

St. Joseph School

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Family Handbook ~ Revised November 2019

MISSION STATEMENT

St. Joseph School in Verona ensures a high standard of academic achievement, personal development, and moral character through which we reflect the unconditional love of Christ. Implementation of a rigorous academic curriculum allows students to discover their God-given talents and maximum individual potential to become part of a strong faith-based community rooted in Christ. Through the support of faculty, families, and parish this learning process empowers students to face the many challenges of the world today.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

WE BELIEVE:

- * That everyone is created by God and therefore is good and has worth.
- * That diversity is valued and instills in our students understanding, compassion, and empathy.
- * That it is essential to educate the whole child spiritually, emotionally, socially, and physically.
- * That each child is important and worthy of an excellent academic education.
- * That the education of each child is a cooperative effort of the school, the child, the family, and the parish.
- * That each child deserves a safe and stimulating learning environment.
- * That daily prayer and Mass attendance enrich the lives of our students, staff, and families.
- * That students are challenged to be lifelong learners academically and spiritually.
- * That adapting instruction to individual needs allows students to reach their highest potential.
- * That students have the opportunity to express their individual talents.
- * That participation in service projects help to create respectful and accountable individuals who will help contribute to the global community.

DIOCESAN MISSION STATEMENT

In order to assist the Catholic Church of Pittsburgh to participate more fully in the teaching of Christ and to aid the Bishop in his own task as Shepherd and teacher of this local Church, the Secretariat for Education has been established to proclaim the gospel, the teaching of the Church, to fashion a people in whom the Word of God has taken root, to provide the coordination and administration of those programs and services which foster a living, conscious, informed, and active faith.

The vision for the Department for Catholic Schools is to promote and sustain Catholic schools of unparalleled quality, which integrate faith into every aspect of life and culture, producing graduates who continually strive for human and Christian perfection.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

The primary purpose of a Catholic school education is to form students in the values of Jesus Christ and the teachings of the Catholic Church. Catholic schools are distinctive religious education institutions operated as programs of the Catholic Church; they are not private schools but are administered and supported by the sponsoring parish(es), the diocese., or religious community. Attending a Catholic school is a privilege, not a right. While academic

excellence and involvement in extracurricular activities (i.e. sports, clubs, etc.,) are important, fidelity to the Catholic identity of the school is the fundamental priority. The school and its administration have the responsibility to ensure that Catholic values and moral integrity permeate every facet of the school's life and activity. In all questions involving faith, morals, faith teaching, and Church law, the final determination rests with the diocesan bishop.

PHILOSOPHY OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION

At the center of Catholic Education is Jesus Christ. He is the teacher in Catholic Schools. All human values find their fulfillment and unity in Christ. All other concepts and ideas about Catholic Education philosophy, its value in secular society, and in the local community flow from this reality revealed in Christ's incarnation, death, and resurrection which is the blueprint of our very nature.

Pope John Paul II stated in 1979 in his message to the National Catholic Education Association, *"In a Catholic school, everyone should be aware of the living presence of Jesus the "Master" who, today as always, is with us in our journey through life as the one genuine "Teacher," the perfect Man in whom all human values find their fullest perfection. The inspiration of Jesus must be translated from the ideal into the real. The gospel spirit should be evident in a Christian way of thought and life which permeates all facets of the educational climate.* A Catholic School teacher's work then is to translate the ideal, spiritual reality of the perfect communion of God and human in Christ, to the real, that which is relatable or understood by today's students.

In this way Catholic Education intends to teach the whole child; the mind body and spirit. And therein lies its value to the whole human community. A Catholic Education not only teaches the skills children need to progress to the next level or grade, but ultimately it creates a foundational cognitive structure that students need to give direction and purpose to their work. Christ becomes both the model and the means to human progress. When the whole child is nurtured students begin to realize that everyone is saved through Grace and that no one is left out.

This manifests itself in a school climate of cooperation between students, teachers, parents and the community at large. A fortuitous byproduct of this is that the community sees the Catholic School as a valuable and charitable neighbor. This communal dimension is rooted both in the social nature of the human person and in the reality of the school and Church as the home of communion and mercy.

To create and maintain a School with this Catholic worldview, where the complementarity of the natural and supernatural reality is understood, it is important that attention be made to hire committed Catholics as much as possible. This is not to say that Catholics have a monopoly on the truth or that non-Catholics do not share the values described above. It is important to understand that the indwelling Holy Spirit or the Face of Christ is in everyone and therefore that everyone deserves a high-quality Catholic Education, and that we all can learn from one another. However, it is imperative that Catholic Schools (and all schools as well) find people

motivated by a profound understanding of the Gospel (good news) of Christ; that all are invited to the banquet by love, grace and mercy. Catholic Schools must do their best to hire people who have deep desire for truth, love, charity, and community.

