

# Thomas Sumter Academy

## PARENT/ STUDENT HANDBOOK *2024 – 2025*



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*Thomas Sumter Academy  
Alma Mater*

*In the rolling hills of Santee  
Proudly does she stand,  
Our dear school, our Alma Mater,  
Finest in the land.*

*Thomas Sumter, how we love thee!  
May we bring thee fame!  
Loyal students we shall ever  
Honor thy great name!*

*Through the years we all shall cherish  
Memories of thee,  
Days we spent within the halls of  
Our Academy.*

*Thomas Sumter, how we love thee!  
May we bring thee fame!  
Loyal students we shall ever  
Honor thy great name!*

## **I. MISSION STATEMENT**

### **MISSION**

The mission of Thomas Sumter Academy is to develop, in a safe and Christian environment, well-rounded individuals who are fully prepared for college and life.

### **VISION STATEMENT**

At Thomas Sumter Academy we envision all students will learn to become prepared, well-rounded, and articulate students who honor the past, live the present, and drive the future. We develop well-educated, socially conscious students who are prepared to face the challenges of a changing world with skills, academics, athletics, confidence, self-control, and moral strength in a Christian environment.

### **PHILOSOPHY**

“Add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge.”

Thomas Sumter Academy is an educational institution serving students in an environment of Christian love and discipline within which students learn to link bodies of knowledge and develop an enthusiasm for living. Recognizing that academic success cannot stand alone, Thomas Sumter Academy places importance on participation in interscholastic athletics, fine arts, and extracurricular activities, in conjunction with the development of their faith, personal skills and attitudes in leadership, dependability, initiative, and fairness. A primary goal of TSA is to assist each student in maximum growth toward independence in thought and action.

Expectations are high, and the calling to be one’s best is very real.

### **CORE VALUES**

Thomas Sumter Academy’s motto, “Acta Non Verba,” is the foundation for every student, faculty and staff member. Action Not Words is paramount. Maintaining high academic standards through research based effective and collaborative learning is also very important as we build our core values. Core values are critical components of the school/organization’s character and brand. TSA affirms the following core values:

- Honor: To be honorable in everything, words and deeds.
- Commitment: To fully engage in every aspect of life at TSA in order to maximize each potential in body, mind, and spirit.
- Fidelity: To be faithful in everything - Faithful to God, country, parents, faculty, and Thomas Sumter Academy.

### **HISTORY**

As of 2007 and written by Joye Davis & Dr. Frank L. Martin III

On September 8, 1964, Thomas Sumter Academy breathed its first breath as a teaching institution. The 112 students enrolled in grades one through ten began fulfilling the long-term hopes and dreams of a handful of founding fathers.

On January 16, 1959, a group of community parents banded together and purchased the land and existing main building from the state, forming the Hillcrest Center, Inc. The original shareholders in the Hillcrest Center, Inc., were W.M. LeNoir, H.C. Edens, Jr., V.P. Dennis, A.W. James, C.A. McLaughlin, E.M. Dubose, A.M. Burrows, J.M. Edens, Jr., and J.B. Gaddy. Each contributed \$100.00 to the corporation to facilitate the purchase. The building was constructed in 1926 and housed Hillcrest School until 1958 when a new and modern facility was built just across from the old building at Highways 521 and 441. For six years, the building sat silent and living only in the dreams of a dedicated few.

In 1964, dreams became reality. By the time the school was ready to open its doors, several other community leaders had joined forces with the Hillcrest Center crowd, as additional investors and/or directors for the new institution, including R.V. Segars, Jr., J.E. Davis, W.J. Carter, M.S. McLaughlin, J.E. Sanders, Jr., J.R. Burrows, J.B. Pate, J.M. Brabham, E.C. Carter, Jr. and V. R. Dinkins. The school became real and continued to grow far, far beyond the greatest expectations of its founding fathers.

Thomas Sumter Academy began operations under the stern but loving hand of Mrs. Frances Mellette (“Fanny”) Dinkins. Mrs. Dinkins served as Headmistress from 1964 through 1966. She turned the helm over to W.W. Wannamaker, III in 1966. Mr. Wannamaker served as Headmaster until 1969. C.E. Owens III was hired in 1969 to replace Mr. Wannamaker and continued in the position of Headmaster until 1996 when he resigned to focus full-time in the Episcopal ministry. Phillip W. Jackson, Jr., a 1984 graduate of Thomas Sumter Academy, took the reins from his former Headmaster and continued until 2004. Mr. William J. Hentges served as interim until Dr. Robert Mayfield joined the school family as Headmaster on June 1, 2006. Ms. Elena Gresham took the position as interim Head of School to complete the school year when Dr. Mayfield left. Long time Thomas Sumter General, Mrs. Debbie Nix accepted the position as Head of School in June of 2008. Her love of the school is evident in all she does.

Thomas Sumter Academy’s motto, “Acta Non Verba,” was engraved on the class rings of the first graduates in 1967; it has served as a prologue for the ensuing years. By the 1966/67 school year, the South Carolina Independent School Association had established intramural basketball, and Thomas Sumter Academy was ready with their first team. The school added bus services for students in the outlying communities in that same school year. On December 20, 1968, Thomas Sumter Academy established a Chapter of the National Honor Society for students excelling in Character, Scholarship, Leadership and Service. In the 1970-71 school year, the Mitch Edens III Memorial Gymnasium was constructed, and the Generals basketball team had played on their home court for the first time.

The school added a Bethel Campus in the 1970-71 school year, which operated in addition to the Dalzell Campus for fifteen years through the 1985-86 school year. Enrollment was an all-time high of 1125 when both campuses were in existence during the 1984-85 school year. In the summer of 1986, the Bethel campus was closed, and the school’s enrollment was reduced accordingly.

The 1971-72 school year produced the first Thomas Sumter Academy football team. In 1974, the school established a concurrent studies program with the University of South Carolina at Sumter, enabling Thomas Sumter Academy students to take courses at their campus for college credit. An additional library was added to the physical plant in 1976, followed by three science classrooms in 1979 and the Fine Arts Building in 1984. The Lower School library, a chorus room and dance studio, and more classrooms were added in 1985. The following year, an after-school daycare was initiated under the direction of Mrs. Renee Langston. In 1987, the academic program was strengthened by the installation of the Lower School science and computer labs.

In 1989, Hurricane Hugo hit Dalzell with force, destroying the old auditorium and causing more than \$300,000.00 in damage to the school. The spirit of the Generals would require more than a hurricane to destroy it. Renovations were completed in 1990, and the school had a beautiful new auditorium in addition to other repairs and improvements to the physical plant. In 1990, Thomas Sumter Academy was fortunate enough to acquire additional property to be used for sports, and the school activities continued to expand. Studio Art was added to the school curriculum in 1991, and a three-year art program for the upper school was added in 1992. In 1993, the academic program received an added boost when the relationship with the University of South Carolina at Sumter expanded, allowing students to receive college credit for courses taken at Thomas Sumter Academy’s Dalzell campus.

Thomas Sumter Academy proudly celebrated its fiftieth anniversary during the school year 2014-2015. Celebration events included a worship service, Founders Day Assembly, 50-year class reunion, former faculty/staff luncheon, and our General Gala. In honor of our 50th anniversary, several of our original students and founding fathers led the commencement processional at the graduation ceremony of the TSA Class of 2015. September 8<sup>th</sup> is Founder’s Day.

In the summer of 2016, TSA opened the Columbia Campus with 16 students. This new campus was under the tutelage of Mrs. Jody Murphy. With the graduation of the Class of 2017, Thomas Sumter celebrated the graduation of the 50th graduating class. The Class of 2017 had a combined scholarship tally of \$5.5 million to colleges and universities such as Washington & Lee, Wofford, The Citadel, University of South Carolina – Beaufort, Francis Marion, Erskine College and many others. In June 2017, Thomas Sumter Academy said good-bye to a legend at Thomas Sumter --- Mrs. Debbie Nix --- who after 39 years of faithful service to TSA retired. Mrs. Nix served as the eighth Head of School for Thomas Sumter. Not only had she served TSA as the Head of School, Mrs. Nix served as a teacher and

Development Director. She is green and gold thru and thru! Thomas Sumter Academy's ninth Head of School is Dr. Frank L. Martin III beginning July 2017

The Class of 2018 had a combined scholarship total of over \$6.6 million to colleges and universities throughout the nation. All Generals strive to represent the ideals of our founding fathers and continue the great legacy of Thomas Sumter Academy for the next 50 years. Additionally, in May of 2018, Thomas Sumter Academy became the first SCISA Certified STEAM school in South Carolina.

The Class of 2019 had 22 graduates with a combined scholarship total of over \$8 million to a myriad of colleges and universities throughout the country. Although a small class, it saw a large number of students achieve and receive a lot in scholarship dollars. A testimony to the faculty, staff and our academic rigor.

The Class of 2020 brought in a new decade as the roarin' 20's of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century came. Although our football team struggled, we had a lot of heart, tenacity, and grit. All appeared normal through basketball season as the JV Girls won their region and the Varsity Girls did enter the State play-offs but lost in the first round. As the winter continued, the world started to hear about a new viral illness --- it was called COVID-19. This changed the landscape for the rest of the school year. Thomas Sumter Academy went home March 16, 2020, to start e-learning and did not return, maintaining the academic rigor through several different learning modalities. Although it was very difficult for parents, students, and faculty alike, everyone came together as one family and provided the students completed the school year. The Class of 2020 were not able to experience the "normal" things other seniors have, but new traditions were started including a Drive-in Graduation Recognition, an outside graduation (with social distancing). Social distancing became the phrase for a "new normal." The Class of 2020 are getting ready for college and were accepted to a multitude of colleges and universities throughout the United States. They also earned more than \$12.2 million in scholarships.

Ms. Cheryl Hale assumed the position of VP for Academics at the TSA-Columbia Campus as well, as of July 1, 2020.

The 2020-2021 school year started like no other. Thomas Sumter Academy showed unequivocal resilience as we opened our doors for In-Person learning. The Pandemic-Back-To-School Team, with Board concurrence, decided to open for In-person only. We opened our doors August 12, 2020, for the year and successfully navigated in-person learning through the tenacity, support, and partnerships between the school, faculty, staff, students, and parents. The Class of 2021 graduated May 15, 2021, with Bobby Richardson speaking. The Class of 2021 had \$4.4 million in scholarships offered to a myriad of colleges, including Clemson, The Citadel, Auburn, Alabama, University of Georgia, and College of Charleston to name a few.

In January 2021, the Board of Trustees voted to close the TSA-CC. The completion of Phase II of the Capital Campaign (Gym Restroom Renovations), refurbishment of the PK building and necessary gutter and roof repairs.

The 2021-2022 school year again brought COVID challenges to include the Omicron variant. In collaboration with the board, faculty, staff, and our constituents, it was decided that masks would be optional for this school year, however, the Administration reserved the right to mandate if it was felt to be necessary to ensure the safety and health of everyone. The school grew by 17% and had a total school population of 423 with the senior class 34 strong. The Class of 2022 had 100% college acceptances for those that applied. College acceptances included UGA, Clemson, USC and USC satellite campuses across the state. They were also accepted to Auburn and University of Alabama. We had a track scholarship to Erskine College as well.

April 10-11, 2022, Thomas Sumter Academy completed its' 5-year re-accreditation visit. The visit was a complete success as Thomas Sumter Academy was re-accredited as an Advanced COGNIA/SCISA accredited school. This took a team effort as the faculty and staff completed the requisite preparations over the last year and a half. During the summer we finished the encapsulation of the main building and changed our upper school library into two additional classrooms due to our growth over the last couple of years.

