. Depending on severity of the infraction, warnings need not be issued.

Expulsion – Expulsion is the termination of the student’s privilege to attend the school and requires a transfer to another school. This penalty is irrevocable and reserved for the most serious offenses. The following offenses are ones that could result in special disciplinary action or expulsion:

Deliberate destruction of school, private, or public property (restitution is required)

Theft

Open defiance of school authority

Chronic truancy from school

Inciting other students to participate or participating in any activity which is disruptive to the normal educational process inside or outside of school

Possession or use of any weapon

Repeated suspensions

Possession of any controlled substance

**The above offenses are not all inclusive.**

## **SCHOOL AND OFFICE HOURS**

St. Thecla School office hours are 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Teachers are in school from 7:30 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. If parents wish to see teachers, please call to make an appointment.

8:00 Students enter building

8:20 Classes begin

11:30 Preschool (3) and optional Pre K dismissal

11:15 to 11:50 Lunch for grades Pre K – 3

11:40 to 12:20 Lunch for grades 4 – 8

3:05 Dismissal

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

**Birthday Celebrations**

Students’ birthdays are acknowledged at school. **However, for health reasons and due to student food allergies and in accordance with our Wellness Policy, food treats will not be allowed.** Rather than edible treats, we ask that parents please bring in food alternatives: i.e. pencils, stickers, bookmarks, a craft to do with the class, a book to be read to the class by the principal, temporary tattoos, etc. If treats are brought in to celebrate birthdays, the treats will be sent down to the office and sent home with the child who brought them. We respect the need for the number of guests to be limited for birthday parties. To avoid hurt feelings, any party invitations or thank you notes should be delivered outside of school, unless all of the same gender classmates or the entire class is being invited.

Care of Books

Textbooks are the property of St. Thecla School or the State of Illinois. Writing in or on the books is forbidden. Replacement costs for damaged or lost books will be assessed to the student to whom the book is assigned. Hard cover text books must have a book cover. It is recommended that students have a book bag to transport books and school materials. For the safety of all students, book bags with wheels must be carried while in the school building.

### Cellular Phones /Electronic Devices

The use of a cell phone, pager, or other electronic device deemed inappropriate by the principal, is prohibited in the school building and on the premises during school hours. All student cell phones must be turned completely off at the beginning of the day and must remain so until 3:05PM dismissal (cell phones put on silent or vibrate or airplane mode is not acceptable – they must be completely turned off). Cell phones and other electronic devices will be confiscated if used during the prohibited times. Course of discipline is at the administration’s discretion for students who are using cell phones when prohibited. These items will be kept in the school office until picked up by a parent/guardian. St. Thecla School is not responsible for any lost or stolen items.

### Early Dismissal

The school allows the early dismissal of a student for matters that cannot be handled after school. This request must be put in writing to the homeroom teacher. The student must be picked up and signed out by a parent/guardian in the school office.

### Emergency School Closing

St. Thecla will close at the discretion of the Pastor and Principal. In the event of a school closing the announcement will be communicated via email, phone, and text.

In the event of severe weather during the school day, the students will be kept at school until the weather improves.

All parents are required to submit accurate contact information that will enable school personnel to notify all households and parents by phone within minutes of an emergency or unplanned event that causes early dismissal, school cancellation or late start.

### Entrance and Exit

Students in Preschool (3) through grade 3 enter school through the parking lot entrance.

Grades 4 and 5 enter through Newcastle doors. Grades 6, 7 and 8 enter through the Palatine door (southeast corner) of school. Families with siblings may enter through the parking lot door, after assigned classes have entered.

No supervision is provided prior to the official start of the school day. Students should arrive no earlier than five minutes before the bell and wait in assigned areas until their teacher meets them. Students will be permitted to enter the building prior to the bell, when adult supervision is available, during inclement weather.

Preschool (3) and Pre K students dismissing at 11:30 will exit through the Palatine Ave. doors.

### Extended day

St. Thecla School extends the day for enrolled students in Grades Pre K to 8 whose families need, pay, and register for adult supervision from 6:45 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. and from 3:05 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. The program is dependent on a minimum number of students needed to support paying the staff. The program begins the Monday of the first full week of school, is not offered on half days, and ends May 31st. On full school days in June, Extended Day will be available.

