



# St. Michael Catholic School

Established 1877

208 McLeod St, Cuero, Texas 77954

Phone: 361-277-3854 | Web: [www.stmschoolcuero.org](http://www.stmschoolcuero.org)

Principal: Mrs. Jennifer Saenz | Pastor: Rev. Jacob Mendoza

*The Mission of St. Michael's Catholic School is to know as Jesus knows, to love as Jesus loves, and to serve as Jesus serves.*

## **Family Handbook**

*Revised 6-2021*

### **PREFACE**

This handbook is presented to the parents and students of St. Michael's Catholic School in order that they become acquainted with the school, its goals, ideals, policies, and regulations. It is the sincere wish of the school administration that parents and students become familiar with the ideals of Catholic education and thus cooperate more closely with the teaching staff. In order to operate the school effectively, this cooperation is necessary. Only when the home and school are linked together will progress be manifested.

We at St. Michael's Catholic School consider it a privilege to work with parents in the education of children, because we understand that, as your children's primary educators, you have decided to share that responsibility with us. It is your right and duty to become the primary role models for the development of your children's lives – physical, spiritual, emotional, moral, and psychological. Your choice of St. Michael's Catholic School involves a commitment and exhibits a concern for helping your children to recognize God as the greatest good in their lives.

May these pages bring a deeper understanding of our purpose and may the spirit of good will and cooperation, which is part of St. Michael's Catholic School, continue to bring God's blessing on all. Together let us pray that God, who has begun this good work in us, may carry it through to completion.

### **RIGHT TO AMEND**

St. Michael's Catholic School reserves the right to amend this handbook. Notice of amendment will be sent via letter to the families, the family newsletter and/or email.

### **MISSION OF ST. MICHAEL'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL**

*The mission of St. Michael's Catholic School is to know as Jesus knows, to love as Jesus loves, and to serve as Jesus serves.*

### **PHILOSOPHY OF ST. MICHAEL'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL**

*St. Michael's Catholic School is dedicated to helping each child realize his/her full potential. We are committed to each child's total education: spiritual, intellectual, physical, emotional and social. We strive to instill Christian values so that each student becomes a force of good in God's world. Our educational program leads, encourages and aids each student*

*to develop his/her unique abilities. We respect the distinct attributes of each student. By providing an atmosphere of living and learning in the light of faith, we encourage each individual to become a whole person.*

## **VISION**

*The vision of St. Michael's Catholic School is to develop future leaders who will draw on their faith as they make decisions for the community, nation, and the world.*

## **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

- (1) St. Michael's Catholic School's primary goal is the continued formation of the Christian person. To achieve this goal, we have the following objectives:
  - Students will develop an awareness of Christ in self and in others.
  - Students will develop Christian values and attitudes.
  - Students will increase their knowledge of and respect for the teachings of Christ.
  
- (2) Students of St. Michael's Catholic School will have the opportunity to acquire knowledge and skills for continued educational development.
  - Students will accept responsibility for the acquisition and use of knowledge.
  - Students will have opportunities to meet with success and a sense of achievement in what he/she does, thus developing a positive self-concept.
  - Students will learn to appreciate the richness and variety of our cultural heritage.
  
- (3) Students of St. Michael's Catholic School will attain the highest possible level of physical, emotional and social growth.
  - Students will strive for and maintain physical well-being.
  - Students will demonstrate concern toward one's self and others.
  - Students will accept and respect the uniqueness of each person.

## **HISTORY OF ST. MICHAEL'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL**

St. Michael's Catholic School was established in 1877 in a building at the rear of the church. Originally, the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word of San Antonio staffed the school; however, in 1884 the Sisters of Mercy from New Orleans began to teach at the school. During the first two decades of the school's existence, the enrollment ranged between 40 and 85 students annually. The Sisters of Divine Providence of San Antonio replaced the earlier nuns in 1897, and remained for ten years. During that time, enrollment was as high as 110 students.

In 1908, the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word of San Antonio returned to St. Michael's to teach all grades, including high school, in the original building. They stayed until 1916, and usually their number included three academic teachers, a music teacher, and a housekeeper. During this time the school awarded degrees in music and high school certificates. Students also studied German, and some boarded at the school in the sisters' residence.

In 1909, the church acquired additional property across from the church, and the school was moved to the Old Baker Home on that property. In 1912, the Old Baker Home was moved across McLeod (then Depot Street) to make way for the first permanent school building, a two-story structure with three classrooms and a wide hall on the ground floor and an

auditorium with a kitchen on the upper floor. The hall served a number of purposes, and mass was held there during the construction of the present church. The Old Baker Home served exclusively as the convent.

In 1916, the Sisters of Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament of Victoria came to the school. In 1927, St. Michael's Catholic School graduated its last high school student, and in 1929, the high school was closed.

In 1955 a new school building was constructed on the site of the razed Baker House. It was a concrete, brick, and glass structure in that it took its design from the international style pioneered in the first quarter of the century by European and American architects. It had four classrooms, a library, office, and a convent upstairs. The building was doubled in 1966, and all the classrooms were air-conditioned.

In 1953, the first lay teacher was hired, and by 1984 two sisters worked with eight lay teachers and the first lay principal. At this time, the first Kindergarten class was opened. In 1996, the Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament ceased leading and teaching at St. Michael's. Since then, the school's faculty and staff have been laypersons. In 1999 the school added pre-kindergarten for three and four year olds. In 2002, the school's Advisory Council submitted a written five-year strategic plan that highlighted future growth and improvements to the school. A Spanish program was also implemented in 2002. In March 2003, the school purchased a 23-passenger school bus with grant funds. Grant funds provided a new playground structure in 2008. All classrooms were wired for Internet access in the summer of 2008. A new roof was added in 2010. Renovations to the library, offices, four classrooms, and the hallway were made in the summer of 2012. Twenty iPads, interactive whiteboards for each classroom, and 14 iMac computers were purchased during the 2012 – 2013 school year. Plans were formulated during the 2013-2014 school year to renovate the gym area, build six additional classrooms and an additional kitchen. Ten additional iPads and 22 additional iMac computers were purchased. In the summer of 2014, the outside doors in the main building were replaced and security doors were added to the front of the building. The newly built gym, cafeteria and Early Childhood classrooms opened in August 2015. Floors in the main building were resurfaced during the summer of 2015. The Administration Office that holds the school secretary and the principal is housed in the main building. A computer lab with additional iPads is housed in the main school building.

The St. Michael's School Advisory Council developed an updated comprehensive plan for growth and improvement to the school in the fall of 2019.

Today, St. Michael's Catholic School offers instruction in grades PreK3 through 6<sup>th</sup> Grades. The school has a lay principal, a faculty of ten, and a support staff of six. The school offers extra-curricular activities that include Sports, Student Council and Choir. All students in 3<sup>rd</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> grades participate in the St. Michael's Catholic School Children's Choir that performs at weekly school Masses and once a month for the Sunday Children's Mass as well as other special performances throughout the year including the Annual Christmas Pageant. Students in 1<sup>st</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> grades participate in Private School Interscholastic Association (PSIA). The school holds a Science Fair that is open to all students. Students participate in the Mass each Wednesday by reading, altar serving, and caring gifts. Each week the students lead the Rosary. During Lent, the students lead the Stations of the Cross. All students are involved in service projects for the community.

### **LOCAL ORGANIZATION**

St. Michael's Catholic School is part of St. Michael's Parish, which is under the authority of the Catholic Diocese of Victoria.

### **The Diocesan Bishop**

As chief representative of the Church's teaching authority, the Diocesan Bishop is juridical head of the school system. His is the ultimate responsibility for articulating the faith and educational policies. He delegates ordinary oversight of the Catholic School System to the Superintendent of Schools.

### **The Superintendent of Schools**

The Superintendent of Schools is the chief administrative officer of the Catholic schools in the Diocese. The Superintendent of Schools is responsible to the Diocesan Bishop. It is the duty of the Superintendent of Schools to coordinate all school programs and to represent the diocesan school system in dealing with state and regional educational offices.