All Generals strive to represent the ideals of our founding fathers and continue the great legacy of Thomas Sumter Academy for the next 50 years.

In 2023 Ben Herod, TSA class of 2001, was hired to serve as the tenth Head of School.

## **II. GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The information contained in this handbook sets forth information, principles, and guidelines for student and parent involvement, participation, and conduct at Thomas Sumter Academy. The material included is not all inclusive, and the administration realizes that events may arise that are not specifically addressed in this document. However, the administration and the Board of Trustees reserve the right and the obligation to amend, add, or delete rules and regulations when deemed necessary to facilitate the smooth operation of TSA and its programs.

### **SPIRITUAL LIFE**

Thomas Sumter Academy is a school with a solid Christian foundation. Emphasis on Christian principles is an integral part of school culture through daily devotions, prayer, and required chapel programs. TSA encourages all students to develop a steadfast commitment to follow Christ in their daily lives.

### **ACCREDITATION**

Thomas Sumter Academy is an independent coeducational day school for students from K3-12<sup>th</sup> grade. We are fully accredited by SCISA (South Carolina Independent School Association) and COGNIA. COGNIA is a global accrediting agency network for 36,000 institutions in over 90 countries for over 18,000,000 students.

### **ADMISSIONS**

New students may apply for admission to Thomas Sumter Academy throughout the year. Class sizes are limited, and waiting lists are utilized. Applications are processed, and the date applications are received is relevant to acceptance. Thomas Sumter Academy has an open admission policy and does not discriminate in its admission policies or in any other school administered program on the basis of race, color, sex, creed, or national origin.

Admission to Thomas Sumter Academy is based on several criteria including an entrance evaluation, a personal interview, prior academic records, performance on standardized tests, discipline records, and recommendations. TSA reserves the right to deny enrollment and/or reenrollment.

Financial aid and scholarships are also available on a first come first serve basis. The SSS portal (<https://www.solutionsbysss.com/>) opens for reenrollment and open enrollment periods for upcoming school years. All families must submit their applications for each consecutive year of the award. The student(s) must remain in good standing in order to maintain their scholarship. Also, if proper student behavior is not maintained throughout the year, scholarships/financial aid will be rescinded. Please see our website for more details.

### **BUSINESS OFFICE**

The Business Office of Thomas Sumter Academy handles all the financial functions of the school. TSA is a private, not-for-profit entity with 501C (3) status that is almost entirely dependent upon tuition, student fees, auxiliary activities, and donations to support the operations of TSA.

The Business Office oversees all charges, collections, and payments for Thomas Sumter Academy. The personnel payroll, accounts receivable, accounts payable, and the budget are essential areas that fall under the umbrella of the business office. Financial statements are generated monthly and distributed to the Board of Trustees which is ultimately responsible for the financial viability of the school.

Families with delinquent payments will be notified by the business office and/or Head of School, as well as FACTS. Families will be afforded the opportunity to bring their account up to date under a delinquent payment policy that will be communicated at that time. Families that are unable to bring their account up to date under delinquent payment policy will be disenrolled from TSA.

### **COMMUNICATIONS**

#### **Public Communication:**

The TSA staff, along with parent and alumni volunteers/groups, provides news releases of current school events and student achievements to various news media, civic groups, alumni, and members of the TSA family. Many of the students of Thomas Sumter Academy frequently find their achievements and group activities highlighted in their local newspapers, television news broadcasts, radio interviews, social media, and alumni publications.

By attending any Thomas Sumter Academy events and their related activities, attendees acknowledge and accept that they may be taped or photographed. The resulting materials may be used by TSA in print or other PR.

#### Parent Communication:

Upcoming events, student achievements, lunch menus, and other important school information are available through FACTS/RenWeb/SIS that is updated regularly. Every parent has access to FACTS through an individual account that is secure and private.

Parent Alert through FACTS will be used to email and text family members regarding developing current information such as weather alerts and last-minute schedule changes due to issues beyond our control. This system will also be utilized to communicate any type of urgent emergency that might arise. The use of this system will be reserved for time sensitive information that needs to be communicated immediately.

Parents are encouraged to communicate with teachers and staff for questions they may have. Parents can monitor their student's progress through FACTS. Be sure to speak to your child's teacher before speaking with administration.

### DEVELOPMENT

Building community and donor support is one of the main responsibilities of the staff in the Development Office. Fundraising and development activities are carried out by the cooperative efforts of both the TSA development staff and volunteers. In all fundraising activities, the school prohibits door-to-door fundraising.

The Development Office is responsible for the creation and execution of all development programs including major gift solicitation, corporate and foundation gifts, special events, community promotions, grant writing, alumni programs, and the annual fund.

### TSA EDUCATION FOUNDATION

January 1, 2022, Thomas Sumter Academy started its' own Education Foundation. This foundation is a nonprofit corporation "established in the town of Rembert, South Carolina. The organization's primary purpose is to increase opportunities for students enrolled in Thomas Sumter Academy and make every effort to provide quality education to students. The organization is created to support the educational programs for both the students and staff of Thomas Sumter Academy, in addition to providing other supportive services as needs are identified." If you have any questions regarding the foundation and/or the opportunities to give, please contact either Development or the Head of School.

## III. ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

### PRESCHOOL

TSA's preschool program includes K3-K5 classrooms. Students must be potty trained to enter the preschool program. The preschool curriculum uses a progressive and developmentally appropriate approach to learning. It is built on strong, fundamental academic self-help skills, socialization, physical education, spiritual guidance, and character growth. An introduction to the fine arts, science, and technology are also important aspects of this program.

### AFTER CARE

After care is a service provided for our families for students K3 – 5<sup>th</sup> grade. After care is provided until 5:30 PM.

Although we will work with families that are late for their child's pick-up, the following charges apply:

1. 5:30 PM – 5:40 PM – Late charge assessed will be \$25.
2. 5:41 PM – 6:00 PM – Late charge assessed will be \$75.
3. After 6:00 PM – Late charge assessed will be \$150.

### LOWER SCHOOL

Children in grades 1-3 are placed in self-contained classroom settings. All subjects are integrated with a strong emphasis on reading, writing, and math skills. Children in grades 4-5 are given departmentalized instruction to better serve varying ability and maturity levels. These children change classes at various times during the day for math, language arts, science, and social studies. All our Lower School students are given the opportunity to grow spiritually through weekly chapels.

All students in grades 1-5 attend enrichment classes that include STEAM, physical education, music/theater, computer lab/keyboarding, and library. Students in grades first through five also attend Bible class. Dance is an optional enrichment opportunity.



## STEAM:

Thomas Sumter Academy is proud to have an award-winning STEAM Program. STEAM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics. STEAM education encompasses holistic learning, engages students in content, and cultivates learners who are competent in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills (creativity, communication, cooperation, collaboration, critical thinking). K4 -5<sup>th</sup> graders visited the STEAM lab to explore science and art topics that require them to use mathematics, engineering, and technology skills in a project-based learning atmosphere.

## Technology:

Thomas Sumter Academy offers access to an individualized online learning curriculum. Each 5<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> grade student is required to have a personal device at school and charged every day. The device will need to be windows compatible. Take note that PSAT, SAT, and other standardized tests are now fully online test. These tests were not designed to be taken on a Chromebook. We encourage all parents to purchase an apple iPad with a keyboard or a laptop that runs windows. TSA will not be responsible for broken devices.

Plagiarism and/or cheating are serious offenses in which students will be issued a referral and sent to the administrative office. Plagiarism and/or cheating criteria include, but are not limited to, the use of another students answers or work, willingly allowing the use of your answers or work, and the use of programs such as Chat GPT or other AI programs.

## Literacy Lab:

Literacy Lab is an enrichment program for students recommended by their teacher. This program does have limited availability. The functionality/goals of the lab will be threefold: The first is to utilize effective research-based literacy methods to instruct students who are reading below grade level and bring them to on – or above – grade-level. The second goal is to become a vital literacy resource for fellow teachers, students, and parents. The third goal is to integrate cross-curricular learning strategies and disciplinary techniques to increase comprehension in the core subject areas so that our students not only enhance their reading and writing skills, but they relate literacy tools to improve their learning outcomes in different subjects. The lab is NOT designed to replace Discovery Therapies as DTI is able to identify and enhance therapeutic learning strategies for those learners that require more.

## Discovery Therapies:

Thomas Sumter Academy has partnered with Discovery Therapies, Inc. (DTI) as our primary referral source for students for whom the process of learning is harder than it should be. DTI is a non-profit learning development center that, in addition to tutoring services, offers interventions that address the underlying issues that can cause a student to struggle. These interventions include educational therapy, executive function coaching, and skill-based interventions. In addition to these fee-for-service interventions, they also offer a free initial consultation to explain the implications of psycho-educational evaluations on students' current learning challenges and how to deal with them. They also offer free workshops and newsletters for interested families. There is an Exceptional Child Scholarship Fund that can help offset the cost of DTI tuition and school tuition for eligible students. All DTI educational therapists are trained and licensed by the National Institute for Learning Development (NILD), which is endorsed by the International Dyslexia Association (IDA). Our goal is to give students the tools they need to become confident, independent, lifelong learners. If you have any questions about your child's progress or would like more information, please do not hesitate to contact them.

## Class Placement:

Consideration is given to the wishes of the parents in making such a request; however, the final decision on class placement is left with the Head of School.

## Summer Reading:

A summer reading program is in place on FACTS for students. Guidelines for each grade level are sent home each spring. Summer reading logs and projects are brought in the first week of school. Students not fulfilling their summer reading requirements must use their recess or break time to complete the missing work. Summer reading requirements for 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades are delineated in the summer packets. Accommodations are and will be made for students who enroll late in the summer.

## MIDDLE SCHOOL

Thomas Sumter Academy sets grades 6-8 apart into a Middle School to best serve the needs of students and their families during this key developmental period in a child's life.

All 8<sup>th</sup> grade students will receive high school credit for the completion of: Computer Applications, Physical Science, Physical Education, English I, and Algebra I.

Special electives are part of the Middle School curriculum; students will get to prioritize their choice of the elective they would like to take for the year. A special focus on English includes separate courses in literature and grammar for the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grades.

Students may elect to participate in various clubs and organizations designed to reflect the interests of students at this age.

## HIGH SCHOOL

TSA's High School consists of grades 9-12. TSA graduation standards meet or exceed South Carolina requirements for graduation, ensuring that TSA students meet all academic requirements to attend the university of their choice.

### THREE LEVELS OF RIGOR, GRADES 8-12

**College Preparatory**-designed for the college-bound student. The highest GPA weighting is 5.000 (10-Point Scale). This is a Thomas Sumter Academy standard, and all academics meet or exceed this requirement.

**Honors**-designed for students who have demonstrated superior achievement and ability. Honors courses require more rigor and coursework by adding depth and increasing the scope of our college preparatory classes, preparing students to take Dual Enrollment/Advanced Placement courses. The highest weighting for Honors classes is 5.500 (10-Point Scale).

**Student Placement**-Academic performance, teacher, guidance office, and administrative recommendation are criteria for placement in Honors classes. Students requesting placement into Honors classes must have recommendation from their teacher in each subject. Guidance and administration will then meet to discuss the request.