In June, cash payment is due daily.

### Field Trips

Field trips are an extension of the educational process and an invaluable learning experience. Teachers plan trips that augment the curriculum or have a cultural value. Complete trip information is sent home in advance providing all details and charges. Signed parent consent forms are required. Parents asked to volunteer as chaperones are not eligible for TRP credit. VIRTUS training and a background check are required.

Students who fail to comply with the St. Thecla Code of Conduct may not be permitted to participate in school field trips. Money will not be refunded.

Since field trip fees are prepaid, refunds will not be issued if your child is absent on the day of trip.

### Forgotten Articles

Forgotten articles, such as homework, gym clothes, or projects are the responsibility of the student. We ask that parents do not come to school to deliver forgotten articles. This does not encourage responsibility, and is disruptive to the operation of the school office and classroom.

### Homeroom Placement

The principal and teachers consider many factors in placing students in their homerooms from year to year. In cases where there is more than one grade level homeroom, requests from parents or students cannot be honored, except for special circumstances. This assures academic and social balance in each room.

### Homework

Homework assignments have a recognized value among educators in continuing and reinforcing skills and concepts developed during classroom instruction. The amount of homework differs from grade to grade. A reasonable amount that can be completed independently by a student is the ideal. Suggested homework time should average approximately 10 minutes per grade. Parents are asked to voice their concerns about homework to the teacher(s).

### Absentee Makeup Work

A student who is absent from school due to illness or other cause must complete all missed assignments. In the case of extended illness, that time period is one week following the absence. Any makeup test or quiz will be arranged by the teacher.

### Internet Conduct

Students are prohibited from posting any information, pictures or videos that are deemed inappropriate by the administration. This includes any social networking sites. Objectionable references to St. Thecla School, students, staff or Parish are forbidden. If an infraction occurs disciplinary action may result in detention, suspension or expulsion.

Incidents of cyber bullying are prohibited and will be dealt with in the same manner.

### Lunch Program

Children may bring a bag lunch from home or purchase a hot lunch, which is selected from a monthly menu. No glass bottles or carbonated beverages are allowed at lunch.

Lunchtime supervision is provided.

### School Parties

Classroom parties in grades Preschool-5<sup>th</sup> are celebrated at the discretion of the teachers and the principal. Room parents facilitate the classroom parties after consulting with the homeroom teacher. Teachers are present at these parties. Grades 6, 7 and 8 attend dances in lieu of parties.

### Telephone Use

Neither a teacher nor a student will be called from class to accept a phone call, except in the case of an emergency.

Students are permitted to use the office phone only in cases of illness or an emergency.

Students will not be permitted to call home for forgotten band instruments, homework, etc.

When a student is to remain after the regular dismissal time (and the parent is not aware) a phone call home is permitted and expected. It is the responsibility of the student to notify the parent.

## **FINANCIAL POLICIES**

### **Tuition**

St. Thecla School is supported by tuition, subsidy, student fees, technology fee, and fundraisers. A tuition rate is set for those families who are contributing to the subsidy of the school through the Parish Offertory Program. Families who do not contribute will be charged the non-parishioner rate.

Tuition is set for one, two, three, and four or more students. A separate tuition is charged for the Preschool (3) and Pre K students.

### **Tuition Collection**

Tuition collections will be handled by the Smart Tuition Program. Parents will be required to sign up for this program in May of each school year. Each family will have the choice of paying in full or 10 or 12-month payment plan. Families who pay their tuition in full by September 1st will receive a \$100 discount.

Payment options include check, money order, or direct withdrawal from savings or checking accounts. The company will allow credit card payments, but will charge the family a fee for this service. Additional information regarding this program is available in the school office.

### **Financial Considerations**

St. Thecla School offers financial consideration to families who are unable to make their tuition payments in a timely manner and at the regular rate. These families can apply through the principal and pastor who will facilitate the process.

### **Delinquent Accounts**

Smart Tuition and the school will inform families when tuition accounts are delinquent. The school advises parents of delinquent accounts regarding band tuition and Extended Day.

On the last day of school, final report cards are distributed to students whose families have paid all tuition, fees, lunch program bills, and fund raiser balances.

