



**ST. THOMAS  
AQUINAS**  
CATHOLIC SCHOOL

# Kindergarten Guide

#itstartedatStThomas

## Welcome

Our staff is looking forward to welcoming your child as a kindergarten student and your family as part of our school community. If you have any questions, please contact Barbara Turner, Director of Admissions, [Barbara.Turner@stasonline.net](mailto:Barbara.Turner@stasonline.net). Tel. 203.255.0556 x.225. Visit our website: [www.stasonline.net](http://www.stasonline.net)

## Admissions

St. Thomas Aquinas has a rolling admission policy. Admission is based on a personal interview, placement screening, and previous school records, when applicable. Required forms can be found on our website: application, parish affiliation form, release of records (if applicable), acknowledgement of medical requirements, State of CT health assessment record.

## Orientation

Parents are invited to attend a school orientation where you will learn more about your child's school and the kindergarten program. Children will have an opportunity to visit the classroom and participate in an activity with the kindergarten faculty.

## Important Dates 2020-2021 School Year

- Orientation-June TBD
- First day of school-August TBD
- First full day of Kindergarten– August TBD



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*"As a teacher my goal is to focus on students' individual academic and social needs. This enables them to build a solid foundation to become enthusiastic lifelong learners and valuable members of their community."*

*-Mrs. Valerie Ford  
Kindergarten teacher*

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## Mission

The St. Thomas Aquinas School community strives for academic excellence in a faith-filled Catholic environment that encourages children to reach their full potential and to become lifelong learners. By word and example, we teach our students to model Christ's message of love.



## Transportation

Busing is available for Fairfield residents. The school office will publish the routes for each bus number. Kindergarten students are discharged at the bus stop to a waiting adult.

## Uniform/Dress Code

See our website [www.stasonline.net](http://www.stasonline.net) for our school handbook containing information on our uniforms and dress code. Be sure to check out our uniform exchange closet for used items in your child's size. New uniforms may be ordered through Dennis Uniforms [www.dennisuniform.com](http://www.dennisuniform.com) or their store in Orange, CT. Some items may be purchased from Lands' End online.

## Kindergarten Program Overview

Kindergarten curriculum includes math, science, language arts, music, art, physical education, penmanship, religion, library and technology. Learning Centers provide students with a hands-on learning experience for both literacy and math. Our Kindergarten program is rigorous and highly engaging, encouraging our students to develop a love of learning and positive self-image, supported by teachers and teacher's assistants who are dedicated to ensuring each child's success and development to their fullest potential.

Our Kindergarten teachers are elementary education certified, and both teacher assistants are college graduates and past St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School parents who have been an active part of the school community and are committed to the art of teaching. Combined, they have over 40 years of St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School experience. St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School works in close conjunction with the Diocese of Bridgeport as well as the State of Connecticut's Kindergarten Guidelines.

Parents are frequently invited to volunteer as room event coordinators, guest readers, for holiday celebrations and crafts, and field trip chaperones.

## Daily Schedule

The school day begins at 7:50 a.m. and ends at 2:10 p.m. Students may be dropped off for morning care at 7:00 at no additional charge. After School Care is offered daily until 5:30 p.m. An hourly rate applies. Kindergarten students may also participate in many of our "Beyond the Bell" after school programs such as STEM classes, sports clubs, art classes, dance classes, and music lessons.

## About Mrs. Ford

"I always knew I wanted to be a teacher and had faith that God would place me where I belong. I am blessed to be a member of the St. Thomas Aquinas community since 2008. As a Catholic school teacher I am able to foster both academic and spiritual growth in my students. In my classroom we become teammates that encourage each other to do our best in all we do.. I am also fortunate to be a parent of a current student. I believe that faith-based education gives children a strong foundation to become positive members of their community with a solid knowledge of their faith. I am proud to teach and have my own child in a school where we serve God and model Christ's message of love daily."

Mrs. Ford earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree, Psychology from Southern Connecticut State University; a Masters of Science Degree, Elementary Education from University of Bridgeport; and is a Certified Elementary Educator K-6.