**Dual Enrollment/Advanced Placement**-designed for students who have demonstrated superior achievement, ability, and qualify through standards set by Central Carolina Technical College. These students wish to earn college credit in high school. The highest GPA weighting for DE/AP is 6.0 (10-Point Scale). **Thomas Sumter Academy has partnered with Central Carolina Technical College for these courses.**

Students may choose from many clubs and organizations to complement and round out their high school experience.

### Senior Dismissal

Any senior wishing to participate in senior dismissal must have approval and complete all necessary forms through the guidance office.

### Technology

Thomas Sumter Academy offers access to an individualized online learning curriculum. Each 5<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> grade student is required to have a personal device at school and charged every day. The device will need to be windows compatible. Take note that PSAT, SAT, and other standardized tests are now fully online tests. These tests were not designed to be taken on a Chromebook. We encourage all parents to purchase an apple iPad with a keyboard or a laptop that runs windows. TSA will not be responsible for broken devices.

Plagiarism and/or cheating are serious offenses in which students will be issued a referral and sent to the administrative office. Plagiarism and/or cheating criteria include, but are not limited to, the use of another students

answers or work, willingly allowing the use of your answers or work, and the use of programs such as Chat GPT or other AI programs. Smart phones are not permitted for classroom use.

#### IV. ACADEMICS

##### GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Twenty-four (24) units are required for graduation by South Carolina. TSA strives to hold its' students to the highest academic standards. Students will be encouraged to continually challenge themselves through vigorous coursework beyond the recommended 24 required units. TSA strongly encourages all seniors to take English and math courses during their senior year. All graduating seniors are required to provide the guidance office with no less than one college acceptance letter or proof of military enlistment by January 1 of their senior year.

English - 4 Units  
Mathematics - 4 Units  
Science – 3 Units  
Social Studies - 3 Units  
Foreign Language -2 units (must be of the same language)  
Fine Arts - 1 Unit  
Computer Science - 1 Unit  
Physical Education - 1 Unit  
Electives – 5 Units

A Thomas Sumter Academy Honor Diploma will be awarded to a student who satisfactorily completes **27** units of High School Courses as designated below. The student must also have a final cumulative GPA of a 4.0 on the South Carolina Universal Grading Policy. All graduating seniors are required to provide the guidance office with no less than one college acceptance letter or proof of military enlistment by January 1 of their senior year.

4 units English (at least 2 at Honors level or higher)  
4 units Math (at least 2 at Honors level or higher)  
4 units Science (at least 2 at Honors level)  
3 units Social Studies (at least 2 at Honors level)  
3 units of the same Foreign Language  
1 unit of Computer Science  
1 unit of Physical Education  
1 unit of Fine Arts  
1 Unit of Bible  
5 units Electives

Note for transfer students:

Every accommodation will be made to satisfy graduation requirements for those high school students who transfer to Thomas Sumter Academy during grades 9-12; however, some situations might require some classes being taken over the summer or online. Our elective courses will be academically challenging and relevant. The objective of all electives are to provide a venue for our students to have options within their schedule as well as maintaining the academic rigor and academic standards at Thomas Sumter Academy. All courses must be approved by the Head of School and Guidance Office before taking the course.

Valedictorian and Salutatorian:

The Valedictorian and Salutatorian will be students with the highest and second highest cumulative GPA. A student must attend TSA their entire junior and senior year to be eligible. All grading computations will be made using the SCUGP.

Silver Cup:

Silver Cups are awarded to 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade students with the highest and second highest cumulative GPA. A silver cup will also be awarded to the male and female student with the most improved GPA in grades 6-12 for the current school year.

## **GENERALS SPEAK**

The program Generals Speak is a part of Thomas Sumter Academy's curriculum to give our students the experience of public speaking in a very safe, encouraging environment. Here are the guidelines:

- Each student in grades 5, 8, and 12 will be required to give a brief speech in front of his/her respective classmates and peers.
- Each student must talk from 2 to 5 minutes, using the podium in the auditorium.
- The student may write his/her talk/speech out completely and read it or make notes and give the talk/speech from that.
- English teachers may choose to assist students with their speech and issue a grade. This is also a great opportunity to practice their public speaking. Each student will give a copy of their "Generals Speak" speech to their English teacher for approval on the Monday before the speech is given.
- Students are responsible for planning and/or writing their speech on their own. This will not be done in class or assigned for homework although guidance will be given through the English classes in 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grades.
- A schedule will be provided to the students outlining dates of the speeches.
- On the day the student gives his/her Generals Speak talk, he/she will dress up.
- Parents are welcome to attend Generals Speak on the day of their child's speech.
- Generals Speak topics are approved by the appropriate Division Head.

## **UPPER SCHOOL COLLEGE GUIDANCE PROGRAM**

Thomas Sumter Academy provides a comprehensive guidance program that helps prepare students and their families for college and life. TSA's Office of College Guidance offers the most current college resources and individual counseling for every Thomas Sumter family.

The goals of our college guidance program are the following:

- To help direct students, according to their fullest potential, on their best path to college admissions.
- To provide resources regarding college information, financial aid, and scholarship opportunities.
- To help parents and students choose the best college options.
- To offer guidance for our graduates as they prepare to enter their freshman year of college.

Thomas Sumter's strong core curriculum and high academic standards help ensure the ideal preparation for college for all TSA students. TSA's guidance counselor also assists TSA students in developing a personalized college admissions plan that will best meet the individual needs of each student and his/her family.

The college admissions process can be an exciting but stressful time for students and parents. The college guidance program at Thomas Sumter seeks to provide each family with the encouragement, guidance, and support they need so that every Thomas Sumter student may find and fulfill the purpose and plans God has for his/her life.

## **SCHEDULE CHANGES**

Upper School students have a two-week drop/add period at the start of each new year. Once the drop/add period has passed, students enrolled in a course are expected to remain enrolled and complete the program of study. The Head of School will consider any extenuating circumstances after initial discussions have been conducted between the individual student and Guidance Counselor.

Students dropping a CCTC course:

- Are required to enroll and complete a course or courses through the TSA Guidance Counselor.
- May not be permitted to enroll in additional dual enrollment courses through CCTC.

## **DUAL ENROLLMENT POLICY**

Dual enrollment (DE) through TSA and CCTC must receive approval through the Guidance Counselor and/or Head of School. Only Junior and Senior class students are eligible to apply and take DE courses. Barring any changes, SC tuition lottery provides these students the opportunity to take 4 DE courses per semester.

DE courses will only impact the students GPA when taken during the academic school year and must be approved by the Guidance Counselor and/or Head of School. This policy is implemented to ensure students have fair and equal opportunity to receive DE course credit and its' impacts on each students GPA.

## **GRADING AND EXAMS**

### **CLASS RANKING POLICY**

Thomas Sumter Academy follows the South Carolina Uniform Grading Policy (SCUGP). The SCUGP is utilized for each course that earns a Carnegie unit. The SCUGP includes weighted grades for honor, advanced placement, and dual enrollment courses. The SCUGP is used to calculate the grade point average (GPA) for each course that receives a Carnegie unit credit. Class rank is determined using the student's cumulative GPA, students are arranged from highest grade point average report with at least two decimal places that may not be rounded up. The class rank is calculated at the end of each year and includes all students that attend Thomas Sumter Academy during the school year.

The SCUGP groups classes into tiers of difficulty. TSA offers three of the tiers: college preparatory, honors, and dual enrollment. Each tier represents a 50-basis point (.5) increase over the lower tier. For example, in a college preparatory class, a 90 would earn 4.0; the same grade of 90 in an honors class would earn 4.5; and a 90 in a dual enrollment class would earn 5.0. Grades are averaged on a 4.0 scale. In addition to weight by rigor, the SCUGP also gives a greater weight for each additional point earned in the class. For example, a 90 in a college preparatory course earns a 4.0, while a 91 in the same class would earn a 4.10.

Thomas Sumter Academy's Letter Grade Scale for grades six through twelve is as follows:

A = 90-100    B = 80-89    C = 70-79    D = 60-69    F = 0-59

# South Carolina Uniform Grading Policy

## 10 Point Grading Scale

South Carolina Uniform Grading Scale Conversions				
Numerical Average	Letter Grade	College Prep Weighting	Honors Weighting	AP/IB/Dual Credit Weighting
100	A	5.000	5.500	6.000
99	A	4.900	5.400	5.900
98	A	4.800	5.300	5.800
97	A	4.700	5.200	5.700
96	A	4.600	5.100	5.600
95	A	4.500	5.000	5.500
94	A	4.400	4.900	5.400
93	A	4.300	4.800	5.300
92	A	4.200	4.700	5.200
91	A	4.100	4.600	5.100
90	A	4.000	4.500	5.000
89	B	3.900	4.400	4.900
88	B	3.800	4.300	4.800
87	B	3.700	4.200	4.700
86	B	3.600	4.100	4.600
85	B	3.500	4.000	4.500
84	B	3.400	3.900	4.400
83	B	3.300	3.800	4.300
82	B	3.200	3.700	4.200
81	B	3.100	3.600	4.100
80	B	3.000	3.500	4.000
79	C	2.900	3.400	3.900
78	C	2.800	3.300	3.800
77	C	2.700	3.200	3.700
76	C	2.600	3.100	3.600
75	C	2.500	3.000	3.500
74	C	2.400	2.900	3.400
73	C	2.300	2.800	3.300
72	C	2.200	2.700	3.200
71	C	2.100	2.600	3.100
70	C	2.000	2.500	3.000
69	D	1.900	2.400	2.900
68	D	1.800	2.300	2.800
67	D	1.700	2.200	2.700
66	D	1.600	2.100	2.600
65	D	1.500	2.000	2.500
64	D	1.400	1.900	2.400
63	D	1.300	1.800	2.300
62	D	1.200	1.700	2.200
61	D	1.100	1.600	2.100
60	D	1.000	1.500	2.000
59	F	0.900	1.400	1.900
58	F	0.800	1.300	1.800
57	F	0.700	1.200	1.700
56	F	0.600	1.100	1.600
55	F	0.500	1.000	1.500
54	F	0.400	0.900	1.400
53	F	0.300	0.800	1.300
52	F	0.200	0.700	1.200
51	F	0.100	0.600	1.100

### Exams

High school and middle school students take exams at the end of each semester in the following core classes: mathematics, English, science, social studies, and foreign language (High School students only). Middle School students take four core exams: mathematics, English, social studies, and science. 8<sup>th</sup> graders enrolled in High School level courses must follow the exam requirements for those courses.

Semester exams count for 20% of the semester grade. Students must take exams when scheduled by administration and must remain in the classroom during the full allotted exam time. Any student who serves an in-school or out-of-school suspension must take all semester exams.

Lower School students do not take semester exams.

### Exemptions

- All students should have experience preparing for and taking semester exams in order to adequately prepare them for their post-graduate studies. A student who exempts an exam can opt to take that exam, hoping to improve their semester average, with the understanding that the exam will not bring his/her grade down.
- Students in grades 6-8 will be required to take at least 1 exam per semester. The exam taken each semester must be in a different subject.

Exam exemptions are awarded according to the following guidelines:

- First Semester
  - Grades 6-12
    - Earn a 90 or above average in a class and remain in good standing.
    - Students in grades 6-8 will be required to take at least 1 exam per semester.
- Second Semester
  - Seniors:
    - Exams are given at the discretion of the teacher if the senior has at least a 75 average and remain in good standing.
  - Grades 6-11
    - Earn a 90 or above average in that class for the semester or for the year and remain in good standing.
    - Students in grades 6-8 will be required to take at least 1 exam per semester.

