

A REVIEW OF CLASSROOM AND SCHOOL POLICIES

I know that all parents are aware that I strictly enforce all school regulations; however, I would like to review those policies which are frequently the subject of parents' questions:

HOMEWORK

Students receive some type of math homework every school night in a normal school week. Assignments may include math vocabulary study, mathematics concepts, computation, and problem solving. Written work in other subject areas is given; however, it is not necessarily assigned on a daily basis. Although a parent may sign the assignment before I receive it, I am more concerned with the parent's reviewing my comments on the returned assignment. Under normal circumstances, I return the assignment the next day. **With the "new normal" I have been forced to have assignments turned in on Google Documents. Parents should still be able to review my comments on the returned assignment.**

Only NEATLY COMPLETED assignments receive full credit. Whenever lines must be drawn (e.g. geometric figures, charts), a RULER MUST BE USED. Failure to comply with this directive results in lower homework grades. **Students who "cut and paste" work from the internet cannot receive full credit.**

When a student is absent from school, he/she is responsible for any work covered in class during that period of time. It is a good practice for the absent student to have his/her books brought home by a classmate. In this way the student does not fall too far behind the class. However, it is NOT required that a student have all assignments completed upon his/her return to school. A REASONABLE amount of time, usually one week, is given for the student to make up any missing work. After this period of time, the student must complete the missing work after school.

The ONLY EXCEPTION to the above absent homework policy concerns those students who are absent when major assignments; that is, term papers, math projects, religion or reading essays and projects for which a long period of time has been allowed, are due. There is a tendency for some students to put off major assignments until the weekend or night before they are due. Sudden illnesses, usually stomach disorders, result. Since I do not favor procrastination in any form, major assignments must be on my desk by 8:05 A.M. to receive ANY CREDIT, even when the student is going to be absent on the day a major assignment is due. I ask that parents discourage all forms of procrastination. **Major assignments can be scanned into the student's computer and sent to my school email address via the Google Classroom if the student is unable to have a friend or sibling bring in the assignment!**

SIGNED TESTS [This continues on the next page!]

As with homework, the shorter "online tests" are usually returned within a reasonable amount of time. Performance on the "online tests" from sites like Khan Academy, MobyMax, and Mathletics are usually available on those sites immediately upon completion.

Once we return to a normal “in person” testing setup, the students will receive graded papers to take home on TUESDAYS. If you do not see graded papers, you should be very concerned: students do NOT forget to bring home these papers if they are doing well. ALL GRADED PAPERS MUST BE RETURNED SIGNED BY THURSDAY.

In order that I may be certain that parents are aware of their child’s academic progress, I request that a **FULL SIGNATURE**, as opposed to scribbled initials, appear on each graded paper below eighty (80) and the cover sheet I include. Parents should sign and date the test packages on the Tuesday that the student receives them. Do not allow your child to hand you the test package just before leaving late for school on Thursday. Please encourage your child’s cooperation in this area.

Finally, parents should be MORE CONCERNED with the CHILD’S ATTITUDE with respect to his/her work than with ANY SINGLE GRADE (even a ZERO!!!) the child receives. AMPLE OPPORTUNITY IS PROVIDED FOR THE CHILD TO RAISE HIS/HER GRADE IF HE/SHE CHOOSES TO DO SO.

SCHOOL UNIFORM

School policy requires that each child be in FULL UNIFORM each school day. On the rare occasions when this is not possible, the homeroom teacher should receive a NOTE from the parent. **In the remote learning class situation, I am requiring the students to be visible during Zoom Lessons. Although some student names appeared on the screen last year, I did not always get a response when I randomly called on the students in class.**

The students have attempted to stretch the rules in this area during the last few years. Boys have substituted blue JEANS for the boys’ BLUE DRESS UNIFORM PANTS. Girls and boys have experimented with non-uniform sweaters and overly-fashionable gym attire. Recent school communications have stated the policy in these areas.

Please do not ask the school to make exceptions (e.g. gym uniform) in these areas. Such requests only lead to problems due to lack of consistency in the applications of the rules.

COVERED BOOKS

Each year some students return books which look as if they have been through a nuclear war. It is certainly unfortunate that future students must use these damaged books. One solution would be to have the students buy and keep all of their own books; however, this would be very expensive. Our solution is to REQUIRE that ALL BOOKS HAVE BOOK COVERS. Please check your child’s books from time to time to see that proper care is being given in this area. Repeated violations will result in a check on the report card in “Respect for School Property.” **TO EARN HONORS AT THE END OF THE YEAR, THE CONDUCT GRADE CANNOT BE LOWER THAN A “B.”** [continued]

Needless to say, at the time of this writing, my understanding is that the students will be using digital copies of the books.

