

ADMISSIONS POLICY

Criteria for Admission

St. Thomas More is a Roman Catholic school, and has as its primary purpose, religious formation in a Christian environment which integrates religious truths and values with every aspect of human life. This integration begins in the home and is further developed in school. The decision to choose Catholic education for a child places upon parents the responsibility to accept the religious values upon which the St. Thomas More educational system is founded, and further obligates them to share those values and responsibilities with their children.

St. Thomas More is operated under the auspices of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Gary. St. Thomas More School does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, or national and ethnic origin in the administration of educational policies, athletic, or other school-administered programs or admissions.

St. Thomas More School participates in the IN School Choice Program.

Non-Catholics

Non-Catholics are welcome at St. Thomas More School. As a Roman Catholic School, we exist first and foremost to promote the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. Although we welcome non-Catholics, **only 15% of our enrollment per grade will be comprised of non-Catholic children.** No student is required to become a baptized Catholic or to participate in the Sacraments, however, students are expected to participate in religious instruction, attend Mass and other prayer services with their class.

Age Requirements

- ◆ Children entering Preschool must be three years old on or before August 1st, toilet trained, and out of any type of diaper or pull-up.
- ◆ Children entering Pre-Kindergarten must be four years of age on or before August 1st.
- ◆ Children entering Kindergarten must be five years of age on or before August 1st.
- ◆ Children entering first grade must be six years of age on or before August 1st. At the discretion of the Principal and/or Director of Student Special Services, an exception may be made for a student who has completed a full year of Kindergarten as a resident of another state in a public or private school.
- ◆ Admission of students to other grades will involve consideration of both chronological age and ability to successfully complete the work in those grades. The Principal and/or Director of Student Special Services have the authority to determine the placement of all students. Prior student records and an STMS placement exam, if needed, will be part of the decision process.

Mandatory Service (Volunteer) Hours

Volunteers are vital resources for St. Thomas More School and help make it a vibrant, caring, state-of-the-art learning facility for ALL of our students, preschool through 8th grade. The Parent Association (PA) coordinates volunteer staffing for activities that occur each school day and during special events. The Development Office currently maintains responsibility for major fundraising events (i.e. Annual Fund Drive, Burgers & Brews, etc.) that provide revenue for technology, student enrichment and curriculum enhancement, as well as help minimize tuition cost increases. Volunteers also staff programs that offer opportunities for families to reduce their personal tuition obligations through the Tuition Reduction Incentive Program (TRIP).

The bottom line is: Volunteers help to keep costs down and, thus, tuition and fees down.

During the 2017-2018 school year, all families are required to work a minimum of **20 service hours in fundraisers or specific school activities or pay a \$10 per hour fee.** Specific program details and opportunities will be listed in the 2017-2018 parent handbook.

Parent Association

The 2017/2018 Parent Association dues may change. In the past, PA dues and fees were as follows:

PA Yearly Dues — \$20/family • Party Fees — \$10/child • Fundraising Fee — \$20/child (covers the cost of auction/raffles throughout the year)

All dues and fees are due by September 15, 2017. Fees can be paid at the Back To School Fair.

Admission Priority

For an Upcoming School Year

Registration for the 2017/2018 school year begins on January 29, 2017. Registrations are taken in the order received and, in most cases, will be capped at 25 students per classroom. When maximum enrollment has been reached, a waiting list will be maintained for each grade. It is important to complete and submit your Online Application (OA) as soon as possible. A student body ratio of no more than 15% per grade of non-Catholic students will be maintained at all times. For new non-Catholic students, applications will be taken in the order received and held until February 28, 2017, when current non-Catholic families have registered for the following school year. At that time we will begin to fill remaining spots from the non-Catholic applications. Applications received on or before February 28, 2017 will be eligible for a \$50 registration fee discount.

Admission Rules

For a School Year Already in Progress

Children who have moved into the area are admitted any time during the school year, pending review of report cards, standardized test scores and the STMS placement exam. Children with special circumstances may be admitted at the discretion of the Principal after review of report cards, standardized test scores, placement exam and behavioral history from the student's previous school(s).

Other Requirements for New Families

Go to www.stm-school.com to start the online application process.

1. Please complete the forms and submit the following:
 - Birth Certificate
 - Baptismal Certificate, if applicable
 - Current & 2 years of Past Report Cards, required for 1st-8th grade applicants
 - Standardized Test Scores for Current & Past Year(s), if applicable
 - NWEA Test Results for students in grades 1-8, may eliminate pre-acceptance Placement Exam.
 - IREAD 3 Test Results, required for 4th grade applicants coming from an Indiana school
 - Custodial Documentation, if applicable
 - Up-to-Date Immunization Records (after admissions)
 - Kindergarten Physical & Eye Exam, required for all incoming. Dated after May 1st and due by August 1st (after admissions)
2. Complete a Placement Exam if NWEA results are not available. Required for 1st-8th grade applicants. You will be notified in late May of the scheduled times.
3. Attend a New Family Information Session, held each year in May. You will receive dates and details in the next few months.
4. Sign up for the Scholastic Kindergarten Readiness Test. You may sign up during the New Family Information Session.
5. Schedule a Parent/Student Interview with St. Thomas More School Administration. Required for 6th-8th grade applicants.