After all efforts to collect delinquent accounts are exhausted, families that do not have their payments up-to-date, or do not make arrangements for an affordable rate through Financial Consideration will not be allowed to register for the following year. Graduating students' delinquent accounts will necessitate the holding of a diploma and transcripts until accounts are brought up-to-date.

Extended Day services end when a family has not met their financial responsibilities within one month of their statement.

### **Delinquent Tuition Exclusion Policy**

At St. Thecla School we believe that our tuition payments are an investment in your child's education and the formation of their religious foundation. In order to maintain operations at St. Thecla School, on time and full tuition payments are vital.

All tuition fees and payments are due according to the tuition agreement and/or the SMART Tuition agreement. If tuition or any other payments owed to the school are not current on a monthly basis and no satisfactory explanation has been given, it is the policy of the school to have the child(ren) remain at home until delinquent fees are paid in full.

Complete records will not be released from the school for students transferring, nor will students be allowed to re-register for the following school year if parents/guardians complete financial account is not current.

### **Student Transfer**

In the event that a student transfers during the school year, the fees will be refunded on a prorated basis. If tuition was paid in full, a refund will be made for the number of months remaining in the school year.

## **HOME/SCHOOL COMMUNICATION**

Frequent communication is encouraged always. Parents may reach teachers by calling the office and leaving a message or through email.

### Conflict Management

A parent is to consult with the teacher when clarification is needed about a classroom matter involving class work, homework, or a discipline matter. The principal will direct a parent back to the teacher when a parent comes to the principal first. The principal will offer to be present at a conference with a teacher, parent, and student if requested by the teacher or parent.

The School Advisory Council is never involved in conflict management. The School Advisory is an advisory board to the principal and pastor, not a grievance committee.

### School Visits

A formal Parent Night is planned in September. Parents are invited to school to meet the teachers, principal, and view the school.

During "Catholic Schools Week" current families, prospective new families, and parishioners are invited to an open house on the last Sunday in January following the liturgy.

Parents are welcome to visit the school. Contact the teacher to arrange a mutually convenient time for your visit. Families interested in enrolling new students may request a tour of the school.

During the year special school sponsored events are planned. Events include: Winter and Spring Concerts, Stations of the Cross, and Band Recitals. Some classes also prepare programs and invite parents.

### School Website

The St. Thecla School website contains extensive information from the school and school organizations. Teachers use the school website to post activities and assignments. Visit the website at [www.saintthecla.org](http://www.saintthecla.org).

### Wednesday Parent Communication

A weekly parent memo is sent via email to all parents or guardians. Parents are asked to submit their email address to the school office at the beginning of each school year in order to be included in all electronic communication. Important Newsflashes will be sent out as needed.

## **SAFETY**

### School Security

St. Thecla School provides a safe environment for its students and faculty. All exterior doors are locked. A closed campus is maintained and entrances are always monitored. Visitors to the school, including parents, must enter the building only through the main entrance and sign in at the school office. Parents are not permitted to walk their child to the classroom. Visitor badges must be worn while in the school building and returned to the office upon leaving.

Upon entrance and dismissal teachers are responsible for the safety of the children and are not available for conferences.

### Traffic Safety Regulations

The cooperation of all parents/guardians is needed to ensure the safety of all our children. The Newcastle Ave. parking lot entrance is closed to all traffic during school hours. All traffic entering the parking lot must do so through the Oak Park Ave. entrance closest to the church. In the morning parents may park in the church lot and escort their child to their grade level line or follow the designated drop-off pattern as outlined on page 12.

At dismissal parents must park in the church lot and meet their children at the school doors. Safety of the student walking to and from school is the responsibility of the student and his/her parents. Students walking to and from school must remain in the designated Safe Zone that runs parallel to the school building and Falcon Hall.

### Bicycle Safety

Students riding bicycles must walk them when they are on school property. Security is the student's responsibility. A bicycle rack is located near the main entrance.

### Reporting Child Abuse

By law the State of Illinois requires all school personnel to inform the Department of Children and Family Services of any allegations or suspicions of child abuse/neglect. Reporting does not suggest belief in the allegation.