## **PROGRESS REPORTS/REPORT CARDS**

Report cards are issued each nine weeks for all students. K3-K5 students will receive hard copies. 1<sup>st</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade progress reports will be posted on FACTS. 1<sup>st</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade Report Cards will be posted along with hard copies being sent home. Teachers in grades 1-5 will have two offered parent/teacher conferences annually. In preschool, mid-year and end-of-the-year conferences are held with the parents to discuss academic progress. Progress reports for all students are posted on FACTS/SIS. Parents are strongly encouraged to check their child's grades on a regular basis. Kindergarten report cards are emailed and are not viewable in FACTS.

Thomas Sumter Academy has established an academic probation plan for our students in grades 6-12. Grades will be checked on both interim and quarterly release dates.

Academic Probation requirements will be as follows:

1. Students on academic probation will be identified and monitored.
2. It is the responsibility of each student to make up failed credits on their own time. Eligibility will be reassessed at the next Interim or Report Card.
3. TSA Student/Athlete Academic Standards:
  - a. A student will be deemed academically ineligible if he/she fails one course or does not maintain a cumulative "C" average for the grading period.
  - b. Academically ineligible students may not attend or participate in any team practices or activities.
  - c. The Head of School reserves the right to deviate from any TSA policy if the need arises due to special circumstances, situations, and/or family emergency.

## **POLICY COVERING MAKE-UP WORK**

A student who is absent is responsible for making up all missed assignments and course work in a timely fashion. Students must meet with their teachers on the day they return to school to arrange for all make-up work. The student has time equivalent to the length of the absence to complete and turn in all missed assignments without a grade penalty. If additional time is needed, it must be discussed and arranged by the student and teacher. Make-up tests will be appropriately and reasonably scheduled by the teacher or proxy.

If it is known that a student will be absent on a particular day, arrangements must be made with the teacher several days in advance, if possible, so that missed work can be sent with the child ahead of time and turned in upon returning from the absence. If a student knows he/she will be absent on a scheduled test day, he/she is expected to be prepared to make up that scheduled test on the day he/she returns. If health permits, the student is encouraged to complete assignments during his/her absence.

## **PROMOTION**

Every effort is made to help each student be academically successful at Thomas Sumter Academy. Communication among teachers, parents, and students is an on-going process. Parents must be proactive in staying informed of their child's grades. Conferences, interim grades, regular progress reports, quarterly grade reports, and on-line access to grades are tools for parents to use to ensure that adequate academic progress is being made.

Promotion for preschool students is discussed with the parents at the end-of-the-year conference. In grades 1-5, a student may be retained if they receive a year average of 58 or below in two courses or are reading below grade level.

Promotion in the Middle School is based on passing three of the four core classes. Reading on or above grade level is a critical benchmark for all students. This benchmark will be taken into consideration.

Promotion in the High School is determined by the necessary credits (Carnegie units) earned by a student. If a class is failed, a conference must be held with the parent, student, and guidance counselor to discuss remediation that must be taken for the student to progress to the next level.

The Head of School reserves the right to make the final decision concerning all student's promotion at all grade levels.

## **HONOR ROLLS**

At the end of each semester, two honor rolls are announced for all grades: Head of School Honors and Faculty Honors. Head of School Honors are awarded to all students with a 93 average or above in all subjects, and Faculty Honors are awarded to all students with an 85 or above average in all subjects. A Recognition Rally will be conducted for 1<sup>st</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade students at the end of the semester.

At the end of each semester, a list of those students in grades 6-12 who have earned Head of School Honors and Faculty Honors for the semester in all subjects will be announced. Students in grades 1-5 who have earned the Head of School and Faculty Honor Roll will be honored at awards day.

## **E-LEARNING**

E-learning is a very important part of the learning process in today's learning environment. However, our ability to conduct virtual e-learning is not designed to be a "fail safe" or fall back for a student or family. It is designed for medical and/or pandemic/natural disaster needs. Additionally, if prescribed Google meets guidelines are not being followed, the student will not be considered present, and will receive a "0" for all work for that day.

## **V. HEALTH CARE**

### **HEALTH REQUIREMENTS**

Thomas Sumter follows SC Laws which govern student health. SC law requires all vaccinations and records to be updated within the first 30-days of the school year. Vaccination records are also required to be updated on a periodic basis. When this occurs, TSA is required to obtain a copy for the student's permanent record. Immunization records and a birth certificate copy should be submitted at the time of application for all ages. Students in the preschool program will need to submit an updated immunization form within one month after their fifth birthday. If you are military, SC law requires your immunization records be on a SC Immunization Form. The base facility can make that transfer. A valid South Carolina Certificate of Immunization can be obtained from your county health department as well. A current physical examination and a copy of the student's birth certificate is also required upon enrollment. Students with a religious or medical exemption must obtain a waiver from the county health department.

### **STUDENT ILLNESS GUIDELINES**

It is very important that your child attend school regularly. However, if your child is sick, please keep him/her home. Your child must be fever free for twenty-four (24) hours without the use of fever reducing medication before returning to school. If for any reason your child is seriously injured at school, the child will be sent to the health office, and you will be notified immediately. A child with a temperature of 100.4° or higher will be sent home.

From time to time, students in any school may contract head lice and other communicable diseases. TSA will follow the guidelines of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention along with DHEC regarding these conditions. When needed, students who come to the Health Office will be quarantined and await the arrival of a parent or guardian.

### **MEDICATION**

It is mandatory that each child has a completed emergency card on file in the health office so that parents may be readily contacted in the event of an emergency. The classroom teacher, coaches, daycare director, and health office personnel will administer simple first aid for minor cuts and scrapes. Upon parent or guardian consent (indicated by a signature on the emergency contact card), health office attendants will also administer over-the-counter medication on an as-needed basis. If your child does not have an emergency card on file within three weeks after school has started, he/she will not be permitted to return to school until the card is on file.

Any additional medication that your child might require during the school day must be kept in its original container, with dispensing instructions and appropriate parent consent for dispensation. The medication will be stored under lock and key in the health office. Children are not allowed to keep medication with them during the school day.



The daycare staff, coaches, and other teachers have First Aid and CPR certification.

## **INSURANCE**

The school provides student accident insurance for injuries occurring during school activities. Parents can elect to extend coverage throughout the child's day for an additional fee. Please contact the front office for information and enrollment forms.

## **CHILD ABUSE**

It is the policy of Thomas Sumter Academy's Administration and Board of Trustees that any discovered or suspected child abuse will be immediately reported to the appropriate authorities. In order to ensure the safety of TSA students, the Board and the Head of School require all employees to pass a criminal background check before they are hired. All students are encouraged to report any type of abuse including verbal, sexual, and/or physical to a teacher, the guidance counselor, or the Head of School. As mandatory reporters, all employees are required to report any suspicion of child abuse to the Head of School for investigation.

## **VI. SCHOOL SAFETY**

### **SCHOOL SAFETY ACT OF 1997**

In June of 1997, the legislature passed SC Code §16-3-612, which requires that if a student commits an assault and battery that is not aggravated on school grounds or at a school-sponsored event, against any person affiliated with the school in an official capacity, the student is guilty of assault and battery on school personnel. The section defines school to include all public and private schools. The section states that the assault and battery against school personnel is a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, must be fined not more than one thousand dollars, or imprisoned not more than one year, or both. SC Code §59-63-370 has been added to require the Department of Juvenile Justice, the Department of Corrections, or the Department of Probation, Parole and Pardon Services when a student is assigned to it, to notify the senior administrator of the school in which the student is enrolled of a student's conviction of certain crimes, to provide notification to each teacher in whose class the student is enrolled of such convictions, and to provide for the inclusion of this information in the student's permanent record. Also, SC Code §59-63-390 has been added to require the senior administrator of each school to include a summary of the school crime report act and the provisions of SC Code §16-3-612 in the school's student handbook each year.

## **CAMPUS SAFETY**

All precautions are taken to keep our Generals safe. The following is a list of some specific safety measures in place on the Thomas Sumter Academy campus.

- All faculty and staff members including substitute teachers undergo a background check before being employed.
- Regularly scheduled drills are held for fire, earthquake, intruder, and tornado situations.
- A Security Officer has been hired and will be around campus on a regular basis.
- All gates but the "front gate" will be closed and locked from 8 AM – 1:50 PM daily.
- Emergency Action Plans (EAP) are reviewed and updated yearly.
- Students in grades 6-12 are not to use the bathrooms in the lower school building.
- The doors located by the lower school bathrooms are panic doors that only open from the inside.
- Students in grades 1-5 will always use the buddy system when going to the bathroom. Whether they are going from their classroom or a special, there will always be at least two students going together.
- All lower schoolteachers will walk their classes to and from the special classes and all programs involving students.
- All visitors are required to report to the main office immediately upon entering school property to have the visit approved and to receive a visitor's pass. All visitors must have a legitimate purpose for being on campus. Visiting students must comply with TSA dress code and all TSA rules. Visitors who don't get a visitor's pass will be asked to leave our campus.
- Thomas Sumter Academy is proud to be a tobacco/vape-free campus.
- TSA has installed security cameras around campus to enhance our safety protocols.
- Information will also be posted using Parent Alert on FACTS/SIS and recorded on the school's phone system if conditions allow.

## **EMERGENCY CLOSING OF SCHOOL**

Information regarding closing of school due to inclement weather or other conditions will be communicated through the following methods:

- WIS TV Broadcast
- Emails to families through FACTS, Parent Alert
- Posts on social media

In any case of an extended emergency closing of Thomas Sumter Academy, e-learning procedures and policies may go into effect.

## **LEGAL FAMILY SITUATIONS**

In order to ensure the safety of our students, Thomas Sumter Academy must have a copy of any legal document(s) pertaining to custody or legal situations if yours is a blended or separated family. We will abide by the document(s) to the letter of the law. If there is a legal change in family dynamics, especially those pertaining to who has permission to pick up a child, please notify the school immediately and submit the appropriate legal documents.

## **VII. STUDENT SERVICES**

### **LUNCH PROGRAM**

Thomas Sumter Cafeteria outsources their lunches from area restaurants. There are beverages and snacks for sale at lunch, daily. Lunch orders may be placed online through FACTS. Only K5 – 12<sup>th</sup> grade can order lunch on FACTS. In order to guarantee lunch for your child, please order 48 hours in advance. Refunds will not be given for any missed days such as sick days, field trips, or doctor's appointments. There will be a small selection of items for purchase should you or your child forget to order ahead, but we encourage everyone to order on time.

### **TRANSPORTATION**

Bus transportation to and from school is provided at a nominal cost. Please note that costs may also change due to an increase in fuel costs. All buses are driven by licensed adults. Buses pick up and drop off students at central locations within Sumter, Richland, and Kershaw counties. Parents interested in one-way transportation on a regular basis will be accommodated at half fare. Information and application forms are available in the front office.

Parents must complete a form available in the front office listing all people who might possibly pick up their child from the bus stop. Names may be added or deleted by notifying the front office. It is important that all bus riders are on time and conduct themselves in an orderly and respectful manner to the bus driver and everyone's safety. Riders that do not conduct themselves properly will be issued a referral and sent to the office. Misconduct can result in the loss of bus riding privileges for a time period or the remainder of the school year.