MAKEUP

Under no circumstances, including “dress up” days, is ANY makeup (e.g. eye makeup, mascara, lipstick, nail polish, etc.) to be worn in school. We love the girls just the way God created them. There is no need for anything artificial to be added to “improve” on what God has done. In more recent years, I have begun to accept nail polish on these days.

With respect to jewelry, one small pair of simple earrings may be worn by the girls; however, gaudy, hanging earrings and hoops are prohibited. Boys may NOT wear earrings or exposed chain necklaces at any time. This policy is outlined in the school handbook. With respect to necklaces, only a cross or miraculous medal are allowed.

GUM

Gum is not permitted in the school building AT ANY TIME.

DRESS UP DAYS

Thirty-two years ago, the eighth grade students requested the privilege of not wearing the school uniform on First Fridays. While I have no problem with special privileges for the school’s senior class, I do have some guidelines with respect to these privileges.

I prefer to call these days “dress up” days as opposed to “dress down” days. As such, suitable dress clothing MUST be worn on these days. I try to model such “dress” clothing in my appearance each school day. JEANS, any outfit made in JEAN FABRIC, and CARGO PANTS are NOT PERMITTED to be worn. Collared shirts which cover the shoulders and midsection are also required. If this special privilege is to continue, these simple guidelines must be followed.

Individuals who choose to ignore this policy will be required to wear the school uniform on these “dress up” days.

DRESS DOWN DAYS

Seven years ago, I was given permission to add a “dress down” day to the list of eighth grade privileges. While more latitude is permitted on these days, the students are expected to respect the minimal dress requirements I state in class. On these days, I do permit blue jeans; however, no jeans should ever be worn if they contain holes. Shirts should be free of

advertising slogans! If any student has a question about the appropriateness of a proposed outfit, I should be consulted in advance.

HIGH SCHOOL ENTRANCE EXAM PREPARATION

During the first three months of the school year, the eighth grade has an intensive preparation for the high school entrance tests. This review does not replace the normal curriculum. **THEREFORE, THE TIME NEEDED TO COMPLETE HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS DURING THIS THREE MONTH PERIOD IS LONGER THAN USUAL.**

ACADEMIC MAKEUP DAYS

Some Saturdays and school holidays are available for making up poorly completed or incomplete major assignments. The purpose of these days is to reduce the possibility that a student may fail to receive a diploma at graduation due to poor study habits.

Regardless of the time of the year, these students must report, in full winter uniform, by 8:00 A.M. (unless directed otherwise), and the required makeup work generally takes a major part of the day. Hopefully, students will eliminate any need for such days by properly organizing their study/homework schedule so that major assignments, especially required religion outlines and textbook activities, are not being rushed at the last minute.

Under no circumstances may students bring any “regular” clothing for the purpose of changing at the end of a “makeup day” before leaving the school. Any change of clothing must take place once the student has returned home. Students who attempt to make their own policy in this area will be required to do all “makeup” work during summer school.

[Until further notice, the above type of makeup opportunities are suspended. It is very important that students not place themselves in any situation where major “makeup” is required.]

HIGH SCHOOL VISITATIONS

School policy prefers the students to visit the high schools once they have been accepted! In this way, the student knows that attendance at the proposed high school is a definite possibility!

High school visitations should not be scheduled on school days **WITHOUT NOTIFYING THE SAINT GABRIEL SCHOOL FIRST**. The first choice for these visits should always be a school day that Saint Gabriel has off for a special reason that does not affect the high schools.

If this is not possible, the visit should be arranged for a school day on which **NO MAJOR TESTS OR PROJECTS ARE SCHEDULED**. Please check with Mr. McCarthy concerning this matter. [I am assuming that opportunities for “virtual tours” will need to be offered; however, this process still needs to be clarified. The TACHS test will be taken online at home!]

SCHOOL SHOES AND SNEAKERS REVISITED

If the students choose to wear sneakers, as opposed to school shoes, the uniform requirement is ALL WHITE (summer uniform only) or ALL BLACK (summer or winter uniform). Each year the school also sends home several notices concerning this matter. School policy has also requested that THICK HEELS NOT BE WORN ON SCHOOL SHOES. In addition, sandals or “flip-flops” may never be worn to school. Once again, I would appreciate your cooperation in this area. Requesting exceptions to this rule only make it difficult for the teachers to enforce the school’s uniform policy.

GYM UNIFORM

Contrary to the popular rumor, the eighth grade does not have the right to experiment with the school’s gym uniform policy. The students change into their gym shorts and tee-shirts after lunch on gym days. White “crew socks” or “knee socks” that can be easily seen above even high-top sneakers are to be worn. Students who fail to wear the required uniform WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO PARTICIPATE IN GYM CLASS!!!

The students may wear the required shorts, t-shirts, and white crew or knee socks under the optional Saint Gabriel sweatsuit or the regular school uniform, but they change for gym after lunch as indicated in the paragraph above.