## **HEALTH**

### Emergency Information

Emergency information remains on file in the School Office. All information must be completed, in full, at the time of registration and the school must be advised of changes that occur during the school year. When completing emergency information, you must list phone numbers of people in the vicinity who can come for an ill child, and if they should be called only if the parents cannot be reached. An ill child is not permitted to walk home alone.

### Communicable Diseases

Students must stay home if they have a communicable disease. This includes flu, pink eye, chicken pox, and strep throat. If your child is diagnosed with a communicable disease, please notify the school office immediately so other parents can be informed. **Children may not return to school until they are fever and symptom free for 24 hours.**

### Head Lice

Head lice is not a communicable disease, but a condition which spreads. If your child has lice, please notify the school office, so the school can take appropriate action to contain the infestation.

### State Health Regulations

According to state law, all students entering school for the first time, kindergarten or first grade, and entering sixth grade must provide the school with evidence of a health examination. All immunizations must be up-to-date by the **first day of school**. The exact dates (month, day, and year) of all immunizations must be included on the exam form, signed by a physician, or the child will not be permitted to attend school.

All Illinois children in kindergarten, second, and sixth grades are required to have an oral health examination. Examinations must be performed by a licensed dentist and he/she must sign and date the proof of examination form. Public Act 95671 requires that all children enrolling in kindergarten and any student enrolling for the first time shall have an eye examination.

### Immunizations

Diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough vaccine at least four DPT with the last given after age four. Children over six years who have not been immunized against diphtheria-tetanus must receive a series of two doses with a booster at least one year later. Rubeola (ten-day-measles) Vaccine after 15months old. Second dose required for those entering fifth grade; or a history of having had the "hard" measles documented by a physician. The required second dose for all students, grades K-8 became effective September 1993. Rubella (three-day-German-measles) Vaccine after 15 months old except females at the onset of menses. Oral Polio having received at least three OPV with the last given after age four. Mumps Vaccine after 15monthsold. Immunization required prior to entering school for the first time or a physician's certification that the child has had mumps. Tuberculin Test Recommended at the time of the physical and the results included on the physical examination report. All children must have received at least one TB skin test since birth. Hepatitis- These shots are required according to state guidelines. Consult your physician.

Lead—Lead screening shall be required as part of the health examination for children 6 years or younger, prior to admission to preschool, kindergarten, or other child care program approved by the State.

The school must exclude, by State directive, students whose immunizations are not up-to-date.



### Medication

School personnel cannot dispense medication to students. Prescription medicine must be labeled and accompanied by a physician's specific directions for administering and will be kept in the school office. The student must administer his/her own medicine. If a child cannot administer his/her own medication, the child must remain at home.

A parent should inform the teacher if a child is regularly taking medication for a chronic condition when the medication or the condition could affect the work/behavior of the child during the school day.

St. Thecla School follows the Archdiocesan policy for school medication procedures.

### Food Allergies

Food allergies can be life threatening. The risk of accidental exposure to foods can be reduced in the school if we work with students, parents, and physicians to minimize risks and provide a safe educational environment for food-allergic students.

Given the rising number of peanut allergies here at school, we have peanut free tables in the lunchroom. The last table (table closest to the kitchen) of each row will be labeled "peanut free". Anyone is allowed to eat at those tables as long as they do not have food containing peanuts during lunch or at before or aftercare. We do not have assigned seating at lunch. There will also be wipes available in the lunchroom for students to wipe down their table if needed.

We fully understand that peanuts are not the only allergen that is threat for students. Knowing that, we have put the following guidelines in place:

#### Family's Responsibility:

Notify the school of the child's allergies. Work with the school team to develop a plan that accommodates the child's needs throughout the school including in the classroom, in the cafeteria, in aftercare programs, during school-sponsored activities.

Provide properly labeled medications and replace medications after use or upon expiration.

#### School's Responsibility

Review the health records submitted by parents and physicians. ·

Include food-allergic students in school activities. Students should not be excluded from school activities solely based on their food allergy.

Assure that all staff who interact with the student on a regular basis understands food allergy, can recognize symptoms, knows what to do in an emergency, and works with other school staff to eliminate the use of food allergens in the allergic student's meals, educational tools, arts and crafts projects, or incentives.

