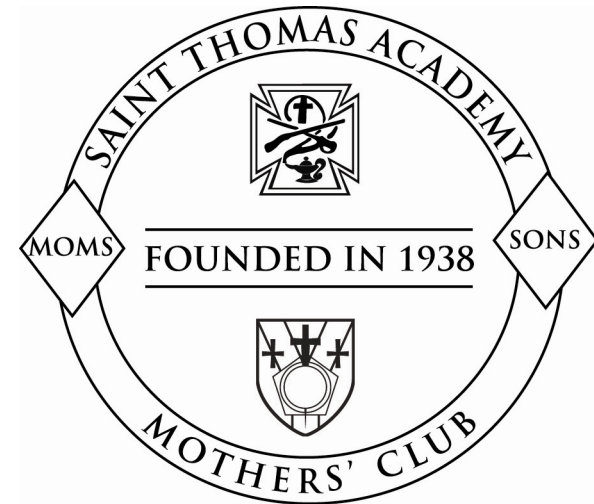


SAINT THOMAS ACADEMY
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SAINT THOMAS ACADEMY MOTHERS' CLUB HELPFUL HINTS

A Reference Guide for New STA Parents



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Please Note: This booklet is intended as a Parents Guide only. The Cadets are taught the information contained in this booklet throughout their years at Saint Thomas Academy.
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Mission

The mission of the Saint Thomas Academy

Mothers' Club is to further the interests of Saint Thomas Academy and to encourage and nurture a cooperative spirit among parents, sons, faculty and administration.

The Mothers' Club sponsors a variety of spiritual, social and informative events. The range of activities is always evolving to meet the changing needs of the STA community. Please visit our Web site at www.Cadets.com/MothersClub (under the Community heading).

The purpose of this booklet is to provide new Academy parents with answers to frequently asked questions. If you're uncertain about an issue, we suggest you first ask your son(s), then check the STA Web site. A great deal of information has been listed on *Cadets.com*. If you have further questions, call the school for clarification. If you have a question or concern regarding a particular class or school activity, go directly to the teacher, staff person or coach. Most issues can be resolved when there is open communication. Please note that this "Helpful Hints" booklet is only a partial guide and is not cast in stone. Things do change. We appreciate receiving any updates to this information.

School Prayer

The School Prayer of St. Thomas Aquinas:

Grant, O merciful God, that I may ardently desire, prudently examine, truthfully acknowledge and perfectly accomplish what is pleasing to Thee for the praise and glory of Thy name. Amen.

Technology: Students are not allowed to use cell phones, CD players, PDAs. Cell phones are never permitted in the locker room.

Please read the STA Handbook for the Internet Acceptable Use Policy.

Athletics & Activities: Approximately 90% of the students participate in at least one co-curricular sport or activity. There are many co-curricular activities and they are usually scheduled after school. It is helpful to get a printed schedule for the sport/activity from your son.

For updated sports-related information refer to the STA Web site Quick Link Box "Athletics," or call the Athletic Dept. Hotline (651-683-1551). The middle school sports information is also listed under "Athletics" on the site.

Pick up and Drop off Students: The middle school has its own entrance; this is where the middle school students should be dropped off in the morning and picked up after school. Parents of the high school students should use the main entrance circle to drop off and pick up their sons. Do not leave your car in the circle unattended, emergency vehicles must be able to proceed through the driveway unimpeded. Students participating in after-school athletic practices and exiting at the locker room level, should be picked up in the parking lot - away from the bus loading zones.

MILITARY-RELATED QUESTIONS

The cadets are given written information regarding often-asked questions about uniforms, Class "A" uniform description, belts, colored shoulder cords, merits/demerits, ribbons and awards. For information regarding various aspects of the military go online to the STA Web site and in the "Quick Links Box" click "Military."

Military Reviews:

- Grandparents' Day (in the fall)
- Alumni Weekend (in the fall)
- Mothers' Review (in the spring)

Graduation at the Cathedral

Family members and friends are welcome at this special evening. When the ceremony is over, everyone goes onto the front terrace for a reception. The graduates exit the cathedral last, into a roped-off area where they toss their hats into the air in celebration. An all-night graduation party is held at STA later that evening.