### **The Pastor**

The Pastor is the ex-officio chief administrative officer of the parish school. The Pastor serves as spiritual leader of the school community. The Pastor, in consultation with the local School Advisory Council, has final approval over actions taken by the local School Advisory Council.

### **The Principal**

The Principal as administrator of the school is responsible for the implementation of council policy, diocesan policy, and governmental requirements. As the educational leader of the school, the principal has full administrative responsibility for carrying out the instructional program. The principal also acts as the executive officer of the local School Advisory Council.

### **The School Advisory Council**

The local School Advisory Council provides advice and direction to the pastor and principal in aspects of the local school including planning, policy formulation, finances and public relations. All policies and significant actions of the local school council shall need approval of the pastor and must be in accord with diocesan policy.

### **The Home and School Association (HSA)**

The purpose of the St. Michael's Catholic School Home and School Association is to pursue ideal Christian values and high educational standards, foster unity, cooperation and understanding between parents and teachers, promote a cooperative Christian spirit among parish, school and community, and provide financial assistance to the school.

### **NONDISCRIMINATORY POLICY**

St. Michael's Catholic School admits students of any race, religion, national or ethnic origin, and physical disabilities to the extent that the school can serve the student to all rights, privileges, programs and activities made available at St. Michael's School. The school does not discriminate in the administration of its educational policies or other programs.

Additionally, in compliance with Title IX of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, no person in St. Michael's Catholic School shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, or be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity except permitted under said Title IX.

### **ACCREDITATION**

In accordance with the decision of the Roman Catholic Bishops of the State of Texas, St. Michael's Catholic School is fully accredited by the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops Education Department (TCCBED). Texas Education Department (TEA) recognizes St. Michael's Catholic School as a fully accredited PreK 3 through 6<sup>th</sup> Grade school.

## **PRINCIPAL'S AUTHORITY**

In accordance with the school's philosophy and values and in situations where policies and procedures have not been established, the principal has the authority to determine and invoke actions or disciplinary consequences regarding students, non-students and parents/guardians. The principal has the authority to:

1. Amend, revise or change school practices, procedures, regulations and other guidelines. Changes are communicated through written notices sent through students and/or electronically, and verbal announcements, when applicable.
2. Determine what is appropriate behavior or dress becoming a student or non-student. The principal is the final recourse in all matters of discipline and school related matters and may waive any disciplinary rule for just cause at his/her discretion.

## **ADMISSIONS**

A child must be three years of age on or before September 1<sup>st</sup> to be admitted to the Pre-K 3 program. A child must be four years of age before September 1<sup>st</sup> to be admitted to the Pre-K 4 program. To enter Kindergarten, a child must be five years of age on or before September 1<sup>st</sup>. A child must have attained the age of six years on or before September 1<sup>st</sup> of the year in which he or she enters First Grade. The principal may make an exception in the case of a child who has completed Kindergarten in a different state where the entering age is lower if testing shows that the child is ready for First Grade.

All new students enrolled will have a 6-week probation period. Students must meet academic, attendance and behavior expectations of the school to be accepted as a student.

All entering PreK students must be potty trained prior to acceptance.

## **IMMUNIZATION POLICY**

Every student enrolled in a Catholic school in the State of Texas shall be immunized against vaccine preventable diseases caused by infectious agents in accordance with the immunizations schedule adopted by the Texas Department of State Health Services. A student who fails to present the required evidence shall not be accepted for enrollment. The only exception to the foregoing requirement is a medical exemption signed by a licensed physician (M.D. or D.O.) authorized to practice in the State of Texas.

## **STUDENT TRANSFERS AND WITHDRAWALS**

When a student is transferring from St. Michael's Catholic School, the principal and teacher must be notified in ample time. Official records are released from the school office by mail or fax only at the request of the school to which the student transfers. No records are released until all books are returned and all school charges and tuition accounts are paid in full.

## **REGISTRATION**

Before a student is eligible for registration, the following information must be received: Birth certificate from the Bureau of Vital Statistics, Baptismal certificate (if applicable), Social Security card, and complete immunization record. Transfer

students must also include two letters of recommendation, their latest report card and test scores, and submit a signed release form for a transfer of records from their previous school. Registration is not complete and students are not admitted to St. Michael's Catholic School until all information has been received. All transfer students will be on a nine-week probation, which may be extended at any time by the school principal. If, during this period, the student or parents demonstrate that they are unwilling to cooperate with the school or its staff, the student will be dismissed or asked to withdraw.

Before a student is finally accepted into St. Michael's Catholic School, the following conditions must be verified:

1. The student must meet the academic standards of the grade or class section in which he or she will be placed as set forth by St. Michael's Catholic School.
2. Any student's academic position will be objectively established through the school transcript or by a standardized test administered by St. Michael's Catholic School at the parent's expense.

Every student who is enrolled from a public or non-public school will be placed in the grade recommended by the sending school until evidence is obtained by testing, observation, and other means make it possible for the principal to make an appropriate grade placement.

### **CUSTODIAL ARRANGEMENTS**

At the time of registration, the parent(s) shall provide competent information regarding the custodial care of the student and visitation rights. Upon request, the parent(s) shall furnish the principal a copy of any relevant court order so as to insure the safety and welfare of the student. The parent(s) shall have a continuing duty to apprise the school of any changes in the custodial care of the student and of the issuance of any court order restricting or prohibiting parental third party access to the child.

### **SCHOOL RECORDS**

Educational records are considered confidential material available only to the parents, and to those members of the school staff who have a legitimate educational interest in the student. Parents shall, upon written request, be entitled to review and request copies of the education records relating to their child.

### **SCHOOL RECORDS AND DUPLICATE NOTIFICATION**

Unless prohibited by order of the court or other legally binding instrument, a non-custodial parent shall have the right of access to school records relating to his or her child and, upon request, may receive copies of all notices relating to the school and school activities.

### **TUITION AND FEES**

Parents may pay their tuition in one of the following ways:

- **Payment in Full.** Payment directly to the school by check or cash by July 1<sup>st</sup> will entitle families to a \$100 tuition discount.

- **Payments through FACTS.** For all deferred payments, tuition may be paid through Automatic Bank Payment (ACH) budgeted through FACTS. Payment date may be either the 5<sup>th</sup> or the 15<sup>th</sup> from checking or savings account. New families must pay in ten months. Returning families may choose to pay in up to twelve installments.

Families registering after July 1<sup>st</sup> shall be expected to fulfill their tuition obligation according to the tuition policy stated above.

Tuition for students registering on or after the first day of school shall be pro-rated over the number of school days they will be in attendance. Tuition refunds for those families withdrawing students before the end of the school year shall be pro-rated over the number of school days each student was in attendance.

**Lunches, bus, and daycare fees must be paid by the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month. In the event of a past due account, these services will no longer be available until these fees are paid.**

### LATE PAYMENTS

It shall be the responsibility of each school family to keep the school office informed of their need to make any changes in their preferred tuition payment plan or adjustments in the amount of tuition expected to be paid. Without such information, the following policy will apply when tuition payments are received late.

- **Full Payment**

If payment is not received on or before July 1, the discounted rate of tuition will not apply. When full payment has not been made by July 1, the family will be contacted within five days concerning the missed payment and alternative tuition payment options will be offered. If funds are not received according to a new agreement, all tuition payments must be made through the FACTS Tuition Management Plan.

- **Monthly Payments** School families who choose the automatic bank payment plan and miss a monthly payment due to insufficient funds will be assessed a \$30.00 missed payment fee by FACTS and may incur a fee from their own financial institution. The missed payment will be reattempted by FACTS within 20 days. In addition, school families who have missed two monthly payments and have not made suitable arrangements within fourteen calendar days of the second missed payment will be informed that their children will not be readmitted to school according to the specifications of this policy.

### TUITION ASSISTANCE

A limited amount of tuition assistance is available for school families experiencing economic difficulties through the Guardian Angel Fund. This fund is fully supported by donations. Normally, requests for such assistance should be made at the time of registration. However, since such circumstances often are unpredictable, families should not hesitate to inform the school office of their need whenever it may arise during the year.