## Parent Testimonials



“St. Thomas as exceeded our expectations in so many ways. Parents are highly involved--lots of opportunities to work in the classroom and serve the school in other ways. The after school programs are amazing--so many programs offered--clubs, sports, dance, music. The staff is so dedicated and talented. We love the student mentoring program where 8th graders are paired with younger students--great role models and leadership. The school lives the Catholic faith--all grades participate in service projects, religious instruction in classroom, students attend weekly Mass as a school. There is a supportive culture and great community--we definitely made the right choice of school for our daughter. She is thriving here.”

I have 3 children at St. Thomas and we moved them over from Fairfield Public Schools. While the public school we are zoned for is good - and a community favorite, we found it alarming that there was no real phonics program, and no languages and no handwriting. St. Thomas has all that, plus script handwriting, math competitions, spelling tests, and a garden program. One of my favorite things about St. Thomas is they help teach the kids the right way to do things, and how to be good people, not just how to walk in a line from recess to lunch. The bottom line is - our kids love going to school everyday, and they are so happy there.

As an educator and a grandparent I am so impressed with this school. The faculty is outstanding, a strong curriculum is provided, and they are building mature and responsible students. My grandchildren in kindergarten were presented with an amazing phonics and reading program. Just to see a smile on these little children when they could read, made me realize that every child is afforded the opportunity to be a great reader. This program is excellent. My granddaughters are now in fifth grade and are doing well. The writing program is concise, informative, and makes writing easy for all. Parents can follow the matrix that is provided so there is no doubt what the assignment is. A math program is developing that will be geared for all levels of learning. If you are considering this school, do not hesitate. You will make one of the best decision for your child.



# Parent Testimonials



St. Thomas is a wonderful school. It effectively balances the development of moral character with academic excellence. It builds key life skills - confidence, hard-work, kindness and respect. It is a sincere community of students, faculty, parents & alumni -- a genuine, caring community. It is back to basics for its students - uniforms, clear guidelines on acceptable behavior, grades with homework early are beneficial in today's world. And the tuition is very affordable (to be clear the only fundraising ask is the auction). The after-school programming is on the rise in both quantity and quality - great external programs (batting cage, chess, art, etc.), the in-school garden, the music program (great Spring Show), basketball, cross country... It is a special, unique place where my children are safe, known and cared for.

St. Thomas Aquinas is a hidden gem in Fairfield. Our son loves it there - he enjoys playing with his friends, being a leader in the community, and of course, lunch (they bring in food from popular restaurants to cater lunch), gym, and recess:)

We love it because the community is inviting, vibrant, and caring. The class sizes are small in comparison to the public school. The tuition is reasonable. The reading program is phenomenal and the new librarian came from the Public Library. My son has been taking foreign languages since Kindergarten. Technology is an integrated and important component of the curriculum. STEAM, although not called out prominently, is a big focus for the school. As a parent, I've been very involved in the classroom and volunteer in the lunchroom. The administration and teachers (seasoned professionals) focus on the best of each child.

As parents we could not be happier with St Thomas. This is our 5th year at the school with multiple children and they are blossoming in a safe, happy and supportive environment. They are getting a solid education with loads of extra activities. We are welcome as parents to fully participate in class room activities, volunteering any number of ways far beyond a what we could get a public school. It's just terrific for our children and ourselves. We love the parents have made wonderful supportive friends.



# Beyond St. Thomas

## Alumni Parent Testimonials

*"Our children learned important values like empathy, compassion, love, and a sense of God. These are important parts of a child's development, especially in our times of increased anxiety. St. Thomas provides a strong foundation and an important spiritual background to help kids for the rest of their lives."*

*"St. Thomas is THE preparatory school for Catholic High Schools and Colleges."*

*"St. Thomas does an amazing job teaching the fundamentals. Our children have been successful in further education and LIFE as a direct result of their St. Thomas elementary preparation. It all started here. The product of St. Thomas is where they go from here...what they do from here on."*