HINTS FROM THE OFFICE

School Supplies: The **middle school** has a partial list of school supplies to be purchased. It is handed out at orientation in March, and again in the summer. Cadet Maker (bookstore) supplies can be purchased during orientation or the first few days of school.

The **high school** supplies are assigned on the first few days of school and should be purchased as soon as possible. Stackable shelves for lockers are very helpful.

High School Entrance Exam: All current eighth grade students take the STA High School entrance exam. It is scheduled during the school day, rather than on a regular Saturday testing day. Students are received to the ninth grade - there is no need to fill out a new application.

“Late Starts:” These days are listed on the school calendar. The first bell rings at 8:45 a.m.; classes start promptly at 8:50 a.m., and there is a shortened class schedule. Cadets may arrive earlier and study in the cafeteria.

Voice Mail: When using voice mail for faculty and staff, refer to the student directory. Dial 651-683-1555 to access the system. The operator will ask for the teacher’s three-digit mailbox number, which is found in the student directory. To leave a voice mail for more than one person, press the # key and enter the next three-digit mailbox number. This helps you continue in the system without making another call. Consider checking with each of your son’s teachers to see if they prefer e-mails or voice mails. Their contact preferences are listed online under “Academics,” then under their respective academic department.

Parent Conferences: Conferences are held twice a year. Parents should limit conference time to five minutes with each teacher. If more time is needed, please arrange for another date.

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POLISHING TIPS

Note: The Cadets are taught how to polish their shoes and brass the very first week of 9th grade in Leadership. It is the cadet's responsibility to keep his shoes and brass polished.

Shoes:

Materials: Shoe brush, dauber, paste polish (ex: KIWI-not liquid), soft cloth or cotton balls, and water. (One mom said a length of pantyhose works well instead of the old t-shirt).



1. Brush off dirt and grime from shoes and sole edges. Remove laces.
2. Wrap the cloth tightly around two fingers, dampen the cloth, dab polish with the damp cloth and using a circular motion, spread the polish onto a small portion of the shoe until it begins to shine. It is the water that shines the polish. One cadet recommended a soft, damp buffing cloth to bring up the shine.
3. Repeat as often as necessary to bring out a high, glossy, smooth shine and the shoe has a "mirror" appearance.
4. Heel and Edge Color Renew by KIWI can be used after polishing. Leather dye by KIWI restores color and finish to badly scuffed or scratched shoes. Clean dirt and grime, use this product next, then polish. (Products are available at Target, Walgreen, and shoe stores.)
5. Many young men keep a buffing cloth in their lockers for unexpected dirt, inspections, etc.
6. When shining shoes, wear old clothes, use newspaper, and don't set freshly polished shoes down on carpeting.
7. For patent leather shoes, use a small amount of Vaseline or Windex to help clean and protect.
8. All shoes require heel and sole edge dressing.

Disco Mixer

This is always a fun fall event for upper school students, grades 9-12. The students dress in "disco style." Rag Stock or Goodwill are good shopping sources. Other STA mixers may be held throughout the year. The Middle School holds its own mixers/dances. Students are expected to dress in appropriate attire.

Retreats

During the year, each class has a day-long retreat. The seniors also participate in a spring overnight retreat. Parents are notified in advance. During the year there are also Mother/Son and Father/Son retreats.

Military Ball (STA's Prom)

Sophomores, juniors and seniors are welcome with their dates. The dance is held at school. The cadets wear their military Class A1 uniforms (black formal bow tie and white pants). The Junior Officer candidates create a military arch as each senior and his date are introduced. Parents may come to watch the "grand march" at 8:00 p.m. from the upper balcony. Only senior parents may go to the first floor to take pictures. At 11:00 p.m. parents may return to watch the final Crack Drill Squad presentation of the year. The dance is chaperoned by the faculty. The school does not sanction after-parties.

First Friday Mass and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

Everyone is welcome. Mass is at 7:30 a.m. in the Chapel. Adoration is scheduled from 8:00 a.m. to 2:20 p.m., following Mass.