### NON-ADMISSION OF STUDENTS DUE TO TUITION AND FEES DELINQUENCY

School families failing to pay tuition according to the agreement which they have made with the school or who have been unwilling to make suitable alternative arrangements with the school, will be informed that their child(ren) will not be readmitted to our school. All families must be current in their payment of tuition.

- **If tuition and/or fees is delinquent as of August 15<sup>th</sup>:**  
Students will not be permitted to return to school.
- **If tuition and/or fees is delinquent as of December 15<sup>th</sup>:**  
Students will not be readmitted on the first day of class in January.
- **If tuition and/or fees is delinquent as of March 15<sup>th</sup>:**  
Students will not be readmitted on the first day of class following spring break.
- **If tuition and/or fees is delinquent as of the last day of school:**  
Students will not receive report cards and permanent records will not be released.

### **DELINQUENT TUITION FROM PREVIOUS YEAR(S)**

All previously unpaid tuition must be paid by August 1, if a student is to be readmitted on the first day of class for a new school year. Payments are to be made directly to the school. If payment is not possible, suitable arrangements must be made with the Pastor and Principal.

### **AFTER SCHOOL DAY CARE**

St. Michael's Catholic School offers extended-day care until 5:15pm for its students after the end of their regular instructional day. Families may arrange for this service with the office for a fee of \$2.50 per half hour or part thereof. Students not picked up by 5:15pm will be charged \$5.00 for each 10 minutes after 5:15pm. Students not picked up 15 minutes after dismissal will automatically be placed in the after-school program that day, and all applicable charges will be applied. All families are expected to follow the After School Day Care Policy. Non-compliance will result in permanent dismissal from the program.

### **LUNCH**

Lunch will be prepared and served from the school cafeteria. Parents may send a lunch, bring one to the school, or order a school lunch prepared by the school cafeteria. Parents are welcome to eat with their children. Parents are required to sign in at the office and receive a Visitor's Badge before entering the lunch area. Adult lunches prepared by the school cafeteria may be purchased but must be ordered in advance (before 9:00am). Students may purchase milk and fruit juices for the morning break and at lunch. One drink is included in the price of the meal.

The price of the school lunch includes one generous serving of an entre, side vegetables, fruit or desert, and a milk or juice. Additional servings will be served, as available, for an additional charge.

Prices are as follows:

Student Lunch--\$3.25

Adult Lunch--\$5.00

Milk or Juice--\$0.50

Additional Entre--\$2.00

Additional side or desert--\$1.50

*Note: Lunch counts are finalized by 9:00am each morning. If the student orders a lunch, even if parent brings a home lunch later, the student will be charged for the ordered meal. Additionally, if the student does not order a school lunch because they are expecting their parent to bring something, the school will wait no more than 5 minutes into the lunch period. The child will then be given a school lunch and charged for it.*

## ATTENDANCE

In compliance with Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops Education Department (TCCBED) and the State of Texas Family Code, St. Michael's Catholic School follows compulsory attendance laws. Parents/Guardians are expected to honor the calendar established and published by the school. Daily school attendance is the only effective way to ensure continued academic progress. The law states that students must be in school for the entire school day, which is 8:00am to 3:15pm for St. Michael's Catholic School. TCCBED requires that students in Texas Catholic schools attend school 180 days.

Compulsory Attendance Law means—Texas Education Code Sec. 25.092—Minimum Attendance for Class Credit (90% Attendance). The law says that in order to be promoted, students must be in school 90% of the days set on the calendar for school in session.

Students are expected to be present and punctual for all classes. Parents should call the school before 8:30 a.m. to report their child's absence. A written excuse from the parent or guardian is required for all absences and tardiness upon the child's return to school. Parents must sign their child in at the office if the child arrives after 8:00am. Students are considered absent for the morning (one-half day) if they leave before or arrive after 10:00am. Students who leave before 12:30pm are considered absent for the afternoon (one-half day). Students arriving after 8:00am or leaving before the dismissal bell at 3:15pm will not be eligible for "Perfect Attendance".

Habitual tardiness or early pick up will not be tolerated. Teachers are required to have instruction for the entire day (8:00am to 3:15pm). When a student is picked up before 3:15pm, instruction is disrupted for everyone in the class because the teacher must stop the instruction to give homework or other information to that student who leaves early.

Though consistent communication from the classroom teacher and the principal will occur, when a student has reached the limit of acceptable absenteeism and/or tardiness, a letter and a meeting must occur between the parent and the principal to determine a plan for instruction and promotion.

## STUDENT ABSENCES

Absence is defined as not being present at school during the required hours of the school day. Absences cause a student to miss important instruction. Instruction for students at St. Michael's Catholic School is from 8:00am to 3:15pm. Students are in danger of not meeting grade level expectations when they miss school. School absence is categorized in the following manner:

### Family Emergency

A death in the immediate family and serious or prolonged illness is always handled on an individual basis. Special care and consideration for the student and his/her family dictate the procedure the principal will authorize in such circumstances.

### Absence Due to Illness

If a student is unable to come to school due to illness, the parent/guardian is expected to notify the school office and send a written note upon return to school—a doctor's excuse is preferable and expected if the absence is more than one day.

### Absence for Other Reasons

When a student is absent from school for any reason other than a dental or doctor's appointment, illness or family emergency, the school staff is not obliged to provide special services. It is the responsibility of the student to obtain and

complete assignments missed while absent and to make arrangements for “make-up” or other help needed. Ordinarily one school day is allowed for each day the student was absent. On extended absences, the student shall make individual arrangements with the teacher with the approval of the principal.

*Though an absence may be deemed excused by the Principal, a student who misses any part of the instructional day is not eligible for Perfect Attendance recognition. All absences, including excused absences, are accountable to the Compulsory Attendance Law—Texas Education Code Sec. 25.092—Minimum Attendance for Class Credit (90% Attendance).*

### Make Up Work

It is the responsibility of the parent and the student to make up any work that was missed during an absence. Generally, the student is given 1 day for each absence to make up work to receive full credit.

### **SCHOOL ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL**

Arrival School begins at 8:00am and dismisses at 3:15pm. Generally, students should not arrive sooner than 7:30am. The Principal must approve arrangements for early drop off. Students are to report directly to the gym when dropped off. Staff members will be on duty to facilitate the drop off of students in the alley behind the gym at the large door. The parent must escort any student who is not dropped off at the drop off line directly into the gym. Students will sit with their classes inside the gym to await Morning Prayer and Assembly. Students are not allowed to play on the playground before classes begin.

Dismissal Students are to leave the school grounds immediately after dismissal each day. Except for emergencies and extra-curricular activities approved by the principal, students who remain on school property more than 15 minutes after dismissal will be charged the After School Day Care rates. Students may not leave with anyone other than a parent or other designated person listed on the official pick up form turned in at the beginning of the year unless the school has been notified in writing. Dismissal will be at the gym following the drop off drive through procedures. Students are asked to remain quiet during dismissal to ensure safe pick up. All students should make sure that their teacher acknowledges who is picking them up before leaving the dismissal area.

### **LEAVING SCHOOL DURING THE SCHOOL DAY**

Students are required to bring a dated note signed by a parent or guardian to request early dismissal. No student may leave the school premises without proper permission. The adult, either the parents or the person designated by the parent, taking the child during school hours must sign the release form in the office. He/She must again sign the form in the school office when returning the child to school on the same day. A student may be released to either parent unless the school has been provided with evidence that there is a court order, statute, or legally binding document relating to such matters as divorce, separation or custody that specifically revokes this right. A copy of such document must be in the school file.

### **EMERGENCY CLOSING DUE TO EXTREME WEATHER**

Generally, if Cuero ISD closes its schools for environmental reasons (chiefly bad weather) St. Michael's Catholic School will also close. However, any closing is a judgment call made by the principal in conjunction with the pastor, and SMS

prefers not to use its two bad-weather days unless it is necessary. If bad weather threatens at night or early morning, parents should tune to the following stations, and listen for information.