*"Each child of mine found their niche at St. Thomas. I loved that my kids learned to deal with adversity – you don't get a 100% all the time at St. Thomas and that helps build important strength later on."*

*"St. Thomas is where it all started. It is where our children became the happy, successful people they are today. St. Thomas gave them a solid academic foundation. They developed good study habits, learned Gospel values of service, charity, kindness; developed good judgement, critical thinking, and ethical discernment. So many of their achievements/accomplishments in life can be traced back to their St. Thomas experiences. "*

*Our children made life-long connections at St. Thomas. They went on to attend Georgetown and Notre Dame, but St. Thomas is truly where their character development began*

*"STA reinforced what we were teaching at home everyday"*

*#ItstartedatStThomas*



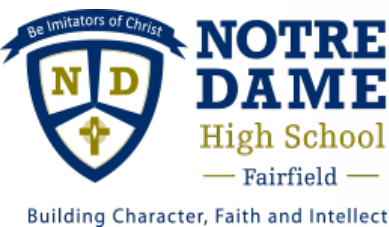
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# Beyond St. Thomas

## High Schools Attended



**Lauralton Hall**  
Connecticut's First Catholic College-Prep School for Girls



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St. Thomas graduates are more prepared for applications and entrance exams, and go on to the public or private high school of choice.



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# Beyond St. Thomas

## Colleges Attended



**Fairfield**  
UNIVERSITY



COLLEGE OF THE  
**Holy Cross**



PROVIDENCE  
COLLEGE



UNIVERSITY OF  
**NOTRE DAME**



**BOSTON**  
**COLLEGE**



**Georgetown**  
University



**LOYOLA**  
UNIVERSITY MARYLAND



**FORDHAM UNIVERSITY**  
THE JESUIT UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK



**PennState**

THE  
**CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY**  
of AMERICA



**LEHIGH**  
UNIVERSITY.



**HARVARD**  
UNIVERSITY



*#ItstartedatStThomas*

St. Thomas is Fairfield County's premier preparatory school for Catholic high schools, colleges and universities.



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# Alumni Spotlight



*Bernadette Boyle*  
*Class of 1999*

## Currently

Tenured Associate Math Professor at  
Sacred Heart University

## Education after St. Thomas

Notre Dame High School of Fairfield

*Summa Cum Laude Merit Scholar*  
*Captain & MVP Cross Country and*  
*track*

*Sr. Marina Reilly Scholarship Award*  
*Jerry Laderman Award for student-*  
*athlete*

Providence College 2007

*Honors Program*  
*Summa Cum Laude Math Major*  
*Division 1 track and field athlete*

Ph.D. Mathematics, University of  
Notre Dame

## St. Thomas Legacy

Grandfather '38, Father '68, Sisters  
( '97, '05, '08)