### **CARPOOL**

#### Morning Drop-Off

Morning drop-off for K3 – 5<sup>th</sup> grade begins at 7:40 a.m. at either the entrance to the daycare facility or the main school entrance. Early drop-off is available no earlier than 7:15 a.m. until 7:40 a.m. in the Lower School library (1<sup>st</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup>), K5 building for K5, and K3 – PK4 at the PK building front entrance for an additional fee; students who arrive prior to 7:40 a.m. must report to early drop-off and will remain there until 7:40 a.m. They will pay on a per day basis and will be billed through the business office. Students in grades 6-12 are to report to the gym if arriving on campus before 7:40 a.m. All drivers, please be aware of "entrance" and "exit" gates and use them appropriately.

The buses will drop off the middle and high school students at the back of campus. Cars are not permitted to drive around the buses. Those parents dropping their students off in the back are reminded that drop-off is no earlier than 7:40 AM. The school is not liable for any students on campus before the prescribed drop-off time. There will be a faculty/staff member on duty in the back parking lot for drop-off.

#### Lower School Afternoon Dismissal

Families who will be picking up children in Preschool (K3- K5) and/or grades 1-5 at 2:10 p.m. are asked to have their assigned number displayed on the driver's side of the windshield each afternoon. All PK3-5<sup>th</sup> grade parents will receive a carpool decal. K5 -5<sup>th</sup> grade parent pick up are to form two lines in the front parking lot. At 2:10 – 2:15 p.m., numbers are called using a walkie-talkie system, and students are escorted and loaded into their car at the side entrance of the Lower School building. Parents are asked not to come inside to pick up children. The carpool line

system must be used for safety reasons as well as to avoid delays. K3-K4 parents may take the immediate left after entering campus to reach the round-about where drop-off is conducted.

Students who ride the bus or attend TSA aftercare will be held and are escorted to their designated locations. They are supervised until they are loaded on the bus/van or picked up by the appropriate individual.

Students enrolled in TSA Daycare are also escorted to the aftercare program and supervised until properly handed over to the aftercare program coordinator.

Parents must communicate to their child's teacher if the student is varying his/her normal dismissal routine. Students will not be allowed to go to an alternate dismissal area unless the school or teacher has been properly notified by the parent.

Please note that TSA is not liable for any age students on campus after the prescribed pick-up time of 3:00pm. Students are not permitted to remain and wander on campus while waiting to attend another school event.

## **DRIVING ON CAMPUS**

Driving and parking on the TSA campus is a privilege, and must be safe for all; therefore, the speed limit on the TSA campus is 10 mph. Students and parents must always drive with extreme caution. There will be no horseplay on or around vehicles. Additionally, students who drive and park on campus must register each vehicle used and brought on campus. Parking applications and guidelines are available in the administrative office. Student parking stickers are required and may be purchased for \$10.

Students cannot go to their cars during the school day without permission from the administrative office. Athletes must put their athletic bags in their lockers in the locker room. The students must sign-out and then back in at the front office after receiving permission to do so. Students will not be allowed to drive themselves off campus to get lunch or run an errand during the school day.

Reckless driving on campus or directly off campus, or violation of any parking guideline may result in loss of driving and parking privileges for the entire school year. For safety purposes, students who drive to school will not be allowed to drive themselves off campus to get lunch or run an errand during the school day.

## **AFTER-CARE**

### **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

As our families experience an increasing need for quality after-school care for their children, an on-campus center is available for TSA students through 5<sup>th</sup> grade. You may reach TSA's Enrichment Program at 803-499-1264 for more information. Be sure to notify the school in writing if/when changes are made to items such as home address, contact number, carpool arrangements, emergency information, etc.

## **GENERAL GUIDELINES**

After School care will be open from 2:15 p.m. (at the end of our K3 program) until 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday during the school year. When school is closed, daycare is closed. There is an application fee of \$75.00 per family to enroll your child in TSA's Enrichment Program.

There will be no deduction for absent days or holidays. If you set up a weekly fee, your child becomes full-time, and you must pay whether your child is here or not. You must give a one-week notice before taking your child out of daycare. Daycare bills will be included in your monthly school statement from our Business Office. Daycare is charged on a weekly basis and billed for the current month; however, if your payment is not received by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the following month, a late fee will be charged.

Children will be encouraged to complete their homework, play outdoors daily, except during intense heat or inclement weather. Please dress your child appropriately for the weather each day. Administration reserves the right to disenroll students from this program due to failed payment or behavioral issues.

The safety of your child is our first concern. If your child will be absent, please notify the daycare. Children must have current medical and immunization records prior to enrollment and submit updated records in compliance with state laws. Your child will be released only to the people who are on your application; identification will be required. If someone not listed on your application is picking up your child, you must call ahead, or your child will not be allowed to leave. Pick-up for day care is at the back door.

## **LIBRARY**

Lower School students beginning with our K3 program attend scheduled times in the library each week where they are encouraged to check out books on the library loan system. Incentives and appropriate recognition will be provided for our students who meet and/or exceed the assigned requirement in order to encourage our children to read. Our upper school students are provided virtual access to the DISCUS library system. A fee will be placed on books that are not returned by the designed time.

## **FIELD TRIP GUIDELINES**

- All school sponsored field trips must be approved by the Head of School.
- A parent must acquire a background check no less than 2 weeks prior if he/she is going to chaperone any field trip that goes off campus. The parent will not have to get another background check if his/her child remains a student at Thomas Sumter Academy unless certain conditions warrant the school requesting another one.
- Lower School field trips are planned by teachers to accommodate the age of that grade. Therefore, due to safety issues, siblings will not be able to join those field trips. Please make plans accordingly.
- Field Trip pricing will be determined on a case-by-case basis.
- Parents are welcomed and encouraged to chaperone field trips. Chaperones are required to drive their own vehicle. Students must ride the bus provided unless permission is given by administration. There will be no field trips scheduled after May 9.

## **VIII. GENERAL RULES OF CONDUCT**

### **ATTENDANCE AND TARDIES**

#### **Absences:**

- Attendance is mandatory except in cases of illness or family emergency. Please contact the front office of any medical issues or family emergencies.
- If a student is tardy, parents who are dropping their students off will need to come in and sign their child in at the front office.
- Thomas Sumter recognizes that some illnesses do not require a doctor's care; therefore, a student is allowed five (5) sick/personal days verified by a note from a parent or guardian for the school year.
- An additional ten (10) days due to illness will be excused if the student is able to provide a note from a medical professional.
- Students must present an original excuse to the homeroom teacher, classroom teacher, or front office within five (5) days of their return to school, or the absence will not be excused.
  - An absence will be considered unexcused if no note is received.
  - Attendance in dual enrollment through the CCTC is based on CCTC attendance requirements.
- Student Athletes must attend no less than half of the school day to be eligible to participate in athletics.
- A student may receive 5 additional excused days due to military parental deployment orders. Proof of orders are to be emailed to the Head of School.
- Students in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades will be provided 2 days per school year to be excused for college visits. Documentation from the college/university must be provided to the attendance office for the days to be excused.

#### **Tardies:**

- Students arriving late to school must sign themselves in with the attendance secretary in the front office.
- High School students with 5 daily or classroom tardies will receive a referral and be sent to the office.

Administration will contact the parent of students that surpass the threshold of absences. Discipline may include, but is not limited to, detention, loss of exam exemptions, loss of grade level promotion, and negligence reported to the proper authorities.

### **BEHAVIOR AND DISCIPLINE CODE OF CONDUCT**

While attending Thomas Sumter Academy during regular hours or school-sponsored activities, students are expected to display moral and respectful Christian values.

1. Teachers are trained and instructed to manage their classrooms in a professional manner. Classroom teachers are permitted to assign recess detention, break detention, and/or silent lunch when necessary. If/when a student's behavior requires further attention, the child will receive a referral and sent to the Administrative Office. Administration will assign appropriate punishment for the infraction. The number of infractions accumulated will be taken into consideration while assigning punishment. When necessary, a student will be placed on formal probation and/or dismissed from TSA.
2. As a condition, rule, and policy of being accepted into Thomas Sumter Academy, whether as a new student or as a re-enrolling student, or to continue to be enrolled at Thomas Sumter Academy during any school year, the parent and student are hereby given notice, and agree to the rule that any on-campus or off-campus conduct which negatively affects the image, reputation and good name of Thomas Sumter Academy, shall be dealt with severely, including, but not limited to permanent dismissal. The offending act and punishment shall be at the sole discretion of the Administration. The offending acts shall include any acts which are crimes, offenses, civil wrongs, acts against personal property, acts of moral turpitude, acts showing a lack of conscious, negative or aggressive social media acts toward TSA, and or any other conduct or act which reflects negatively upon Thomas Sumter Academy and the student body in the sole opinion of Administration. This shall include any such conduct, or act, whether committed on campus or not, whether criminal charges or civil complaints are brought, or not, and whether or not the student is later convicted, or later exonerated.
3. Administration reserves the right to randomly search lockers, vehicles, pocketbooks, book bags, handbags, gym bags, vehicles, cell phones, person, and any other personal property of, or within control of, any student if it is deemed necessary for the protection and general safety of TSA students, faculty and staff members. By enrolling, the parent acknowledges and agrees to willingly consent to such random searches by the Administration of Thomas Sumter Academy. Any criminal violations of the law may be reported to local law enforcement.
4. TSA schoolhouse and grounds are not places for public displays of affection at any time.
5. TSA is an alcohol free, drug free, vape free, weapon free, and nicotine of any form free environment. Any student caught in possession, consumption, or transportation of these or other items in kind will receive disciplinary action up to dismissal. Random drug tests may be required at the student's expense and results of said test be shared with Administration.
6. Enforcement and interpretation of infractions and discipline are at the sole discretion of the Head of School.
7. In School Suspension (ISS) and Out of School Suspension (OSS) are at the discretion of Administration.
  - ISS requires students to serve the class day in an isolated location while completing all coursework for the day. Students cannot receive a grade higher than a 79 for their coursework done on that day.
  - OSS requires the student to remain off campus for the time determined by Administration. All work must be completed but cannot receive a grade higher than a 59. Students may not participate or attend any school sponsored event, club, activity, or athletic activity.
8. Thomas Sumter Academy will not tolerate offensive remarks, racial slurs, offensive or derogatory words or acts.
9. Thomas Sumter Academy does not tolerate bullying. Because bullying may take several forms, this handbook does not seek to completely quantify all behaviors. Bullying emerges from a power relationship among individuals, occurring when a student with more power intimidates a person with less power. Once bullying is confirmed, Administration will firmly address the infraction.
10. Thomas Sumter Academy seeks to maintain a learning and working environment free from harassment. Unwanted and unwelcomed actions or advances, requests, and other inappropriate conduct will not be tolerated.
11. Your priority at school is to learn. Avoid distractions that interfere with or are counter-intuitive to that mission.
12. Be in the assigned place with appropriate materials, ready to work at the designated time that class begins and ends.
13. Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself, and never intentionally harm another student.
14. Be kind and respectful to everyone, including other students, teachers, administrators, support staff, and visitors. This extends on and off-campus as a representative of Thomas Sumter Academy.
15. Follow individual teacher instructions, class rules, and expectations at all times.

Thomas Sumter Academy believes that all students should receive fair and consistent discipline when school rules are violated. The discipline code of Thomas Sumter Academy will be in effect on campus, at bus stops, on school

buses, and at all school-sponsored activities on and off campus. The school's jurisdiction will extend within sight and sound of the school building or beyond if the students' outside conduct affects the school and is detrimental to the best interest of the school.