KIXS FM Radio 107.9 KVIC FM Radio 95.1

KAVU TV Channel 25

Additionally, information will go out via text messaging. **All parents are required to be able to receive text through the school's Remind text messaging system.**

If CISD closes during the school day for environmental reasons, to avoid confusion, SMS will also close for the rest of the day. Parents will be notified in this case via text, email, or telephone call.

### **CLOSING DUE TO STATE/COUNTY MANDATE**

When the governor or local county judge signs a mandate requiring the local school buildings to be shut down as per law, St. Michael's Catholic School will strongly consider the closure. The Texas Attorney General's Office has clarified that private, Catholic schools may make a local decision due to Religious rights. In the event that a non-mandated alternative plan is suggested, St. Michael's Catholic School will make a decision based on specific needs, parental survey, and pastor/principal evaluation of the situation. St. Michael's Catholic School will follow the approved traditional school calendar keeping staff, students, and family safe at all times.

In the event of a local emergency, St. Michael's Catholic School Emergency Response Procedures Policy will be followed, which gives local First Responders authority to make a decision.

### **TRAFFIC AND PARKING**

Drop off and pick up of students will be at the large gym door that is located in the alley behind the gym. Cars will travel on McLeod in front of the main school building and the church; travel past Church St., which will be blocked to traffic; then turn right into the alley that leads behind the gym. Staff will be available to let students out of cars. The children will go into or come out of that entrance during drop off or pick up time. When leaving the alley, cars will be directed to turn right at Clinton St. Parents who do not want to go through the line must park in designated parking areas. Students are not permitted to cross the street without adult supervision. All students who do not get dropped off at the drop off line must be escorted into the gym by their parent.

To avoid disruption, confusion, or unsafe conditions, the classroom teacher will take all children to the gym at the end of the day. Teachers will not stop to let students go to cars parked along the street.

Under the provisions of an ordinance of the City of Cuero, we close the 200 block of McLeod St. in front of the school and the 300 block of Church St. between the Early Childhood Building and Church each day. This permits students to safely cross to the playing field and to use the streets for activities. When the barricades are in place, no one is to drive past them. The closed street is not a parking area. The exceptions are for vehicles making deliveries that are large or heavy. The streets will be open during times when the church is having services. No parking is allowed on the streets in front of the barriers for safety reasons. These are considered emergency entrances for EMS, police, or fire departments.

### **VISITORS**

Parents, visitors and guests are always welcome at St. Michael's Catholic School. Parents are welcome to observe their children's classrooms; however, to ensure that students receive the maximum benefit of the teaching-learning process, the parent should contact the teacher at least one day before observing. Visitors must check in and out at the office and

receive a Visitor's Badge. The Diocese of Victoria and St. Michael's Catholic School require Safe Environment training for anyone who interacts with students. Principal approval is necessary to observe a classroom. Teachers are available during their conference time and before or after school for meeting with parents. Teachers will not stop instruction to conference with anyone.

In the event that a parent/guardian must bring something to the school, he/she should leave it at the school office. Neither the child nor the teachers are to be disturbed during class hours.

While on campus, visitors may not take video or pictures of other students without the principal's consent.

### **EARLY RELEASE DAYS**

Catholic schools of the Diocese of Victoria are permitted a maximum number of early release days per school term. Students will be dismissed at 12:00pm on these days. Please make arrangements to pick up your child/children promptly at 12:00pm. There will be After School Day Care on early dismissal days only on days when school is dismissed for Faculty meetings. Generally the first Friday of the month is an Early Release Day. The day before Christmas and Easter breaks and the last day of school are Early Release Days. The school calendar reflects the days for Early Release.

### **HEALTH POLICIES**

A health record is maintained for each student. Each student must be immunized and health rules observed according to state law and diocesan regulations, especially regarding medicine and all contagious infections. Hearing tests and vision screening will be conducted annually for all students. Students will be measured for height and weight each year. Students in Grades 5 will be screened annually for scoliosis. Diabetes screening will be conducted annually for Grades 3 and 5. Students are checked for head lice periodically. A complete copy of the Health Policy is available in the principal's office.

### **MEDICINES**

St. Michael's Catholic School will administer prescription or non-prescription drugs to students whose parents indicate, in writing, a necessity. Parents or guardians must complete and sign the medication release forms, which are available in the office, for each medicine a child is taking. Prescription drugs must be clearly labeled and identified as being prescribed for the student. Non-prescription medicine must be in the original container, accompanied with a parent's written instructions for administration. All medications, including cough drops, must be left in the school office. The school does not supply any medication for students. The school has the right to refuse to administer medication to students. In that case, a parent must make arrangements to administer their child's medication.

### **HEALTH ISSUES**

Children with certain symptoms should not be sent to school, or if they develop them during the day, must be sent home. These symptoms include: oral temperature of 100 degrees or greater; vomiting, nausea, or severe abdominal pain; marked drowsiness or malaise; sore throat, acute cold, or persistent cough; red, inflamed, or discharging eyes; acute skin rash or eruption; swollen glands around jaw, ears, or neck; any skin lesion in the weeping stage, unless protected and diagnosed as noninfectious; serious earache; pediculosis (head lice) that has not been treated; other symptoms which are suggestive of acute illness. Any student sent home for any of the above symptoms is not allowed to return the same day.

The school must be notified in the event that a student has been exposed to a highly contagious disease such as COVID-19, or has been to a region that is deemed high risk as per Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The principal will make a determination about the student's ability to return to school.

### AIDS

Recognition of a student or employee with AIDS is not reason alone for exclusion from school. Each person should be evaluated as an individual case, and exclusion from the school environment should be based upon the person's physical limitations, psychosocial activity patterns, and the opinion of a panel of responsible persons designated by the Superintendent of School.

If a student has been diagnosed as having AIDS and has any of the following conditions, he/she shall be excluded from attending school:

- Vomiting
- Lack of toilet training
- Other medical conditions conducive to spreading of the virus
- Open Sores
- Tendency to bite

### SAFE ENVIRONMENT TRAINING

As mandated by the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops, all employees and volunteers in the Diocese of Victoria are required to:

1. Complete, submit and receive clearance of the required online application/criminal background check. Approval from the Diocese of Victoria and the Pastor/Principal of the parish or school is also required.
2. Attend the Keeping Kids SAFE & *Code of Pastoral Conduct and Policy Regarding Sexual Abuse of Minors* Training Session within 90 days of the background check clearance date.

Only those who successfully complete the requirements for employees and volunteers will be allowed to supervise, chaperone and/or provide care to the students of St. Michael's Catholic School. This is a requirement for all those who wish to attend a school field trip, volunteer for a classroom activity, attend a classroom party, or routinely eat lunch with their child in the cafeteria.

In addition, all employees and volunteers are required to attend education sessions pertaining to various aspects of abuse every three years. Background Checks are automatically re-submitted for approval one month prior to the third year anniversary date.

Parents who wish to volunteer/interact with students at St. Michael's Catholic School must have Safe Environment Training.

### DIOCESE OF VICTORIA PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING ABUSE

If you witness, suspect, or know of child and/or vulnerable adult abuse, **YOU MUST FILE A REPORT WITHIN 48 HOURS!**

#### **Contact Civil Authorities:**

Department of Family and Protective Services  
**1-800-252-5400 or [www.txabusehotline.org](http://www.txabusehotline.org)**

*If the person is in immediate danger, call 911.*

### **If Church Personnel Is Involved In Alleged Abuse:**

**Step One**— Contact Civil Authorities.

**Step Two**— Contact one of the following:

- Coordinator of Pastoral Care and Outreach, Vicki L. Pyatt, LMS, at (361) 827-7186 or [pastoralcare@victoriadiocese.org](mailto:pastoralcare@victoriadiocese.org);
- Bishop or Chancellor of the Diocese of Victoria at (361) 573-0828
- *Written Allegations Should Be Sent To:*

*Office of the Bishop, P. O. Box 4070, Victoria, Texas 77903--Mark as "Personal and Confidential".*

We will also help you bring your concerns to church officials outside the diocese if the abuse occurred elsewhere and you now reside in the Diocese of Victoria. If you are unsure about bringing a complaint or would like further information, please contact Vicki L. Pyatt.