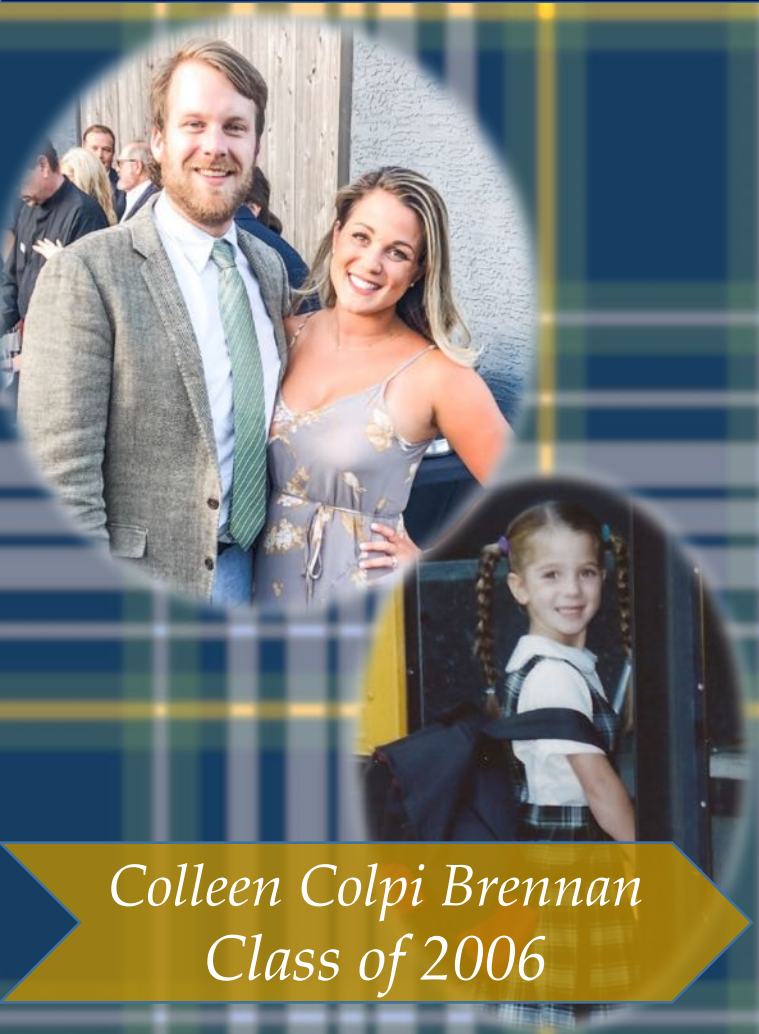
## *#ItstartedatStThomas*

"St. Thomas gave me an excellent foundation which truly set me up for success academically in high school, college and beyond. However, St. Thomas school is much more than a place of academic learning. It is a community. The teachers truly care about each student and want them to succeed. It was not uncommon for teachers and parents of other students in the school to make my family dinners at times when my mother was sick. The friends I made in grade school helped me to learn about myself and I still enjoy crossing paths with them over 20 years later. St. Thomas also taught me to make God and my Catholic faith a part of my everyday life which has helped me a lot over the years. St. Thomas taught me to love learning."



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# Alumni Spotlight



*Colleen Colpi Brennan  
Class of 2006*

## Currently

First grade teacher at Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Glenview, IL

## Education after St. Thomas

Lauralton Hall

*Awards for academic excellence in  
French and Art*

*Captain of lacrosse and volleyball  
teams*

Miami University, Oxford, OH

*Dean's List*

*Alpha Chi Omega sorority*

## St. Thomas Legacy

The youngest of six siblings to graduate from St. Thomas (3 older brothers and 2 older sisters)