Senior Community Service Hours & Senior Projects

Between the end of junior year and the beginning of senior projects in mid-May, seniors have to complete 50 hours of service - ten hours are journal writing (to be collected and reviewed by their theology teacher). Of the remaining 40 hours, 30 hours must be in one place/agency. In addition, each senior spends the last two weeks, approximately 40 hours, working at a pre-assigned social service, non-profit, or educational agency. These service projects are a graduation requirement. Full details are available at Cadets.com.

St. Thomas Aquinas Mass

Teachers attend Mass in January, in cap and gown, to honor the patron saint of the school, St. Thomas Aquinas.

During the Advent and Lent Seasons

During Advent, students are invited, through their second period class, to participate in the local Adopt-a-Family Program through Catholic Charities. Various charitable activities occur during the Lenten season.

STA TRADITIONS

Saint Thomas Academy is a school rich in history and traditions. Brief descriptions of some of the traditions are provided below. Please check the school Web site regularly for upcoming events and activities.

Morning Formation

Unless it is a late start or an assembly schedule, the student body gathers in their military companies in the court at 9:40 a.m. Middle School students stand around the upper balcony to observe (on some days, they have their own "formation" in the middle school). As a school community, the boys pray, say the Pledge of Allegiance, share daily announcements, and listen to one or two senior speeches.

Senior Speeches

As a graduation requirement, all seniors must present a five-minute senior speech to the entire student body. The speeches are coordinated by their English teacher and can be humorous or serious, but they are always thought-provoking. Parents are welcome and encouraged to attend.

Out of Uniform Days

These days are announced to the students. Cadets pay for the privilege of attending school out of uniform. The money is donated to charitable organizations.

Freshman Sing Day

Unique to STA. Friendly and fun. This occurs in early fall, seniors seek out freshmen in the halls between classes and make them sing the school fight song.

Homecoming/Alumni Weekend

A weekend at the Academy, full of tradition. During the week, students enjoy a barbeque, fun activities and a pep rally. On Homecoming Friday, there is an official Cadet Review for alumni; families are welcome to attend.

The Alumni Association offers a Tailgate Party and family activities before the game. STA does not have cheerleaders or a homecoming queen, but there is a semi-formal dance at school Saturday evening for sophomores, juniors and seniors.

Uniform Brass:

New brass has a protective shine coat which does not need polishing. Brass that has been handed down or that has been scratched or worn or develops a green oxidized or tarnished look will need polishing.

Materials needed: Brasso (found at the Quartermaster Store, Cub, Rainbow, Target, near cleaning supplies), and a very soft cloth such as a Cadie cloth, flannel or cloth baby diaper.

1. Follow the directions on the product. Apply Brasso to the brass and rub off the polish while buffing vigorously with the cloth. Rub until the black residue is gone and the brass has a smooth, glossy appearance.
2. Never use abrasives which would scratch the brass.
3. Never boil pins. This may be a joke passed on by older cadets as "initiation" but it is not accurate.

SCHOOL STORES

Cadet Maker, the Academy Bookstore

The Cadet Maker is open Monday through Friday during students' lunch hours and after school. For exact times, refer to the online Quick Link Box. The Cadet Maker sells school supplies, letter jackets, STA logo clothing and gift items throughout the school year. Visa, MasterCard, checks and cash are all accepted.

Quartermaster Store

High School students can purchase their uniforms, and other military-related articles, from the Quartermaster Store located in the Military Wing of STA. Please refer to the Cadet Maker Web site for store hours.

The Quartermaster Store holds a New Uniform Sale for three days every August. Information is available on the Web site. New students should purchase their uniforms at this sale; volunteers are available to answer questions about the uniform requirements, proper fit, care, and placement of brass. The Mothers' Club holds a Used Uniform Sale in July. Visa, MasterCard, checks, and cash are all accepted.

Note: white pants are not needed until Spring EXCEPT for band members. Note: nametags are provided to new students by their Leadership instructors. Brass nametag clips ("pips") and replacement nametags are available for purchase in the Quartermaster Store.