\* Enforcement and interpretation of all behavior and discipline issued is at the discretion of the Head of School.\*

### **CELL PHONE / ELECTRONIC DEVICE**

In accordance with the Safe Schools Act (2006) and Mandatory Reporting procedures as specified in South Carolina Code of Laws 67-7-310 and 59-24-60, students that make threatening or demeaning remarks, post or share inappropriate photos, intentional disruption of school electronic media, downloading/uploading or installing unapproved programs, and other actions of this type through media devices will receive appropriate disciplinary action and may be turned in to the Sumter County Sheriff's Department.

Cell phones and other electronic devices may be brought on campus at your own risk. These items are only to be used during permitted times and spaces. The privilege of bringing a cell phone on campus can be revoked by Administration.

- Students in 8<sup>th</sup> grade and below are required to turn in their cell phones to their teacher at the beginning of each class period.
- Students will retrieve their cell phone from that teacher at the end of class or when dismissed by the office.
- Students in 9<sup>th</sup> –12<sup>th</sup> grades are allowed to have their cell phone on their person throughout the school day with the clear understanding that punishment will be issued for unauthorized use.
- Cell phones are not to be used during class for any reason.
- Cell phones may be used before and after school, between classes, and during breaks.
- Cell phones are to be off or on silent and remain in a pocket, book bag, or purse throughout all class periods. Teachers are instructed to confiscate cell phones when a student has it out during class (even to check the time) or attempts to use it. The student may retrieve their phone from the teacher at the end of the class period. If any additional offense occurs, the teacher will confiscate the phone and send it with a referral to the administrative office.

### **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

If/when TSA discovers sites or posts that involve the school community, Administration will review the occurrence and decide the appropriate course of action. All cases will be reviewed on their own merit. The most serious situations prohibited by TSA include, but are not limited to:

- Threats or demeaning communications about other students, faculty members, the school, or administration (this includes verbal as well as pictures or videos).
- Personal descriptive photos or communications related to school personnel, students, or actual policy. This includes facilities and anything of an embarrassing nature through any social media platform.
- Abusive or profane language.
- Implied or direct threats to the well-being of others.
- Unauthorized recordings.
- Negative and/or aggressive electronic communication or social media posts by students or parents may lead to student disenrollment.

Internet sites and social media posts are not private property and that their words and actions at these are part of public record. While we do not monitor off campus internet use, TSA reserves the right to protect itself and its members through disciplinary action for those that misuse technology and affect the communal wellbeing of TSA.

### **COMPUTER AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES REGULATIONS**

Thomas Sumter Academy offers the opportunity to use school computers and electronic devices for educational purposes only. The use of this network is controlled. Violation of these rules will result in disciplinary action.

- **INDIVIDUAL ACCOUNTS AND PASSWORDS:** Each student is given an individual account on the school network to give student access to specific resources. At the first of each year, each student is required to set a private password to secure this account. This account is specifically for the use of the designated student and no one else. Students should not disclose passwords to anyone. Usage is monitored through computer software.

- **LOG OFF:** Once finished using a computer, the user is required to log off so the next student may log on. Leaving a computer without logging off for any reason leaves the student responsible for any network abuse conducted under his/her sign-on.
- **MISUSE OF COMPUTER/ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT:** Use of TSA computer equipment and/or electronic devices for any purpose other than what it is specifically designated for is unacceptable. Rough handling of any equipment will not be tolerated. Students are to check their equipment to make sure there is no damage at the start of each class. If there is damage, the student should notify the teacher immediately. If the student does not notify the teacher immediately, the student is financially liable for replacement of the damaged equipment. No students should be on a computer or an electronic device anywhere on campus unless under the supervision of a faculty member. If a student is found on a computer without proper supervision, disciplinary action will occur.
- **INSTALLING SOFTWARE OR HARDWARE:** Students are not allowed to load any software on a school computer or electronic device without express permission from the system administrator. Students are allowed to access document and image files via a flash drive as long as the material is supporting the educational requirements of the student, and the teacher has instructed the student to make use of a flash drive.
- **VANDALISM:** Vandalism of computer equipment or an electronic device will result in cancellation of privileges and disciplinary action. Vandalism is defined as a deliberate or attempted act intended to harm or destroy data of any other user or altering the original state of any equipment. This includes, but is not limited to, the uploading or creation of computer viruses, or any other effort to interfere with another user on the system.
- **GAMES:** Educational games may be installed on the computers when the operating system is available. At times, students may be directed to utilize these games for designated educational purposes. Playing any of these games other than when directed by a teacher constitutes a misuse of school equipment and is not allowed; disciplinary action will result.

## **INTERNET ACCESS**

Thomas Sumter Academy gives students the opportunity to access the Internet through the school network. Although it is possible for a student to find undesirable Internet material inadvertently or unintentionally, TSA tries to minimize the occurrences of this through constant supervision and filtering software. TSA believes the benefit to students from access to the Internet exceeds any disadvantages. The following guidelines for Internet usage have been established by Thomas Sumter Academy:

- **PRIVILEGE:** The use of the Internet is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use will result in cancellation of those privileges. The system administrator and school administrators will determine whether an individual's use violates the standards of acceptable use set forth in the preceding paragraph, and their decision is final.
- **SOCIAL NETWORKING:** Although social networking through the internet sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. are popular activities for individuals in today's world, it is not a proper use of computer time at Thomas Sumter Academy due to the associated dangers and privacy concerns. The filtering software blocks these sites.
- **NETIQUETTE:** You are expected to abide by the generally accepted rules of network etiquette.
- **NO WARRANTIES:** The school makes no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, for the service it is providing. Thomas Sumter Academy will not be responsible for any damages you suffer. This includes loss of data resulting from delays, non-deliveries, or service interruptions caused by negligence, errors, or omissions. Use of any information obtained via the Internet is at your own risk. Thomas Sumter Academy specifically denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through its services.
- **SECURITY:** Security on any computer system is a high priority, especially when the system is involved in many uses. If you feel you can identify a security problem, you must notify the system administrator.

## **SUBSTANCE USE**

The Thomas Sumter community believes that students should be alcohol, drug, and nicotine free and actively supports programs and initiatives that aim to reduce risky behavior and unhealthy lifestyle choices. Any and all items of this nature are not permitted on campus or at any school-related event.

In addition to the school's disciplinary action, South Carolina and Sumter County laws specify actions that must be taken to both public and private schools if a student of any age is on school campus with illegal substances. In such a situation, the school is required to confiscate the illegal substances and bring the student immediately to the Head of School's office. The school will secure the evidence, and if necessary, the Sumter County Sheriff's Office will be notified. The student will be taken into custody by the Sumter County Sheriff's Office and detained at the Sheriff's headquarters. The parents of the student will be notified by both the school and by the Sheriff's Officer after the

appropriate reports have been filed, and the student has been processed into their system. Schools are required by law to follow these procedures and school officials who do not comply subject themselves to criminal penalties. The school is not permitted under current law to exercise its discretion.

## **DRESS STANDARDS**

Thomas Sumter Academy is a conservative Christian school. Students are expected to be neat and clean at all times. Students are required to reflect the gender of their birth while adhering to all dress codes and standards. Extreme or fad fashions in clothing and grooming do not meet the dress standards at Thomas Sumter Academy. Interpretation of acceptable attire and personal appearance is at the discretion of the Head of School. The dress code will be monitored throughout the year to determine any changes deemed necessary. Proper appearance is required on campus as well as off campus when representing TSA.

### Lower School

- 1<sup>st</sup>- 3<sup>rd</sup> grade

- Boys' hair must be well-groomed.
  - a. Remain off their eyebrows
  - b. No longer than the bottom of their ears
  - c. Off their collar
- Unusual hair colors and extreme contrasting colors are not permitted for all students.
- Girls and boys are to dress comfortably and appropriately for their daily activities.
- No bare skin is to be shown between pants and shirt or top. Conservative dress is required.
- Students are to wear appropriately sized clothing. This includes items that are overly short, tight, or baggy.
- When choosing shoes, keep in mind that students will play outside and use stairwells on a regular basis. Please keep young ladies' heels to a 1 inch or lower for safety purposes.
- Political apparel is not authorized to be worn at any time.
- Hats are not to be worn on campus.
- No visible body piercing (with the exception of earrings for girls) or tattoos are permitted.
- Appropriate clothing and shoes for PE is required.
- Chewing gum is not permitted.

- 4<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> grade

- Boys' hair must be well-groomed.
  - a. Remain off their eyebrows
  - b. No longer than the bottom of their ears
  - c. Off their collar
- Unusual hair colors and extreme contrasting colors are not permitted for all students.
- Girls and boys are to dress comfortably and appropriately for their daily activities.
- No bare skin is to be shown between pants and shirt or top. Conservative dress is required.
- Students are to wear appropriately sized clothing. This includes items that are overly short, tight, or baggy.
- When choosing shoes, keep in mind that students will play outside and use stairwells on a regular basis. Please keep young ladies' heels to a 1 inch or lower for safety purposes.
- Political apparel is not authorized to be worn at any time.
- Hats are not to be worn on campus.
- No visible body piercing (with the exception of earrings for girls) or tattoos are permitted.
- Appropriate clothing and shoes for PE is required.
- Spaghetti straps and halter style shirts are not permitted. No bare skin is to be shown between the shirt and pants.
- Skirts and shorts must be at least fingertip length.
- No athletic shorts or pants may be worn by 5<sup>th</sup> grade students starting second semester.
- Earbuds are not authorized to be worn on campus during the school day.
- Chewing gum is not permitted.



Beginning with the third grading period, fifth graders will make the transition to the Upper School dress code to prepare them for Middle School. During fourth quarter, consequences begin for being out of dress code.

- Shirts, sweatshirts, and hoodies must either be a solid color, have a TSA logo, or are imprinted with an appropriate design for TSA standards. Logos cannot depict any inappropriate material.

#### Upper School (6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades)

- Boys:

- Hair must be well-groomed.
  - a. Remain off their eyebrows
  - b. No longer than the bottom of their ears
  - c. Off their collar
- Unusual hair colors and extreme contrasting colors are not permitted for all students.
- Students are to wear appropriately sized clothing. This includes items that are overly short, tight, or baggy.
- Political apparel is not authorized to be worn at any time.
- No visible body piercing, or tattoos are permitted. Earrings are not permitted off campus while representing TSA.
- Appropriate clothing and shoes for PE is required.
- Shorts must be at least fingertip length. Frays, holes, and patches are not permitted.
- No athletic or jogger athletic style pants or shorts may be worn.
- Collared shirts are required Monday-Thursday and must remain tucked in all the way around.
- Dress pants, khakis, and blue jeans are permitted. Frays, holes, and patches are not permitted.
- Belts must be worn.
- Boys are to be clean shaven, and sideburns may not extend past the bottom of the ear.

- Girls:

- Unusual hair colors and extreme contrasting colors are not permitted for all students.
- No bare skin is to be shown between pants and shirt or top. Conservative dress is required.
- Students are to wear appropriately sized clothing. This includes items that are overly short, tight, or baggy.
- Political apparel is not authorized to be worn at any time.
- No visible body piercing (with the exception of earrings for girls) or tattoos are permitted.
- Appropriate clothing and shoes for PE is required.
- Spaghetti straps and halter style shirts are not permitted. No bare skin is to be shown between the shirt and pants.
- Skirts and shorts must be at least fingertip length. Frays, holes, and patches are not permitted.
- No athletic or jogger athletic style pants or shorts may be worn.
- Dress pants, khakis, and blue jeans are permitted. Frays, holes, and patches are not permitted.
- No pajama pants, leggings, jeggings, yoga pants, compression pants may be worn.
- No transparent blouses, low cut blouses, backless, or off the shoulder clothing may be worn.
- Sleeveless tops with at least a three-inch (3") shoulder strap are acceptable.
- Bra straps may not be seen with any garment.
- Nose piercings are not permitted.