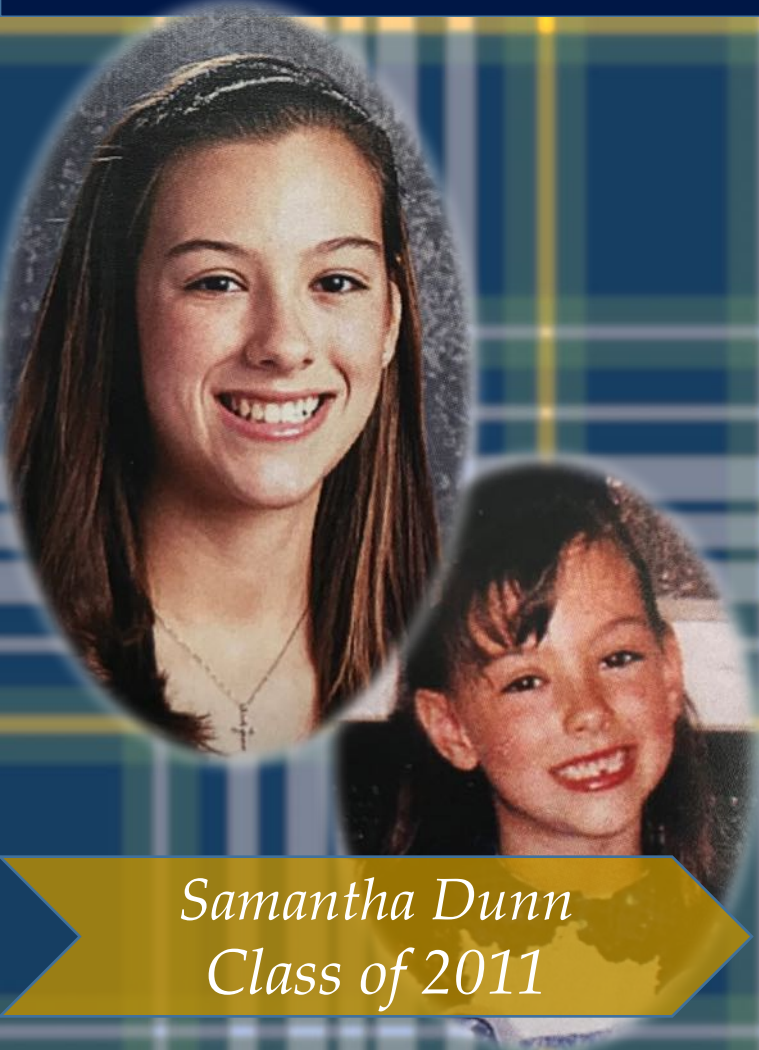
## *#ItstartedatStThomas*

"During my time at St. Thomas, I learned that everybody is unique and should be treated with respect. I think that is what caused me to develop and value such great friendships throughout my time in high school. While attending St. Thomas, I loved how the faculty always encouraged the students. My second grade teacher told me that I could be anything I wanted to be if I never gave up and tried my best. She was right, and I ended up wanting to change the lives of children, just like Mrs. Pierson changed mine. I owe my success to her.. I received such an amazing education at St. Thomas that I wanted to return the favor. Now I teach at a Catholic school in Glenview, IL and couldn't be happier."



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# Alumni Spotlight



*Samantha Dunn  
Class of 2011*

## Currently

Completing a Master's Degree program in Reading Education at Marywood University, coach field hockey, substitute teacher

## Education after St. Thomas

Fairfield Ward

*National Honor Society*

*French National Honor Society*

*3 season athlete*

Marywood University

*6 Honor Societies; medal recipient*

*President of Education Club*

*Field Hockey Captain*

*Founded Women's Ministry Group*

## St. Thomas Legacy

Sister '13, Sister '21

## *#ItstartedatStThomas*

"My St. Thomas experience taught me how to live a Christian life and to be hard working in all I do. Spiritually I felt prepared and continued to partake in Church youth groups. I was very prepared for high school academically, in high school I took multiple AP classes, resulting in entering college a semester ahead of my peers."