**St. Michael's Catholic School Safe Environment Coordinator is Dawn Jemelka. She may be contacted at 361-277-3854 or [djemelka@stmschoolcuero.org](mailto:djemelka@stmschoolcuero.org).**

### **TRANSPORTATION POLICY**

The Diocese of Victoria Transportation Policy is designed to ensure the safe and responsible transportation of all people and property involved in diocesan activities. Adherence to the guidelines and procedures of the Transportation Policy is mandatory for all employees and volunteers transporting people or property in the Diocese of Victoria.

A copy of the DOV Transportation Policy is available on line at <https://victoriadiocese.org/safe-environment-office> and in the school office.

### **STUDENT INSURANCE**

All students in St. Michael's Catholic School are covered under the group insurance policy adopted for the schools of the diocese. This covers students while on school property or at a school function. More complete coverage is available if the parents choose to pay the higher premium.

### **FIRE AND TORNADO DRILLS**

Fire drills and tornado drills are held periodically as required by state law. When the alarm is sounded for a drill, students must go to their assigned place in silence and as quickly as possible without running. They remain there until the signal to return is given.

A complete copy of the St. Michael's Catholic School Safety Plan is available in the school office.

### **ASBESTOS CONTROL**

The school is inspected every six months. A copy of the management plan is available for inspection in the principal's office.

## **TELEPHONE**

The office telephone is a business phone. Parents and children are asked to make necessary arrangements while at home. The student use of the telephone is for emergencies. In order to avoid numerous interruptions in the classroom, students will not be called to the telephone.

## **CELL PHONE USE**

At no time should cell phones, including other devices for calling/messaging, be brought to school. If a student needs to bring a cell phone for after school due to walking home from school, entering a house where no one is home, or attending sport practices or games, he/she should bring the cell phone to the office upon arrival in the morning. The cell phone should be in the off position for the day. The student may pick up the cell phone at dismissal. At no time during the day should a cell phone be in a student's backpack, desk, or in his/her possession. Devices taken away from students will be returned to the parent(s)/guardian(s) two weeks after the device has been taken away.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

Our weekly family newsletter is a source of communication to help parents know about upcoming events and pertinent information. The newsletter goes out in student envelopes each Friday. In addition, the school will publish a calendar on the school website each month that lists activities, holidays, etc. Most school information will be emailed unless otherwise requested. The school's website, [www.stmschoolcuero.org](http://www.stmschoolcuero.org), will be updated with weekly newsletters and other important information. The school also uses an electronic text messaging system for sending out information. It is required that all parents provide the school with a phone number that receives text messages.

## **LOST ARTICLES**

All items found on the school grounds are taken to the school office. Many items are unclaimed each year. Please mark your child's possessions so they can be returned when found. Lost articles will be stored for a period of one month only.

## **WELLNESS POLICY**

The Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Victoria are committed to providing school environments that promote the development of lifelong wellness practices. In order to protect students' health and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity, St. Michael's Catholic School will:

- Strive to comply with the health guidelines set forth by Texas Conference of Catholic Bishops Education Department, Texas Public School Nutrition Policy and/or the USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans for all foods and beverages sold or served at school.
- Provide nutrition education and physical education to foster lifelong habits of healthy eating and physical education.
- Provide opportunities for all students to be physically active on a regular basis.
- Involve students, parents, teachers, and other interested community members in developing and implementing school nutrition and physical activity goals.
- Appoint a Wellness Committee to annually evaluate compliance with the wellness policy and local school goals.

## **LIBRARY**

The library is open throughout the school day (8:00am to 3:15pm), and teachers will encourage and require students to use it. With prior arrangements through the principal, the library will be available before and after school for research. Students may check books out for a one-week period, which can be extended. Overdue books will incur a fine of \$.10 (ten cents) per day. Students will be charged for lost or damaged books.

Each month, students walk to the Cuero Public Library during their regularly scheduled library period. Students may apply for a library card and check out books. All books must have the approval of the teacher. Families are responsible for returning the books and paying any fees for overdue or lost books.

Students in Kindergarten through 6<sup>th</sup> grades are required to participate in the Accelerated Reader Program (AR Program), which promotes reading skills and comprehension.

## **PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES**

St. Michael's Catholic School encourages parents to meet with their children's teachers often, if only for a few minutes, to stay abreast of the students' progress. Parent-teacher conferences are mandatory at the end of the first and third (if needed) nine-week grading periods. At these meetings, teachers will give parents their children's report cards and beginning of the year Iowa Assessment scores. Additional meetings may be scheduled during a teacher's conference period or immediately before or after school. Please call the school office or the teacher directly to schedule a meeting. Instructional time is important, so teachers will not be available to meet at other times during the day. Teachers are also required to set up text and email systems to communicate with parents on a regular basis.

## **GRADING STANDARDS**

The St. Michael's Catholic School academic year is divided into four grading periods in two semesters. Each grading period is approximately nine weeks. St. Michael's reports student progress as numeric values except in Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten. Progress Reports are sent out mid-way of each grading period to keep parents informed of the student's progress.

## **GRADING SCALE**

### For PreK:

S – Satisfactory Progress

N – Needs Time to Develop Skills

### For Kindergarten:

E – Excellent Progress

G – Good Progress

S – Satisfactory Progress

N – Needs Improvement

U – Unsatisfactory

For Grades 1 and Higher

- 94 – 100 Excellent Achievement (A)  
 85 – 93 High Achievement (B)  
 75 – 84 Average Achievement (C)  
 70 – 74 Low Achievement (D)  
 0 – 69 Unsatisfactory Achievement (F)

For Conduct In All Grades:

- S – Satisfactory  
 N – Needs Improvement  
 U - Unsatisfactory

**HONOR ROLL**

To enhance academic performance of the students, St. Michael's Catholic School has an Honor Roll for students in grades 1 and higher. Academic Honor Roll is defined in the following manner:

High Honors (or A Honor Roll) All grades in the grading period are 94 or higher in the Core subjects (Religion, Reading, Language, Spelling, Vocabulary, Social Studies, Science and Mathematics) with no grade below 94.

Honors (A-B Honor Roll) All grades in the grading period are 85 or higher in the Core subjects with no grade below 85.

An “Unsatisfactory” grade in conduct will disqualify a student from receiving any academic award.

**PROMOTION/RETENTION**

The promotion or retention of a learner should be based primarily on the degree of achievement of the specific objectives of the grade or course. A learner who has not achieved satisfactorily in a grade or subject should repeat the subject or grade. To permit a learner to take a course for which he or she does not have the proper preparation is an injustice to him or her, to the other learners, and to the teacher. Students are subject to Compulsory Attendance requirements for promotion. There may be cases in which ability, effort, interest, and other factors must be weighed. In such cases, the principal’s decision will be final.

Parents shall be informed of possible non-promotion at the beginning of the second semester or as soon as this becomes evident. If the learner is promoted conditionally, the parents shall make provision for the learner to remove the condition through summer work. The principal shall approve these provisions.

Regulations for Promotion

A student who has made satisfactory progress at one grade level will be promoted to the next higher grade.

- Students in Grades 1-3 shall earn a final average of 70 in each major subject in order to be promoted to the next grade. The major subjects for these grades are Religion, Reading, English and Math.
- Students in Grades 4-6 shall earn a final average of 70 in each major subject in order to be promoted to the next grade. The major subjects in Grades 4-6 are Religion, Reading, English, Math, Social Studies and Science.
- Due to the developmental variances of PreK and Kindergarten children, the school will never recommend retention in these grade levels

## **SCHOOL CURRICULUM**

The Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops Education Department (TCCBED), the Texas Education Agency, and the Diocese of Victoria Office of Catholic Schools for all parochial schools in the diocese approve the curriculum followed at St. Michael's Catholic School. Christian truths and values are integrated into the students' total development. Thus, the students in our school will be led to a faith that is living, conscious and active. St. Michael's Catholic School follows the Curriculum Guides approved by the Diocese of Victoria. These guides follow Common Core Standards with the coordination of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills Standards (TEKS), and TCCBED Standards. The TEKS are followed in subject areas not covered by the Diocesan Curriculum Guides.