- Boys and Girls:

- Generals may wear TSA, college, or Christian T-shirts/sweatshirts every Friday (unless it is a dress-up day).
- There will be no heavy chains or dog collar-style studded accessories.
- No jewelry of any kind may be worn by our athletes during athletic contests or practices unless approved by the coaches.
- No rubber or plastic flip-flops, bedroom shoes or slippers may be worn.
- Leather or fabric flip-flops cannot be worn on dress-up school days.
- Extreme fashions at TSA and are not allowed.
- Shirts, sweatshirts, and hoodies must either be a solid color, have a TSA logo, or are imprinted with an appropriate design for TSA standards. Logos cannot depict any inappropriate material.

- If a sweatshirt, sweater, or hoodie is worn, the clothing worn underneath must still meet dress code if the outer garment is removed. If the underneath garment does not meet dress code, then the outer garment may not be removed and must be worn at all times.
- T-shirts/sweatshirts from any other high school are not allowed.
- Earbuds are not authorized to be worn on campus during the school day.
- Chewing gum is not permitted.
- Hats are not permitted during the school day.

Understanding it is impossible to list all possible infractions, enforcement and interpretation of all behavior and discipline issued is at the discretion of the Head of School. Dress code and behavioral offenses will receive a referral and sent to the administrative office. If dress code issues cannot be resolved on campus, the parent will be contacted, and the student will be required to leave campus and return in code. Student will be held responsible for any course work missed.

Every Wednesday is a Dress Up Day and students are expected to dress appropriately.

- Our young ladies must wear nice slacks, dresses, or skirts and a nice top, no jeans, shorts, jean skirts, romper shorts or flip flops. Dresses must be at least fingertip length.
- Our young men must wear a button-down dress shirt. Young men may choose to wear a tie or sport jacket. No jeans, shorts, tennis shoes, or flip flops will be allowed.

Failure to meet this dress code will result in a referral.

## **TUESDAY DRESS DOWN DAY STANDARDS**

Purchasing “Shatter the Dress Code” pass via Shenanigans affords the following:

- Lower School students will have pajama day every Tuesday.
- 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade students are permitted to:
  - Girls may wear leggings/yoga pants with shirts that cover their backside.
  - All brands of t-shirts in good taste are permitted (no profanity, political, or inappropriate)
  - Fingertip length athletic shorts may be worn.
  - Sweats and joggers are permitted.
  - Students may untuck their shirts.

## **IX. PARENT AND TEACHER SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS**

### **PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION (PTO)**

The Thomas Sumter Academy PTO is an active organization and a valuable asset on “the Hill.” Volunteers spend many hours helping to make this school the best it can be. Volunteer duties vary from tutoring to fundraising to aiding teachers.

### **BOOSTER CLUB**

The TSA Booster Club is composed of parents, faculty, and friends of TSA. They are dedicated to helping provide the best athletic program possible on “the Hill.” Their numerous undertakings include home concessions stands, game programs, and monetary support of the Athletic Department. The revenue raised through their many fundraising efforts is used to better the athletic program with updated equipment, uniforms, and facility improvements.

## **X. STUDENT ACTIVITIES**

### **STUDENT COUNCIL**

The Student Council is an integral part of the student life of Thomas Sumter Academy in 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades. One of the main purposes of this organization is to provide opportunities for students to develop leadership skills.

Student Council officers have many responsibilities that require them to guide a class of thirty or more students to accomplish the goals set before them in a fun and orderly way.

The officers are responsible for planning activities that will help them raise the money needed to sponsor the prom their junior year. While this may not seem like a daunting task, having students work together to raise the necessary funds and then plan and execute an event for over one hundred people is a major undertaking. In addition to working toward this overall goal, the officers help plan and conduct Homecoming festivities, the annual “Spirit Week” activities, school dances and a school-wide drive to raise money.

Being elected to serve on the Student Council is an honor and privilege; however, most importantly, it is a great responsibility. These individuals need to possess the qualities of high integrity and honesty. The officers and their advisors put in many hours above the call of duty to ensure that the atmosphere of Thomas Sumter is one where school spirit and morale are high, and every student has the opportunity to answer the call to be one's best.

## **STUDENT CLUBS**

**NOTE:** Club offering may change from year to year. Additionally, we may institute/create a club that may not be in this list due to faculty/staff or student interest.

### Anchor Club

The Anchor Club at Thomas Sumter Academy is a service organization to the school and community. This club tries to generate fellowship and stimulate interest by having service projects and fundraisers throughout the school year. In Anchor Club, girls learn to plan, organize, execute, and accept responsibility. Any eleventh or twelfth grade girl may join. The Sumter Chapter of Pilot International sponsors the club.

### Art Club

The TSA Art Club is an opportunity for high school students to participate within the art community. Members demonstrate their artistic talent through participation in the Fall Festival, Christmas with the Arts, Prisma Health Tuomey tree decorating, the National Accessibility Art Show, Shenanigan's, and various fundraising opportunities for the art department.

### Bible Journaling

Bible Journaling is open to all Upper School Students. Students meet during their lunch period once a week to study His word and illustrate in their Bibles. We enjoy fellowship, food, and fun as we reflect on our devotions and spend time creating works of art in our special Journaling Bibles.

### Chess Club

The Chess Club welcomes students of all levels, whether they want to learn the basics, improve their skills, or compete against challenging opponents. Members are encouraged to play both at meetings and at home. The Chess Club competes in SCISA's annual chess tournament as well as in matches with other schools.

### Fellowship of Christian Athletes

The FCA at Thomas Sumter Academy welcomes students in grades six through twelve who participate in sports or who support athletic activities on "the Hill." The meetings begin with refreshments, prayer, praise, music, and a program. The programs are varied and may include skits, testimonies, movies, or games.

This organization gives TSA students a chance to encourage and be encouraged by fellow believers who share a desire to follow Jesus. The FCA assists in organizing TSA's chapel programs. Well-known speakers and singers, along with TSA's own talented students, present chapel programs that bring glory and honor to the name of Jesus in fresh and exciting ways. God is certainly at work through the young people who are leading and participating in this organization.

### First Priority

First Priority is a time to build fellowship with other students on our campus who are committed to reaching TSA and our community for Christ. First Priority meets 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of every month for lunch, devotion, music, and fun.

### Foreign Language Club

The Foreign Language Club is comprised of students currently or formerly enrolled in foreign language classes. Activities during the year are planned for enrichment. The faculty member teaching the Spanish classes is the advisor.

### National Junior Honor Society

Thomas Sumter Academy received a charter to organize a chapter of the National Junior Honor Society in the fall of 2012. This organization recognizes students in grades 7 and 8 who excel in the areas of scholarship, character, leadership and service. To be eligible for membership, the candidate must have been in attendance at the school the equivalent of one semester and have a cumulative scholastic average of at least a 90 or above. Candidates are further

evaluated on the basis of service, leadership, and character. Final selection is made by a faculty council. Student members are required to provide 25 hours of individual service each school year as well as participate in a chapter service project.

If a member fails to maintain Society standards, the student is informed in writing of the nature of the violation and given a specific amount of time to make the correction necessary to regain the trust imparted on the member. If the student does not make the improvement in the specified time, he or she is then dismissed and is ineligible for future membership.

Any NJHS member who is suspended for any reason will be dismissed from the Honor Society for that year but will be eligible to reapply the following year.

### National Honor Society

The National Honor Society of Thomas Sumter Academy is an organization that promotes appropriate recognition for students who demonstrate outstanding accomplishments in the areas of scholarship, character, leadership, and service. Membership is an honor and a commitment.

To be eligible for membership, the candidate must be a sophomore or junior, have attended the school the equivalent of one semester, and have a cumulative scholastic average of at least a 90 or above. This is done by taking each student's cumulative average, using all high school credits including high school credits earned in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, of core classes (English, math, science, history, and foreign language). This cumulative average is determined by adding a point to the average if it is an honor's class and 2 points to the average if it is a Dual Enrollment (DE) class. This process is generally done at the end of the first semester of each school year prior to the induction ceremony that normally takes place in February/March. Candidates are further evaluated based on service, leadership, and character. Final selection is made by a faculty council.

If a member fails to maintain Society standards, the student is informed in writing of the nature of the violation and given a specific amount of time to make the correction necessary to regain the trust imparted on the member. If the student does not make the improvement in the specified time, he or she is then dismissed and is ineligible for future membership. It is up to the student to meet and/or exceed all academic and character standards. If there is any question regarding grade averages or GPAs, the STUDENT must contact the Guidance Counselor and the NHS Advisor for clarification.

Any NHS member who is suspended for any reason will be dismissed from the Honor Society for that year but will be eligible to reapply the following year.

The TSA Chapter undertakes various service projects in the school and the community each year. In addition to the school and community projects, first year members are required to complete 25 hours of individual service annually and all other members are required to complete 15 hours of service.

### Chapel

Chapel is provided for 1<sup>st</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade students every Thursday. During this service there is praise and worship along with a speaker. For our middle and high school there are weekly chapels provided. These chapels may be inclusive of special events such as Veteran's Day, Prom Promise, etc.

### **Homecoming**

1. Students must have a 3.0 overall GPA or higher to be considered for the court.
2. Students must remain in good disciplinary standing.
3. Class meetings will be held in 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades to take the following steps:
  - a. 9<sup>th</sup> Grade
    - i. All students in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade will meet and nominate male and female class representatives.
    - ii. That collection of class representatives will then be voted on by their classmates. The male and female student receiving the highest number of votes will serve as the 9<sup>th</sup> grade class representatives for Homecoming.
  - b. 10<sup>th</sup> Grade
    - i. All students in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade will meet and nominate male and female class representatives.
    - ii. That collection of class representatives will then be voted on by their classmates. The male and female student receiving the highest number of votes will serve as the 10<sup>th</sup> grade class representatives for Homecoming.
  - c. 11<sup>th</sup> Grade

- i. All students in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade will meet and nominate male and female class representatives.
- ii. That collection of class representatives will then be voted on by their classmates. The male and female student receiving the highest number of votes will serve as the 11<sup>th</sup> grade class representatives for Homecoming.
- d. 12<sup>th</sup> Grade
  - i. Senior football players will select a senior female TSA student as a running mate for the Homecoming Court.
  - ii. All students in 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades will then vote for the Homecoming Queen.
  - iii. The senior TSA female that receives the highest number of votes will be crowned Homecoming Queen, and her senior football sponsor will be named the King.
  - iv. In the event there are less than 5 senior football players to select senior female TSA running mates, administration will provide the senior class student body with the opportunity to vote on additional female Homecoming Court members. The total number of senior female TSA Homecoming court members shall not be less than 5. These students will be added to the voting process for Homecoming Queen. The additional female Homecoming Court members will select a TSA junior football player as their sponsor.
- 4. The Homecoming Court will be introduced during the Homecoming Assembly and at half-time of the Homecoming Football game.

## **PUBLICATIONS/YEARBOOK**

### Yearbook

TSA's yearbook, *The General*, is published each spring by the Upper School yearbook staff. *The General* recaptures the significant events of the year and provides an accurate record of all aspects of life at Thomas Sumter Academy.

The staff selects the theme of the yearbook and strives to provide a student-oriented compilation of memories. Members of *The General* staff hone skills in the areas of photography, composition, layout, and computer design/graphics. Paid advertising, school portrait sales, and yearbook purchases finance *The General*.