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# Alumni Spotlight



*Margo Sheehan*  
*Class of 2005*

## Currently

Dean of Students, St. Joseph  
High School

## Education after St. Thomas

St. Joseph High School

*French National Honor Society*

*Track Captain*

*Honors & AP courses*

*Student Ambassador*

Providence College, BA in  
Social Work

*Dean's List*

*Student Congress*

*Admissions Ambassador*

*Orientation Leader*

Providence College, Master of  
Education in Counseling

## St. Thomas Legacy

Sister '03, Brother '08

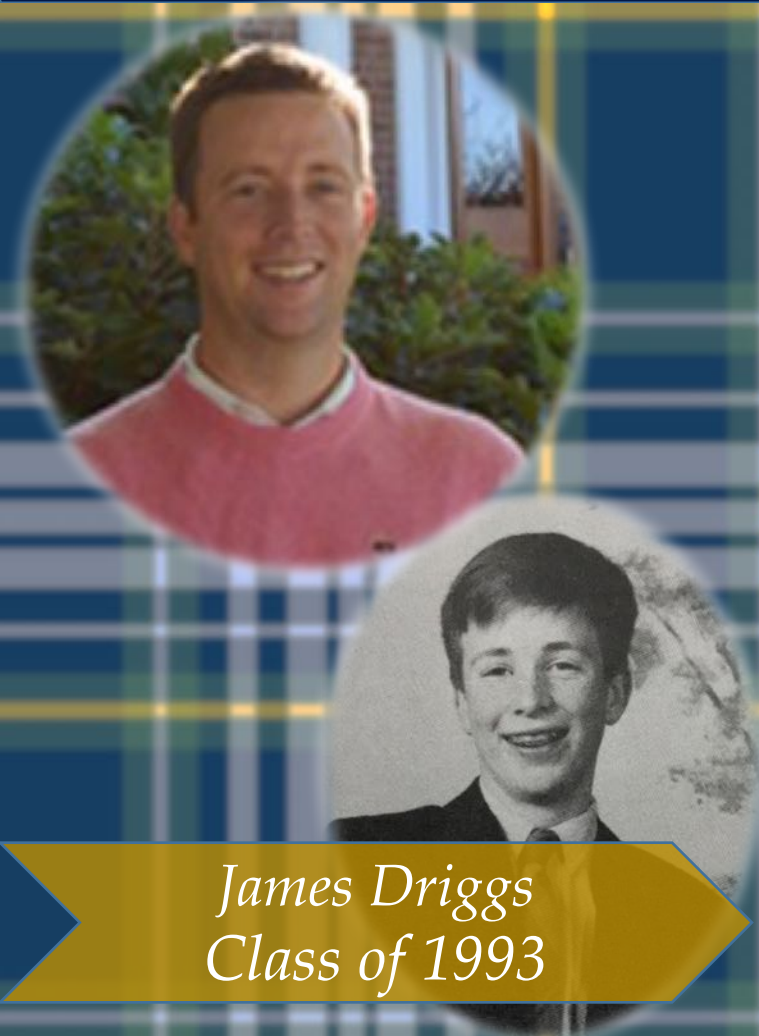
## *#ItstartedatStThomas*

"St. Thomas encouraged us to get involved and develop a strong work ethic, both of which helped me. The most important thing I learned at St. Thomas was the value of a school that feels like family. It's such a special place. This is how special it is—I saw my second grade teacher the other day at a Diocesan event for all employees, and seeing her was the highlight of my day. She still cares so deeply for her students, 15 years later!"



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# Alumni Spotlight



*James Driggs  
Class of 1993*

## Currently

Business Owner, Basketball  
Coach

## Education after St. Thomas

St. Joseph High School

*Honors/AP Classes*

*National Honor Society*

*Sports accolades*

Hamilton College, BA Political  
Science and Government

*Ned Doyle Scholarship*

*All League, Basketball*

*Lead College Basketball in assists*

University of Rochester,  
Master's degree

## St. Thomas Legacy

Sister '98, Sister '97, Mother  
(current faculty)

## *#ItstartedatStThomas*

"St. Thomas provided a strong foundation in the fundamentals of math and reading & writing. It's a loving community that builds the foundation for success in high school. St. Thomas does build a lifelong network. I still remain close with several friends from St. Thomas."



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# Alumni Spotlight



*Paul Halas  
Class of 1970*

## Currently

Retired after 37 year legal career, last 13 years at General Electric Co.

## Education after St. Thomas

### Fairfield Prep

*Prep Athletics Hall of Fame*

*Awarded Outstanding Student-Athlete*

*State Latin Champion*

*Captain, MVP All-State Football*

*Captain, MVP All-State Baseball*

*Barnum Festival king*

*Harvard Prize Book*

### Harvard College

*Economics Honors Graduate*

*Harvard National Scholar*

*Outstanding Scholar-Athlete*

*Ivy Football Championship*

*Captain, Ivy Baseball Team*

### Harvard Law School

*Honors Graduate*

## St. Thomas Legacy

6 siblings 1963-77, 2 nieces, 1 nephew

## *#ItstartedatStThomas*

"St. Thomas instilled in me a great sense of discipline and self-reliance; critical thinking; respect for others; a spiritual grounding and the importance of spiritual integrity and freedom of choice. Service as an altar boy from the 4<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grade was instrumental to my spiritual growth and sense of belonging and purpose. My fondest experience was the continually growing friendship and community with my classmates and their families. My advice, in hindsight, is to get as involved as possible; believe in yourself and in your teachers; and be grateful to your parents for giving you this opportunity"