Please refer to the Student Handbook for Middle School uniform details.

WEB SITE INFORMATION

Web Site:

The Saint Thomas Academy Home Web Page is www.Cadets.com.

STA'S Web site home page offers several informational "Quick Links" designed to provide timely, updated, information pertaining to frequently accessed sites. The red button on the home page allows you to access the most current news, schedules and notices.

PowerSchool is the school's online Academic information system for students and parents. A site link is located at Cadets.com, on the upper blue bar. The site is password protected: Parents and students each receive a designated password/user name. At this site you and your son have access to class syllabi, homework assignments, attendance records, grades and announcements.

ACADEMICS

Eagle and Silver Torch Awards

The Eagle Award and Silver Torch Awards are two academic honors awarded at STA. Students earning a 3.67 GPA or higher for the prior year are invited, along with their parents, to a special fall evening ceremony. (Seniors awards occur in spring). Silver Torch winners, having earned a GPA of 3.33-3.66 for the past year, are recognized during morning formation. On average, more than 25% of the students earn Eagle or Silver Torch awards yearly.

Semester Exams

Semester exams are given twice a year, consisting of one to two finals per day for four consecutive days for grades 7 - 12. Students are only required to be at school for their scheduled exams. If your son has a study hall or a class not offering an exam during a scheduled class period, he may remain at home or study at school.

SCHOOL CALENDAR & HANDBOOK

The STA School Calendar/Handbook was handed out at Parent Night. **It is filled with important information which is helpful to review at the beginning of each year.** Calendar information is also available online at the school's Web site and the handbook is also available in the Student Planner.

UNIFORM TIPS

-Nametags are required for all students, grades 7 through 12. Middle school students receive their nametag on New Student Orientation Day, and on the first day of school for current students (additional nametags may be purchased by contacting the office at 651-683-1520. High School nametags are provided by the Leadership Department (additional nametags may be ordered in person from the Quartermaster). Information regarding the Middle School uniform is on the STA Web site - Cadets.com/MiddleSchool.

-Blouse coats should be kept at home unless boys are directed to bring them. At school, the blouse coats should be kept in a garment bag when in a locker. Label the inside of the hat and other valuables.

-White Pants, which are part of the Class A1 uniform, are required for cadets (Upper School students) on the following occasions: White Pants Inspection (April), Mothers' Review (May), Military Ball (May), Military Awards Ceremony (May) or other ceremonial events. For this reason, many cadets purchase their white pants at the spring Mothers' Club-sponsored White Pants Sale (used pants), or in the Quartermaster Store (new pants). Cadets in Band and Honor Guard require white pants throughout the school year. For additional uniform information, refer to the Handbook, or go online to the Military pages.

-Hats should be kept in cadets' lockers as they are worn during most drill periods. Mark the student's name on the inside of the hat.

-Upper School gray trousers may be dry cleaned or washed at home (do not use the dryer). To wash at home follow these instructions: 1. Machine wash and rinse pants in cold water, gentle or hand-wash cycle. 2. Smooth and "press" the legs with your hands, creating a crease down the fronts. 3. Clip the bottom of each separate leg to a pants/skirt hanger (i.e., two hangers). 4. Hang the pants with the legs slightly apart (the pants will be hanging down). 5. Touch up with iron, if needed. They'll be ready for inspection the next morning!

-As the gray trousers are a 'military' fit, some mothers recommend having the crotch double-stitched to prevent the seams from tearing.

-Cadets are responsible for having an ironed uniform shirt every day.

-Your son should keep an extra tie, shoe polishing cloth, and pair of gloves in his locker in case of dirt, spills, or a loss.

-The Mothers' Club holds a Used Uniform Sale for grades 9-12 during the summer, usually at the end of July. Refer to the school calendar and/or Mothers' Club Web site for specific sale-related information including dates/times, and contact names/numbers. **PLEASE NOTE: THIS SALE IS FOR UPPER SCHOOL UNIFORMS, ONLY. BRING YOUR SON(S) ALONG TO ENSURE A PROPER FIT! CASH & CHECKS ONLY ACCEPTED.**