## **FINE ARTS DEPARTMENT**

In order to develop and nurture aesthetic potential, and to enhance learning by activities that require both right and left-brain coordination, a complete fine arts program is available and is conducted in a modern facility containing a large music rehearsal room and an oak-floored, mirrored dance studio. In addition, an auditorium with curtained stage, theatrical lighting, and seating for 328 is located in the main building of the campus. TSA students have won state and national awards in the areas of music and drama and have traveled nationally and abroad for performances. Some fine arts classes may have a nominal fee for supplies, and offerings may change from year to year.

### Choral Music:

High School students audition for chorus, which is known as General Sound. The students perform throughout the year and may culminate in the annual spring concert in May. This active group may participate in many community affairs and is a tremendous asset to TSA. Chorus is an elective.

### Middle School Theatre:

In middle school theatre, students get used to being comfortable on the stage. They will learn the basics of theatre such as vocabulary, techniques, and history. Students will stage a middle school production and have the opportunity to audition for smaller roles in upper school productions. Theatre is an opportunity to develop public speaking skills, empathy, and relationship building skills. In middle school theatre, students will get to see the whole picture of what goes into getting a play from page to stage all while having fun and gaining confidence.

### Upper School Theatre:

Along with learning the basics of theatre such as vocabulary and history, upper school students will get an in-depth look into the art of Theatre. They will develop acting skills, study plays, and explore the importance of theatre throughout history as a reflection of the world around it. Students will have the opportunity to participate in school productions as well as the SCISA drama festival in the fall. Theatre is an opportunity to develop public speaking and relationship building skills along with empathy, confidence, and teamwork. In upper school theatre, students will dig

deep into what makes theatre a significant art and develop as actors and tech crew preparing them for further involvement in their community and college.

### Visual Arts

Art training on “the Hill” encompasses more than producing art. Students gain knowledge and skills in the areas of art history, aesthetic awareness, and art criticism. Visual arts encourage the development of cognitive, higher order thinking, and problem-solving skills. Students gain these skills in art classes by learning to perceive, conceptualize, and produce art.

Art helps lower school children develop their ability to think in visual and verbal terms. They attend art classes on a weekly basis throughout the school year. Middle school students may spend a year exploring a variety of artists and media to expand their visual language and technical skills.

Upper School students are offered year-long art courses that encompass a wide array of opportunities to examine various aspects of the arts that challenge the ability levels of each individual student.

Student artwork is displayed throughout the TSA campus, the community, and media sources. Students’ artwork is often selected for entry into various contests and exhibitions. TSA artists are also encouraged to attend local art showings and museum exhibits. The primary goal, however, of the Visual Arts department is to produce students who can think, interpret, and reflect upon what they have learned.

### Dance

TSA is one of the few schools in the Southeast boasting an in-house dance program held in a modern dance facility and taught by professional dance instructors. Children in K5-12<sup>th</sup> grade receive dance instruction in the areas of creative dance, tap, ballet, Pointe, jazz, modern, and improvisation. Group lessons are offered during the regular school day as a part of TSA’s Fine Arts curriculum. Students in grades nine through twelve may elect to take dance for a fine arts or physical education credit toward graduation. These classes meet on a daily basis and are for the most serious of TSA’s many talented students. A dance recital is presented by all Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade dance students at year’s end with smaller performances scheduled throughout the year on and off campus.

## **XI. ATHLETICS**

TSA’s athletic program is an integral part of the Academy’s effort to develop well-rounded students. Athletics play a big part in the school’s overall pride and spirit. All students are encouraged to participate in athletic events either as a participant or a spectator. A qualified coaching staff is dedicated to teaching the fundamentals for success on and off the athletic fields. TSA students are not charged admission to on-campus regular season events.

The following four requirements must be met before any athlete can participate or play in a game:

- Complete and submit all SCISA required forms referenced in the SCISA Bluebook.
- Meet SCISA eligibility rules.
- Sign and Return the Student and Parent Code of Conduct Forms

Thomas Sumter Academy offers a variety of athletic teams in order to ensure that each and every Thomas Sumter Academy student has an opportunity to participate in our Athletic Program. The following is a list of sports that are offered at TSA throughout the year.

### **ATHLETIC TEAMS (All teams and team levels are subject to change)**

- Fall Teams:
  - Football: grades six through twelve (Middle School, JV, Varsity)
  - Volleyball: grades five through twelve (“B” Team, JV, Varsity)
  - Girls Tennis: grades seven through twelve (V)
  - Cross Country: grades six through twelve (JV, Varsity)
  - Cheerleading: grades six through twelve (Middle School, and Varsity)
- Winter Teams:
  - Boys Basketball: grades five through twelve (B-team, JV, Varsity)
  - Girls Basketball: grades five through twelve (B-team, JV, Varsity)
  - Cheerleading: grades six through twelve (Middle School, JV, and Varsity) - TBA
  - Youth Basketball: grades pK4 through sixth
  - Sporting Clays: grades six through twelve (Varsity)
  - Girls Bowling: grades six through twelve (Varsity)

- Boys Bowling: grades six through twelve (Varsity)
- Wrestling - TBA
- Archery: grades six through twelve (Varsity)
- Spring Teams:
  - Archery: grades six through twelve (Varsity)
  - Baseball: grades six through twelve (JV, Varsity)
  - Softball: grades 5<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> (B-Team); grades six through twelve (JV, Varsity)
  - Golf: grades six through twelve (Varsity) -Based on interest
  - Soccer: grades six through twelve (Varsity) – TBA
  - Track: grades six through twelve (JV, Varsity)

If your child is interested in participating in athletics at Thomas Sumter Academy, please contact our Athletic Department.

#### Strength & Conditioning Program

Strength and conditioning classes have been established for all TSA students to be able to lift weights and participate in speed and agility exercises. TSA PE courses will also provide similar training. Special attention is given to each age level starting with middle school. TSA puts a strong emphasis on taking athletes and making them stronger, faster, and fit.

#### **XII. POLICY STATEMENT REGARDING COMMUNICABLE DISEASES, INCLUDING COVID 19**

In consideration of a student, being admitted into Thomas Sumter Academy, and in further consideration of allowing the student to be enrolled in and attend Thomas Sumter Academy, and for the student to attend and participate in school-related events and any activities connected with the school, the undersigned Parents and Student, understand, acknowledge, appreciate and agree to the Academy's Policy Statement Regarding Communicable Diseases, including COVID 19, as follows:

1. I/We as student, and parents, understand that enrollment and attendance at Thomas Sumter Academy includes the possible exposure to, and illness from, various infectious communicable diseases, now known to science, and which may appear in the future, including, but not limited to, potentially fatal diseases such as : MRSA (Staff Infection), influenza, and COVID 19.
2. I/We, as student and as parent(s) of the student attending Thomas Sumter Academy hereby knowingly and freely assume all such risks of exposure and illness, at the school and at any school function, both known and unknown, now and in the future, even if arising from any alleged negligence of Thomas Sumter Academy or others.
3. I/We, as parents of the student, do assume full responsibility for my/my child's enrollment and attendance at Thomas Sumter Academy and for his/her safety from infection by communicable infectious diseases arising out of his/her attendance at school and participation in any school sponsored activities.
4. I/We, as parents of the student, hereby agree and promise that I will notify the school immediately and I will NOT send my child to school in the event that I learn or reasonably suspect that my child has been exposed to any person with a communicable infectious disease, requiring testing or quarantine, even if my child does not display any outward signs or symptoms of infection.
5. I/We, as parents of the student, also hereby agree and promise that I/We will NOT send the student to school if I know, or by the exercise of reasonable diligence and due care should know (for example by the child having fever, cough, sore throat, etc.) that my child may have contracted and be carrying a communicable infectious disease capable of infecting others.
6. I/We, Parents and Student, hereby willingly agree to comply with all safety protocol established and required by Thomas Sumter Academy, such as: use of face masks, social distancing, use of hand sanitizer, hand-washing requirements, and all other reasonable protective measures as may be recommended by health care officials or recommended or required by state or federal governmental agencies, and adopted by the Academy. That such compliance by parent and student is considered a part of the terms and conditions for enrollment for the protection of students, parents, and others against communicable infectious diseases.

7. I/We, as Parents and Students, willingly agree that if, at any time, I am present at Thomas Sumter Academy or at a school function of Thomas Sumter Academy, at any place and time, and I observe any unusual, dangerous, or significant hazardous activities by any student or adult, or if I observe any disregard of the Academy's infectious disease safety precautions, I will immediately remove myself from the location of such, and I will bring such activity to the attention of an official of Thomas Sumter Academy.
8. I/We, as Parents and Students, for myself, and on behalf of my heirs, assigns, personal representatives, and next of kin, do hereby release and agree to defend, indemnify and hold harmless, to the fullest extent allowed by law, Thomas Sumter Academy and all employees of Thomas Sumter Academy, and all officers, officials, agents, board members, other students, participants, sponsoring agencies, individual sponsors, advisors, and if applicable, any owners and lessors of premises used to conduct any events, with respect to any and all illness, disability, death, or loss or damage to person or property, whether arising from the alleged negligence of the above described released persons/organizations.
9. I/We, as Parents and Students, fully understand that I/We have the right to consult with my child's physician before admission into Thomas Sumter Academy regarding the precautions used by the Academy, and that I/We should direct any questions regarding those precautions to the admissions staff of the Academy that I/We may have before enrolling into Thomas Sumter Academy, concerning the terms and conditions of the Academy's ***Policy Statement Regarding Communicable Diseases Including COVID 19***, I/We understand and agree that I/We may give up substantial rights by ratifying this Policy, however, I/We hereby agree to this Policy freely and voluntarily, without any inducement, other than stated above.
10. As Parent or Guardian of the above student, with legal responsibility for this student, the said Parent or Guardian certifies that he/she has read and explained the provisions of this ***Policy Statement Regarding Communicable Diseases Including COVID 19*** to my child/ward, including explaining the risks of his/her presence and attendance at Thomas Sumter Academy and all school activities, and the student's personal responsibilities for adhering strictly to the rules and regulations established by Thomas Sumter Academy, for protection against contracting communicable infectious diseases, including COVID 19.
11. As Parent or Guardian of the student, I/We hereby further verify that I have explained this ***Policy Statement Regarding Communicable Diseases Including COVID 19*** to my spouse/the child's other parent and verify that my child/ward, and any non-signing parent understands and accepts these risks and these responsibilities. I agree on behalf of the student, myself, my spouse, and/or for my child's other parent, do hereby release and agree to indemnify and hold harmless Thomas Sumter Academy and all other persons, organizations or entities named or unnamed, as to any and all liability for injury or death incident to my child's/ward's presence or participation in any such school activities as provided above.

**XIII. MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING AND ACCEPTANCE OF TERMS OF ADMISSION INTO  
THOMAS SUMTER ACADEMY  
2023 - 2024**

**WE, the undersigned, as enrolling/re-enrolling student and as applying/re-applying parent, by our signatures below, hereby state and declare that we have read and understand and accept all of the rules, regulations, policies, guidelines, stipulations, punishments, and consequences of enrollment into Thomas Sumter Academy, as relating to academics, attendance, behavior, conduct, dress code, classes, fund raising, sports, school activities, fees, tuition, behavior, and conduct outside the school setting, and all other matters generally applicable to the student/parent/school relationship, as outlined in the Thomas Sumter Academy Student Handbook.**

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Signature of Student

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Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian

Date: \_\_\_\_\_