#### Student's Responsibility:

Should not trade food with others. Should not eat anything with unknown ingredients or known to contain any allergen. Should be proactive in the care and management of their food allergies and reactions based on their developmental level. Should notify an adult immediately if they eat something they believe may contain the food to which they are allergic.

## **UNIFORM REGULATIONS**

### All Students

Shoes Brown, black or navy dress shoes must be worn on non-gym days. Gym shoes will not be allowed on non-gym days, and are to be worn **only** on gym days. Your child's gym shoes must not scuff the floor. White or mostly white soles are preferred. The following may never be worn: shoes with blinking lights, backless shoes, flip-flops, platform shoes, shoes with wheels, moccasins, slippers, and unsafe styles or distractions to the learning environment. Boots are to be removed and shoes put on during the school day.

### Preschool (3) and Pre K

No uniforms are required. Students should wear comfortable clothing appropriate for easy movement and the weather.

### Kindergarten through Grade 8

SOCKS must be worn. For girls in grades K through 8 these are to be white or navy blue socks, knee highs or tights. For boys in grades K through 8 white or black socks must be worn. On gym days white or black socks must be worn by all students.

GYM UNIFORMS consist of navy blue with grey or white logo T-shirts, shorts (May 1- October 31), sweatshirts, or sweatpants. Non-logo clothing is prohibited. Students may wear gym clothes to school on gym days only. HAIR must be natural color, no bleaching or dying is allowed. Styles should not detract from learning. Hair must be neatly groomed. Boys' hair should be above the eyebrows and ears and off the collar. Crew cuts or buzz cuts are acceptable. Headbands and hair accessories must not be jarring/garish or distracting in nature.

Administration has discretion.

No colored or logo t-shirts or tank tops may be worn under the uniform or gym shirts. Only plain white t-shirts are allowed and must be tucked in. No pajama bottoms, jeans or yoga/workout pants

No makeup, nail polish, or temporary tattoos

No excessive jewelry

No hoop or dangling earrings

No hooded sweatshirts may be worn during the school day.

St. Thecla approved sweatshirts

### BOYS – Kindergarten through Grade 5

Medium blue, two button polo shirt

Uniform navy blue pants (uniform navy shorts May 1- October 31)

Uniform pants and shorts may not have outside cargo pockets, welded seams, or metallic trim.

Pants with loops require wearing a black, blue, or brown belt.

Shirts must be tucked into pants or shorts.

Sweaters must be navy blue with the school logo.

### GIRLS – Kindergarten through Grade 5

White collared (short or long-sleeved) blouse, polo top, or turtleneck

Plaid uniform jumper (Grades 14),

uniform skirt or jumper (Grade 5)

Uniform navy blue pants (uniform navy shorts May 1-October 31)

Tops must be tucked into the pants or shorts.

Sweaters must be navy blue with the school logo.

No slacks, sweat pants, leg warmers, pajama pants, or shorts longer than the skirt are to be worn during the school day.

If a belt is worn it must be black, blue, or brown.

### BOYS – Grades 6 through 8

Navy blue, two button polo shirt with school logo

Khaki uniform dress pants (uniform shorts May 1-October 31)

Uniform pants and shorts may not have outside cargo pockets, welded seams, or metallic trim.

Pants with loops require wearing a black, blue, or brown belt.

Sweaters must be navy blue with school logo.

Shirts must be tucked into pants or shorts.

No earrings may be worn.

Navy blue, two button polo shirt or over-blouse with school logo

Plaid uniform skirts

Khaki uniform dress pants (uniform shorts May 1 October 31)

Sweaters must be navy blue with the school logo.

Tops must be tucked into the pants, shorts, or skirts unless it is an over-blouse.

No slacks, sweat pants, leg warmers, pajama pants, or shorts longer than the skirt are to be worn during the school day.