## **CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION IN THE EVENT OF A MANDATED BUILDING SHUTDOWN**

In the event of a building shutdown due to local, state, or national emergency mandate, every effort will be made to continue instruction following standards and timelines. The procedures for this will be visited and revised each year during beginning of the year staff development. The procedures are to include consistent online virtual meetings, other electronic communication with parents and students, and textbook instruction.

## **RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES**

All students and staff (Catholic and non-Catholic) are required to participate in the Liturgy of the Mass weekly and on special holy days. During the day, teachers will lead the students in a prayer to begin and end an activity. Communal Reconciliation Services or opportunity for the Sacrament of Reconciliation will be arranged. Rosary is celebrated throughout the year and the Stations of the Cross during Lent. As St. Michael's is a Catholic school, the development of the Catholic Identity is an important part of all school activities. All students, regardless of their religious affiliation, are required to attend and participate in religious activities offered during school hours.

By enrolling a student at St. Michael's Catholic School, parents are agreeing to abide by the teachings of the Catholic faith.

## **GUIDANCE CURRICULUM**

Students in Grades 1-6, students receive instruction using the curriculum, Faith, Family and Friends, which is in compliance with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Education Department (TCCBED) Guidelines entitled *Human Sexuality: A Catholic Perspective for Education and Life-Long Learning*, the General Directory for Catechesis, and Catechism of the Catholic Church. This is a developmental program with a scope and sequence appropriate for elementary age children. Classroom teachers will inform parents of topics each month. Parents are welcome to stop by the principal's office to view the curriculum. Faith, Family and Friends, in concert with the church's teaching, is a guidance program built on the following principles:

1. Through Baptism and the other sacraments, the young person has an intimate relationship with the loving God.
2. Like all Christians, the young person is called to respect life in all its forms.
3. Because of God's gift of freedom, the young person can grow responsibly into self-direction.
4. The Catholic school is concerned with facilitating, enabling and assisting young people to grow in their ability to freely and responsibly choose life and development.

Specifically, the school will help young people:

1. Know themselves better and positively and accept who they are.
2. Form positive and enduring interpersonal relationships.
3. Improve their decision-making skills.
4. Use their abilities and skills for their own happiness and for the good of others.
5. Achieve self-direction and self-discipline according to their own maturity.
6. Begin to see life and learning as an interconnected whole, aimed at loving God and serving neighbor.

### **TEXTBOOKS**

Textbooks used at St. Michael's Catholic School are those officially adopted by the Diocesan Office of Catholic Schools and approved by the Texas Education Department. Textbooks are loaned to students. These should be covered at all times and properly taken care of by the students. Students must take home textbooks to complete assignments. All textbooks are the responsibility of the student for whom it is issued.

### **TESTING**

Students in Grades 1-6 are administered the Iowa Skills Assessment each year in September and in April. These tests identify the strengths and weaknesses of the individual student in subject areas of Reading, Writing, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. The school uses the data to view performance of the collective student body as compared with Diocesan and National norms. Teachers use the data to drive instruction. Parents are apprised of the strengths and weaknesses of their own children as indicated by the tests.

Students in Grade 5 are administered the Assessment of Catholic Religious Education (ACRE) test each February. This test data is used to identify strengths and weaknesses in accumulated religious education and outcomes for the school.

### **INDEPENDENT WORK/HOMEWORK**

Students are expected to do independent work at school and at home. Teachers assign independent work to reinforce the instruction they provide, to increase skills, to increase students' confidence, and to instill in students a sense of academic curiosity. Homework assigned is based on the grade level of students. Reading, which is essential for all subjects, is required daily at home. Since math facts memorization is required as per grade level standards, this should also be practiced daily at home. Parents should help provide an atmosphere conducive to study. Assignments should be handed in on time. Late notices will be sent to parents for their signature. Any work not received the following day may result in a "0" for that assignment.

### **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

Participation in P.E. is mandatory for all students in accordance with the Texas Educational Agency and Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops Education Department requirements. Exemption is given to those who present a note signed by a doctor. Students do not dress out for PE at St. Michael's Catholic School. All students are required to have appropriate tennis shoes for PE that fit and are secured by shoelaces or Velcro.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Field trips will be related to the curriculum. Classroom teachers, with the approval of the principal, will plan trips. Adequate transportation and supervision will be provided. Generally, educational trips taken by students in the primary grades will be within a close distance. Drivers must meet Diocesan requirements. All volunteers must meet Safe Environment requirements.

Field trips are a privilege, not a right. Students not exhibiting proper behavior in school will not be allowed to accompany their class on field trips and will be required to attend school that day. Any student receiving an in-school or out-of-school suspension at any time during the school year will not be allowed on field trips but will be required to attend school the day of the trips. While on a field trip, all students must follow school rules and any rules set forth by the teacher and principal.

School uniforms or school spirit shirts are always required for field trips.

No student will be permitted to participate in school or church sponsored events without a permission slip.

NOTE AS PER DOV SAFE ENVIRONMENT POLICY: Only those adults/chaperones who are SAFE ENVIRONMENT-compliant AND have been given permission by the school principal or pastor will be allowed to attend the school or church sponsored trip.

## **DRESS CODE**

### Shirts and Blouses

- Short or long-sleeved polos—plain white, navy blue or purple (no identifying logos). These may be purchased wherever school uniforms are sold.
- Spirit Shirts may be worn on Fridays—these may be purchased through Special Stitch at 106 E Main, Cuero.

### Pants, Shorts, Skirts and Skorts

- Khaki or navy blue pants (no denim) that are pleated in the front and have no external pockets. Cargo pants and skinny pants are not allowed.
- Khaki or navy blue shorts (no denim) that are pleated in the front and have no external pockets. No cargo shorts. Girls may wear skirts, jumpers, or skorts that are khaki, navy blue, or the approved plaid.
- All shorts, skirts and skorts must be at least fingertip length at all times even on a free dress day.
- Belts must be worn at all times by 1<sup>st</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> graders.
- Girls must wear shorts under skirts or jumpers.

### Dress Uniform (Required for Mass)

- Boys—khaki or navy blue long pants and navy blue polo shirt.
- Girls—navy blue, khaki, or approved plaid skirts or jumpers with a white blouse.
- Cowboy boots are not allowed on Mass days.
- Only navy blue or white button down sweaters are allowed at Mass.

### Outerwear

- Jackets must be zippered or buttoned without hoodies. No pullovers are allowed.

- Navy blue or white sweaters are allowed for Mass. Otherwise jackets must be taken off during Mass.
- No outerwear may contain logos that would not be appropriate for the Catholic School setting (beer logos, tobacco logos, bad words, etc.)
- Long sleeved shirts or non-St. Michael's sweatshirts over uniform tops are not allowed.

### Hair

Hair must be neat, clean and not a distraction. Girl's hair should be pulled back away from the face. Boy's hair should be short--it should not touch shirt collar or come down to cover eyes. Ponytails for boys are not acceptable.

### Other Dress Code Rules

- Shoes and belts may have color other than primarily white, brown, or black but cannot be distracting. No flashing lights.
- Open-toed shoes and backless shoes are not acceptable.
- Socks and leggings must be a solid color: khaki/tan, navy, black, gray, or white. Socks must be worn at all times with shoes.
- Shirts must be tucked in.
- Caps or sunglasses are not permitted inside the building.
- Boys and girls may wear watches and neck chains as long as it is not distracting.
- Girls' earrings must be modest and small. Boys are not allowed to wear earrings. Piercing other than in ears is not allowed.
- Shirts with spaghetti straps, tank tops, and sleeveless shirts are never allowed even on free dress days.
- White shirts that are see-through must have a t-shirt or camisole under it.
- Facemasks are allowable as long as they are not a distraction.