PARENT/GUARDIAN COOPERATION

It is the privilege of St. Joseph School to be a partner with parents/guardians in the religious and moral formation of your child. To be effective, cooperation, trust, and support are essential for this enormous responsibility. By sending your child to St. Joseph School, you have agreed to and will support its institutional policies. For these reasons, we ask the family to become familiar with the philosophy, policies, and procedures developed and enforced by St. Joseph School. Parents/guardians are required to state that you have read the Student/Parent Handbook, that you accept St. Joseph School's philosophy, policies, and procedures, and that you and your child will comply with them.

ACCIDENT AND INJURY

In the case of accident or illness at school, parents are contacted to take the child home, to the doctor, or hospital. It is important for your child's safety and comfort, as well as the effective operation of the office, that emergency information needed to locate parents, is available for each child and that this information is kept up-to-date by parents. Parents of children who have any type of physical disorder should contact the principal, school nurse, or teachers to make them aware of the problem. All cases of head lice should be reported immediately.

ADDRESSING ADULTS

Students are expected to accord all teachers, faculty, and staff proper courtesy and respect. Teachers and all other adult members of the school faculty and staff are to be addressed by their proper titles (Father, Sister, Mr., Mrs., and Miss, etc.). Being disrespectful will result in Demerits.

ADMISSION/REGISTRATION POLICIES

Saint Joseph School admits students of any race or nationality or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to all students formally accepted into the school. We do not discriminate on the basis of race or nationality or ethnic origin in the administration of our educational policies, admission policies, athletic or other school administered programs. Children who are not Catholic are expected to participate in religion classes and to attend all religious functions of the school/church. Parents must be involved in the Christian development of their children. Students entering kindergarten may be required to take a readiness test and must be five years of age by September 1. Official certificates of birth and Baptism are required at the time of registration. A mini-battery may be administered to all new students to verify placement. Grade level and academic group determinations are made based on school records. Immunization records must be complete and in accordance with Pennsylvania state guidelines before any child may enter school.

ALCOHOL/DRUGS

Sale, use, transfer, possession, or aiding possession of alcohol or other illegal drugs or related paraphernalia on school property or at a school-sponsored student activity, is absolutely forbidden. St. Joseph School fully adheres to and supports the Pittsburgh Diocesan Substance Abuse Policy.

ASSIGNMENT PLANNERS

The PTG will provide students with student planners, which will be used the entire school year.

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance at school is a major factor in determining academic success. Students (who are absent for more than thirty days during the academic year,) may be denied academic promotion. Absences from school are defined as either EXCUSED or UNEXCUSED according to guidelines from the Pennsylvania School Code. Excused absences include illness, quarantine, impassable roads, recognized religious holidays, and urgent reasons, such as death in the family or a court appearance. The state guidelines also permit an EXCUSED absence for educational trips if a request is sent to the school prior to the dates of the trip. If no prior notice of such a trip is received, the absence is classified as UNEXCUSED.

Parents should call the school office by 7:55 AM each day that a child is absent from school. Please include the child's name, homeroom teacher, and reason for absence. Parents are encouraged to arrange a homework pickup time. All missed class work and homework is to be completed in a timely manner. A written excuse needs to be submitted to the office for the following reasons: illness, doctor's appointment, vacation, change of dismissal plans (walk, bus, or car rider), and early dismissals. **If this excuse is not submitted within three (3) days following the absence, the absence will be classified as UNEXCUSED.** State law requires that an accumulation of unexcused absences results in a report to the Truancy Office.

According to the Pennsylvania School Code, Section 1332, "The absences of any pupil who remains out of school with or without his parent's/guardian's permission and is not absent because of illness or for other urgent reasons, as defined in the School Code, shall be unexcused. Such absence will be recorded as 'unlawful-unexcused' for a pupil who is under the compulsory attendance age." Section 1333 states, "Any such child who has been absent three days, or their equivalent, during the term of compulsory attendance, without lawful excuse, shall be given written notice. If, after such notice is given, attendance is again violated by the person, such person shall be liable for referral to the magistrate."