[At the time of this writing, I am not aware how gym classes will be conducted since the students will be remaining in their own classrooms throughout the school day!]

FORGOTTEN LUNCHES

For some reason the number of students forgetting their lunches has increased in recent years. STUDENTS NOT MAKE IT A HABIT TO BOTHER MRS. DALY AT THE OFFICE FOR MISSING LUNCHES. I am requesting that the students share their lunches in the classroom on the rare occasions when this happens. Hopefully, no student should make it a habit to come without lunch. Also, YOUNGER SIBLINGS SHOULD NOT HAVE TO CARRY EIGHTH GRADE LUNCHES TO SCHOOL. By the time a student has reached the eighth grade, he or she should be more than able to accept full responsibility for arriving at school fully prepared for the day.

[Since the sharing of lunches will not be allowed under the new safety protocols, it will be very important that the students remember to bring their lunches.]

LUNCH PROCEDURES (REVISITED)

There are three basic rules which govern the lunch period at Saint Gabriel School. The purpose of these rules is to insure the safety of the students.

- 1) The students must show respect for the person who is helping the school by serving as a lunch supervisor. This person should not have to raise his or her voice to get the attention of any student.
- 2) The students must remain seated in the classroom until they are instructed to return the desks to the normal class positions. Unless the privilege is lost, the students place the desks in “lunch position” before they go out for recess.
- 3) Under no circumstances, except a major emergency, should any student be permitted to leave the classroom for either the lavatory or the school office (See above!). The students have regularly scheduled bathroom times before and after lunch.

[At the time of this writing, my understanding is that the students eat their lunches at their desks. Until further notice, there will be no change in the arrangements of the desks during the lunch period. I believe a schedule is being devised for the teachers to bring their students to the yard for ten minutes, during which time the students may remove their masks while maintaining the requirements for proper social distancing.]

BEHAVIOR IN SPECIAL CLASSES

Art, music, gym, and Spanish classes are scheduled each week throughout the school year. It is very important that the teachers of these classes experience the same proper respect that is given when the homeroom teacher is present. Unfortunately, some students fail to show these teachers the proper respect that is due to them.

Although some talking is permitted in gym and art classes once the teacher has explained the program for the day, Spanish and music classes should follow the same procedures outlined for homeroom:

1. Students should only be speaking in a direct response to the teacher’s question or when a student wants to ask the teacher a question about the presented material.
2. Hands should be raised so that the teacher may identify the student who has permission to speak.
3. Upon being recognized by the teacher, the student should stand to give a response or to ask a question. All other students should silently listen to the student who has been recognized.
4. Any type of social conversations is not permitted during these classes.

Students who disregard the guidelines for proper student behavior in these classes may have their conduct grades lowered substantially. Students cannot qualify for “honors” if appropriate behavior is not exhibited at all time. [continued]

[As mentioned above, until further notice, my understanding is that all “special” classes will be conducted in the homeroom class.]

THE USE OF CELL PHONES

All cell phones should be “entirely **OFF** throughout the school day. They are collected and sent to the office when the students arrive each day. Before dismissal the phones are returned to the students. The student slips for getting extra help or completing “missing homework” on Tuesdays and/or Thursdays are available on my Class Page. Therefore, there should be no need for any phone calls from the office or to the office with respect to this issue. A Sample of the “after school” notice slip follows on the next pages. Space is limited to thirty-two students, and preference is given to those students who have the greatest need.

The students should not be phoning home to ask parents to bring in “forgotten” homework. The students will never learn to be responsible if the parents allow themselves to be frequently inconvenienced by calls of this nature. The students must learn to accept the consequences for their actions.

[I am assuming that the students must keep their phones in their school bags throughout the school day. At the time of this writing, I am just guessing the policy; however, I am sure that Mr. Naccari will clearly state all “revised policies” during the “new normal.”]

[On the next page is a copy of the “After School Extra Help” slip that I have used the last few years before we were forced to adapt “remote learning” last March. At the time of this writing, it is my understanding that there will be no after school activities until further notice.]

Saint Gabriel School
590 West 235th Street
Bronx, New York 10463

After School Help or Makeup Assignment Notice

Dear Mr. McCarthy,

Please be advised that I give permission for my child, _____, to stay for extra help in math or makeup work on Tuesday, September 10, 2019. I am aware that my child will be with you in your classroom until 4:00 P.M. unless I give him/her permission to leave once you have provided the necessary remedial instruction. I understand that no phone calls are to be made to the office in connection with these after school help sessions. Upon dismissal, my child is required to follow whatever instructions I have given him/her.

Thank you for your time and effort in this regard.

Respectfully yours,

Parent's Signature: _____

Special Dismissal Instructions: _____

Please Note: No child is permitted to stay if they have not returned this signed form.

No child will be permitted to make any phone calls from the office.