### **OUT OF UNIFORM DAY REGULATIONS**

Shorts or skirts must be an appropriate length

Shirts must have sleeves

Shoe, makeup, jewelry, nail polish and tattoo guidelines listed under Uniform Regulations must be followed

Inappropriate pictures or sayings on shirts are not permitted

### **ATHLETIC ELIGIBILITY**

In order to be eligible for participation in the St. Thecla Parish athletic programs, students must maintain a “C” in all academic subjects at the 1<sup>st</sup> of every month and marking periods as well as follow the St. Thecla Code of Conduct. If a student’s grades fall below a “C” or the student does not follow the code of conduct, he/she will be given a warning in writing. This warning will be sent home and must be signed by the parents. The student will have one week to improve his/her conduct or academic grade (to a C or above). If there is no improvement, a suspension from the team will follow until grades improve at the administration’s discretion.

Students must be in attendance for the full day of school in order to participate in an extracurricular activity scheduled on that day. The only exception will be a valid reason, which has prior approval of the principal.

Parents may choose to remove their child from the athletic program at any time to support responsible behavior or improve academics.

## **ORGANIZATIONS**

### School Advisory Council

The purpose of the St. Thecla School Advisory Council is to work with the pastor and principal to provide a complete Catholic education for the students of St. Thecla School within the guidelines of the Archdiocese of Chicago. The St. Thecla School Advisory Council consists of the pastor, principal and at least seven persons, 21 years or older, who have children in the school or are parishioners. The Council advises on policy, helps in the principal selection process, and advises on budget. They are involved in planning, development fiscal and physical plant recommendations. The Council members cannot discuss personnel or curriculum issues.

### Family School Association (FSA)

The St. Thecla Family School Association (FSA) is an organization comprised of parents/guardians of St. Thecla School students. Its objective is advancement of Catholic education and the welfare of all children of St. Thecla. It facilitates parental involvement in the school, benefiting the school financially and socially, and enhancing communication between parents and the school. Membership on its board is open and applicants are selected by the existing board. Meetings are open to the public. Policies are shared with the School Board and approved by the

### Athletic Advisory Council

The St. Thecla Parish Athletic Advisory Council exists as an advisory and policy making organization for the parish's elementary school sports matters. It also exists to provide a variety of high quality athletic programs for the students in the parish who attend elementary school and to raise funds for the athletic program. Membership is open to adults who apply to the council and are approved for membership. Policies are shared with the School Board and approved by the pastor and principal.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

### **TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTABLE USE PROCEDURES**

The goal in providing technology resources is to promote educational excellence by facilitating resource sharing, innovation and communication with support and supervision of parents/guardians, teachers and support staff. The use of these resources is a privilege, not a right. Access to computers provides the potential availability of material that may not be considered of educational value in the context of the school setting. Appropriate behavior, as it relates to the use of computers, iPad, and other forms of technology, is no different from the behavior expectations in all other aspects of the learning and instructional program. All users are expected to use the available technology in a responsible and ethical manner.

**Use of technology resources that are prohibited include, but are not limited to:**

Violating student rights to privacy/confidentiality, or unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal identification information.

Attempting any unauthorized access, including hacking of any computer system

Downloading unacceptable materials

Re-posting personal communication without the author's prior consent

Violating copyright law

Using school technology resources for financial gain, credit card fraud, electronic forgery, other illegal activity.

Downloading, installing or storing software on a school computer without the approval of appropriate school personnel

Changing or attempting to alter any configuration, program or password on any computer or system

Using a school computer without knowledge or approval of school personnel responsible for the computer

Using inappropriate language, pictures and gestures in any form on the Internet

Using the Internet for entertainment or limited self-discovery function

Using the Internet for unauthorized purchases

Student-owned computers and other electronic devices cannot be used on school premises without the expressed consent of the principal.

**TECHNOLOGY USE OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL**

Parents/Guardians are primarily responsible for the students' appropriate and ethical use of technology outside of school. However, the inappropriate use of technology outside of school may subject the student to disciplinary action. Inappropriate use of technology may include, but is not limited to harassment of others, use of the school name, remarks directed to or about teachers and staff, offensive communications including videos/photographs and threats.

Unauthorized costs incurred for online purchases charged to the school are the responsibility of the student and her/his family.

**RIGHT TO AMEND**

Statements in this handbook are subject to amendment with or without notice. The school will attempt to keep you informed of all changes, additions, or deletions as soon as practical; however, some changes might be made immediately due to extenuating circumstances.