### Noncompliance

Homeroom teachers and other staff members will report to the office students who are not complying with the uniform requirement. Three instances of noncompliance in a grading period will result in lunch or after-school detention.

## **STUDENT BEHAVIOR AND DISCIPLINE**

At St. Michael's Catholic School, we believe that good discipline is a prerequisite for effective teaching and learning. No student has the right to interfere either with the teachers' ability to teach or with the students' opportunity to learn. Students should act in such a manner as to make St. Michael's Catholic School a center of Christian social living and to enable themselves to acquire the fullest education possible. They should avoid behavior that is harmful to the good order of the school, to themselves, or to fellow students. They will be held accountable for conduct, whether on-campus or off-campus school activities, that is detrimental to the reputation of the school.

Every student in St. Michael's Catholic School is expected to follow the example of Christ; each student is expected to exhibit Christian values in their daily lives. Students are expected at all times to conduct themselves in a manner reflecting credit to their parents and their school. Disciplinary guidelines are in place to encourage students to practice self-control and serve as role models for one another. Regulations are not intended to place undue restrictions on the students, but rather to encourage all students to be well mannered and considerate of others and to conduct themselves in a manner that they will be a credit to St. Michael's Catholic School.

**Unacceptable behavior** on campus or at any school-related activity constitutes the following:

### 1. **Disturbs Class**

Any disturbance that interferes with another student's opportunity to learn, including, but not limited to: talking, making noises, out of seat, eating or drinking in class except during appropriate times, slamming books, playing with toys, or throwing spit wads

**2. Does Not Cooperate**

Argumentative, refusal to follow directions or ignores/defies authority figures

**3. Is Disrespectful**

To any teacher, aide, other student(s), religious traditions including misconduct in church or during the liturgy, or any other legitimate authority

**4. Cheating**

Cheating shall be defined as:

- a. The unauthorized use of aids (notes, electronic devices, other students, etc.) during tests or exams
- b. Knowingly and/or willfully giving and/or receiving schoolwork to and/or from another student for the purpose of the other student submitting the work as his/her own

**5. Plagiarism**

Copying or stealing someone else's words or ideas and claiming or presenting them as their own

**6. Fighting**

Including, but not limited to, rough housing, play fighting, name calling, pushing, shoving, kicking, tripping, spitting, slapping, pinching, hitting, pulling chair out from someone, or biting

**7. Unacceptable Language**

- a. Including, but not limited to, profanity, derogatory terms, racial slurs, hurtful words, or inappropriate gestures
- b. Students in grades K-6 will receive a written disciplinary referral to the principal's office for using inappropriate language or gestures
- c. Students in grades k-6 will receive detention automatically when flagrant or severely abusive language is used

**8. Damage to School or Personal Property**

Misuse of buildings and grounds, textbooks, library books, and materials, including, but not limited to, throwing food and/or littering on campus, breaking windows, damaging outdoor equipment, defacing school property. Students are responsible for the repair or replacement of damaged textbooks or property.

**9. Stealing**

Includes taking any property belonging to any other student, school personnel, the school, or the church

**10. Uniform Violation**

Improperly dressed for Mass or daily uniform, which includes correct socks, shoes, and belt.

**11. Chewing Gum**

Students may not chew gum on school or church property, including the school bus.

**12. Leaving the School Grounds Without Permission**

This includes during the school day and at dismissal time.

**CLASSROOM DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES**

Classroom discipline is essential for effective learning to take place. Listed below are the disciplinary procedures for each grade level. Levels of discipline may be skipped depending on the severity of the infraction (or repetition of action).

- |          |   |
|----------|---|
| LEVEL I  | Reminders – Verbal and/or nonverbal (warning)                           |
| LEVEL II | Documentation of behavior, reflection time, student/teacher conference, |

	and parent notified through note and/or phone call
LEVEL III	Parent notified through phone call, extended time after school
LEVEL IV	Referral to the principal's office with consequences such as detention, in school suspension, or other as per the principal's discretion. Parent will meet with the principal.

There will be immediate removal from classroom for hurting self, others, or teacher.

Failure to serve the original detention or to return a signed discipline slip will result in an additional detention.

A Parent-Teacher conference is expected for any discipline referral. Ongoing disruptive behavior will not be tolerated.

### **AFTER SCHOOL DETENTION**

For continued discipline infractions, the principal may assign after school detention. Parents will be charged \$10.00 per half hour. Failure to complete the assigned detention will lead to additional consequences, which will include a Parent/Principal/Student meeting.

### **SATURDAY DETENTION**

Saturday detention is reserved for serious infraction or continuous discipline infractions. Saturday detention will apply to students in Grades 2-6. The cost to the parent is \$20.00 per each hour served. Saturday detention will consist of a 4-hour period from 8:00 am until noon at the school. NOTE: Students who do not perform Saturday detention will be required to serve double hours on the next designated Saturday detention. Only a medical or family emergency is considered an excused absence from Saturday detention. Contact the school office as soon as possible in case of such an emergency. (Leave a message on the office answering machine if necessary.)

### **SUSPENSION**

Suspension is a serious disciplinary action that results in the temporary dismissal from classes. A student issued an in school or out-of-school suspension forfeits participation in any club or school-related activity during the period of suspension.

#### **a. In-School Suspension**

Duration of an in-school suspension may be one day to three days. The parent/guardian will be notified of the student's status. Suspension will be served from 8:00 am until 3:15 pm. The student will not attend classes the day(s) of the in-school suspension. The student will receive assignments to be done in the suspension room apart from other students. Credit will be given for class assignments turned in on time and major tests given. In-School Suspension incurs a charge to the parent for a substitute teacher to sit with the child. (Currently \$75 per day.)

#### **b. Out-of-School Suspension**

The duration of an out-of-school suspension may be up to three days. The parents will be notified for a conference prior to suspension. The student must be prepared with all class work assigned on the day of return from suspension. The student must also be prepared to take any make-up tests after school on the day of return. A zero will be recorded for any assignment not turned in on the day of return. A zero will be recorded for any test not made up as scheduled by the individual teachers.

### **PROBATION**

When serious or continued misconduct warrants it, a student will be placed on probation for a clearly defined period of time and with specific conditions. A student placed on probation will be removed from an office of any club, class

activity, or organization and denied the privilege to represent the school in any extracurricular activity or field trip. A probationary period can be designated for the remainder of the school year or less. Failure to comply with the conditions set forth in the probationary contract may lead to dismissal.

### **EXPULSION**

Dismissal is a serious matter and is invoked only as a last resort. Normally, it will follow a grave offense or a series of offenses indicating a student's unwillingness to follow the guidelines of the St. Michael's Catholic School Family Handbook. The principal reserves the discretionary right to expel/dismiss from school any student whose attitude and/or conduct, on or off campus school activities, reflects adversely on the school community.

### **CORPORAL PUNISHMENT**

The Diocese of Victoria prohibits corporal punishment in all of the schools in the diocese.

### **ACTION OF PARENT/GUARDIAN**

The disruptive, threatening or illegal behavior of a parent/guardian may result in the expulsion of their child.

### **THREATS**

Any threat of bodily harm or threat of the possession of a weapon shall be taken seriously. Students, parents and staff shall be responsible to report to the administration any knowledge of verbal or written threats. Any such threat or any false reports of such threats may result in immediate suspension or expulsion. A threat shall be defined as any verbal or written comments intended in jest or otherwise, which would cause alarm to the school and anyone in it.

### **ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

Based on our philosophy that Catholic Schools have been established to provide an environment of faith, which brings all of life together within the grace and love of God,

St. Michael's Catholic School views bullying as unchristian behavior, and it will not be tolerated. We define bullying as an act which:

1. Repeatedly hurts another individual either-
  - a. Physically (such as pushing, hitting, kicking, spitting, or any other use of violence, taking items from, forcing to do something unwillingly)
  - b. Verbally (such as teasing, name-calling, sarcasm, threatening, spreading rumors)
  - c. Indirectly (such as excluding, tormenting, using hurtful gestures, making hurtful written comments)
  - d. Through the use of technology (such as cyber bullying – using technology to hurt others through any communication device such as e-mail, cell phone, camera, chat rooms, text messaging, or websites)
2. Is deliberate and sustained
3. Is intended to isolate, hurt, or humiliate another individual
4. Is unprovoked

The goal of this policy is to ensure that all students experience a safe, Christian environment that is conducive to learning. The following steps will be taken when it is determined that bullying is taking place:

1. Isolated or initial incidents, which do not constitute bullying, will be handled by the teacher in charge during the time of the incident. Depending on the severity of the incident, the principal and/or parents may be notified. Disciplinary action set forth in the school handbook will be followed.

2. Whenever possible, any incidents, which may constitute bullying should be reported immediately to the teacher in charge at the time of the incident. The teacher in charge at the time of the incident will immediately deal with those involved in the incident.
3. In some cases, students may choose to report the incident to a different adult in the building, such as an aide, their homeroom teacher, or the principal. If so, students are encouraged to report the incident(s) as soon as possible.
4. The principal or teacher in charge should be made aware of any bullying incidents. Students engaging in bullying behavior will be disciplined according to the discipline policy. Depending on the severity and length of the incident, parents may be notified.
5. If the bullying does not cease after the student has been disciplined, parents will be notified and other action will be taken according to the school discipline policy.

In addition to the above outlined steps, anti-bullying policy requires the following:

1. Staff members of St. Michael's Catholic School should:
  - a. Remain alert to signs of bullying and act promptly and firmly against it according to the school's discipline policy.
  - b. Report incidents of bullying to the principal or teacher in charge, who will determine if further disciplinary action should be taken, and/or if parents should be notified.
  - c. Offer support and encouragement to students being bullied, including notifying parents, principal, and/or support staff as needed.
  - d. Encourage all students to refrain from bullying behavior and encourage reporting of any bullying behaviors they witness.
2. Parents of St. Michael's Catholic School students should:
  - a. Report concerns of bullying behavior to their child's homeroom teacher as soon as possible following the incident(s). If concerns are not handled sufficiently at this level, a report should be made to the principal.
  - b. Support the school's anti-bullying policy and actively encourage their child to avoid bullying behavior.
3. Students of St. Michael's Catholic School should:
  - a. Report incidents of bullying they witness to the teacher in charge at the time of the incident, or to another staff member as soon as possible following the incident.
  - b. Whenever possible, stand up for the student being bullied, and refrain from joining in bullying behavior.
  - c. Treat others with the respect and dignity that is expected of any Catholic school student.

### **SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

No student shall possess, use or attempt to possess, use or be under the influence of any of the following substances on school premises during any school term or off school premises at a school related activity, function or event:

1. Any controlled substance or dangerous drug as defined by law, including but not limited to marijuana, any narcotic drug, hallucinogen, stimulant, depressant, amphetamine, or barbiturate.
2. Alcohol or any alcoholic beverage.
3. Any abusable glue, aerosol paint, or any other volatile chemical substance for inhalation.
4. Any other intoxicant, or mood-changing, mind-altering, or behavior altering drug not authorized by a licensed physician through a prescription specifically for the student's use.

Students who violate this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action including expulsion. Desks and other personal property may be searched by administrators for alcohol, drugs, and other controlled substances. The transmittal, sale or attempted sale of what is represented to be any of the above-listed substances is also prohibited under this policy. Students involved in such actions shall be expelled from school.

### **SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

Sexual harassment is immoral and reprehensible and will not be tolerated in St. Michael's Catholic School. It subverts the mission of Catholic education and threatens the careers, educational experience and well-being of all affected persons. In both obvious and subtle ways, the very possibility of sexual harassment is destructive to individuals and to the school community as a whole. Harassment involving any student or staff member shall be investigated, and appropriate action shall be promptly taken.

Harassment shall be defined as any conduct of an intimidating nature that creates a hostile or offensive environment. Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, the following behaviors:

1. Verbal conduct such as epithets, derogatory jokes or comments, slurs or unwanted sexual advances or imitations;
2. Physical contact such as assault, unwanted touching, blocking normal movements or interfering with work, study or play because of sex;
3. Retaliation for having reported sexual harassment.

### **PLAYGROUND POLICY**

Students must obey the following rules:

1. Play in designated areas only.
2. Follow the directions of supervisors.
3. Play games that are safe.
4. Keep playground free of all litter.
5. Use all playground equipment properly.
6. Be respectful to others.

### **BUS BEHAVIOR POLICY**

While on the school's bus, the students must observe the following:

1. Obey the driver and speak only in a courteous and respectful manner.
2. Seatbelts must be worn correctly at all times.
3. No walking around while the bus is moving.
4. Wait for the vehicle to stop completely before boarding or leaving.
5. Remain seated and keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself.
6. Speak in a low, respectful voice to others.
7. Exercise courtesy toward the driver and fellow travelers.
8. Refrain from eating or drinking on the vehicle, unless allowed by the teacher in charge.
9. Keep the vehicle free of all litter.

As per DOV Transportation Policy, all students receive bus safety training each year.

## **BIRTHDAY PARTIES**

Invitations to parties are not to be distributed at school unless all classmates are invited, and then, only at the end of the instructional day. Birthday celebrations are not allowed at school. Birthday cupcakes or birthday snacks (no cakes) may be distributed at the end of the day to everyone in the class and must comply with the school's Wellness Policy. This must be approved prior to the occasion by the principal. Gift exchanges and party embellishments such as balloons, streamers, and party favors are not allowed. Please do not have gift baskets, etc. delivered to the school because it interrupts office business and instruction.

## **APPEALS PROCESS**

Although the Diocese of Victoria endeavors to establish a harmonious Christian atmosphere within its schools, it recognizes that misunderstandings or differences of opinion sometimes occur. Ideally, such matters can be resolved informally by a parent or guardian by meeting with the immediate authoritative person to discuss the matter. If, however, the matter is not then settled to the parent or guardian's satisfaction, and the parent or guardian believes the dispute to be a misapplication or misinterpretation of a school related policy, only then may the parent or guardian institute a formal grievance. A formal grievance must be in writing and must be received in five (5) working days following the occurrence of the event on which the grievance is based. Please contact the principal for a copy of the Diocese's current **Complaint Procedure for Students and Parents** for further details. Also, please note that current policy supersedes and replaces all previous policies and statements regarding institution and processing of formal grievances within the Catholic school of the Diocese of Victoria.

## **GOOD CHOICE CELEBRATION**

At St. Michael's Catholic School, we implement a system that celebrates good choices. Students may earn a total of 4 points each day for the following: Being in school for the entire day, completing homework and/or classroom assignments, wearing the appropriate school uniform, and having good behavior. Students are expected to be in compliance of policy at all times including while at cafeteria, playground, Music class, and PE. At the end of each month, each student who has earned 90% of the possible points will attend a Good Choice Celebration. Examples of Good Choice Celebrations are game time in the gym or a movie and popcorn. Students who do not earn enough points will remain in the classroom to work on a social skill lesson, any classwork that has to be made up, or other writing activity assigned by the principal.

## **CHOIR**

All 3<sup>rd</sup> through 6th Grade students are required to participate in the St. Michael's Catholic School Children's Choir. The choir will practice each week in addition to their regular Music classes. The choir is expected to perform at every Wednesday morning Mass and at special performances such as during the Christmas pageant. The expectation for behavior is full participation of singing and following all school rules, which include respect for the Choir Director. Students in the choir highlight our school and parishes. Singing is a glorious form of prayer. All choir members are required to participate during scheduled performances. A written excuse from the parent is required for missing a performance. All members depend on each other for a beautiful sounding choir. Parents will be notified in advance of any change to the schedule. Occasionally, the choir is asked to sing at a weekend Mass. This is our way of saying thank you to the parish, which lovingly and generously financially supports the school operations.