Any student who is not in school during the day may not participate in any extracurricular school activities that evening. This does not apply to mandatory academic events such as musicals, band concerts, and science fair. Vacations or family trips are not necessarily recognized as valid excuses for absences. Please refrain from taking vacations during school time. All medical appointments such as dentist and/or orthodontist visits should be scheduled after school hours, on school holidays, or during the summer months. Parents and guardians of students who acquire excessive absences may be required to provide documentation from a physician indicating that the absences are related to an existing medical condition.

AUXILIARY EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

The following services are offered through the Allegheny Intermediate Unit: Remedial Reading and Math (Title I), Speech/Language, and Counseling.

BULLYING/HARASSMENT

Bullying or harassment, unwarranted and uninvited behavior imposed on one person by another, is not in keeping with the philosophy of St. Joseph School, nor expected of anyone who purports to be a Christian person. The school will not tolerate harassing behavior in any form. All allegations of harassment or bullying are treated seriously and investigated thoroughly, and swift and certain disciplinary action taken.

It is the policy of St. Joseph School that students and employees should not be subjected to forms of bullying, harassment, hazing, or discrimination while at school or school-sponsored activities and in various social media environments including but not limited to email, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat et al... Furthermore, the policy's intent is to address this issue in a proactive manner through the establishment of a system for educating students and staff at the school level regarding the identification, prevention, intervention, and reporting of such anti-social acts.

The responsibility for effective prevention and response to acts of bullying, harassment, hazing, and discrimination lies within a collaborative effort of administrators, teachers, school staff, students, parents, school communities, and appropriate community support agencies. The process at the school level to establish educational procedures and programs should include a comprehensive representation of the participants identified above. Within such programs and procedures, a focus shall be placed on training school staff and students regarding the recognition and reporting of incidents through a systematic process respective of state and federal laws.

It is the sincere hope of St. Joseph School that students and parents join us in helping to educate each other in the area of bullying and cyber bullying. On September 10, 2015, Act 26 2015 took effect expanding crimes code 18 to include cyber bullying in the state's Offense of Cyber-harassment statute. Cyber bullying is [bullying](#) that takes place using electronic technology. Electronic technology includes devices and equipment such as cell phones, computers, and tablets as well as communication tools including social media sites, text messages, chat, and websites. Examples of cyber-bullying include mean text messages or emails, rumors sent by email or posted on social networking sites, and embarrassing pictures, videos, websites, or fake profiles.

CAFETERIA

Lunch: All students must bring or buy a lunch on full day sessions. Those bringing lunch may purchase milk or other beverages.

Rules: The use of good manners is encouraged and, therefore, the following cafeteria rules are to be observed:

- Remain seated unless disposing of garbage.
- Refrain from abusing food; your own or that of others.
- Do not waste food.
- Always walk while in the cafeteria.
- Refrain from shouting or screaming; enjoy the company of those nearby.
- Be courteous and respectful to all those helping during the lunch period.
- Do not take food from the cafeteria.
- Keep your table, chair, and floor area clean.
- Raise your hand to ask for assistance.
- Family members and/or outside friends are not permitted to have lunch dates with students during the normal school day.

The cafeteria is operated in accordance with U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, which prohibits discrimination based on race, color, sex, age, handicap, religion, or national origin.

CATECHETICS

- Catechetics is the center of the Catholic school. A conscious effort is made to create a Christ-centered atmosphere by stressing Christian values and morality in the classroom as well as throughout the school. A conscious effort is made to integrate catechetics into every aspect of the school curriculum. Our belief in Jesus has drawn us to this school community.
- Our beliefs are expressed in and strengthened by daily communal prayer. Students develop skills and a love for the Church's daily worship. Prayer includes a prayer service each morning along with simple prayers before and after lunch and at the end of the day. An introduction each morning briefly sketches the saint or feast of the day or some aspect of the liturgical season. Attention is also given to the seasons of the year, to the anniversaries of historical figures and peacemakers of our time, and to the civil holidays that have significance for our children.
- Faith experiences are an integral part of catechetic. Opportunities for Mass and other Liturgies, Reconciliation, Stations of the Cross, the Rosary, and other Catholic prayers, classroom prayer, and service to others are to be included. All students are required to attend these religious services. Community is at the heart of Catholic education, not simply as a concept to be learned, but as a reality to be lived.
- The principal, in conjunction with the pastor and the catechetical administrator, work with the teachers in the religious development and sacramental preparation of the students. Parent/guardian preparation programs for Reconciliation, Eucharist, Confirmation, and the Catholic Vision of Love are held during the year. These are parish programs and involve all eligible children and parents/guardians of the parish.

CALENDAR

Please check your child's book bag for notices and the school's website for monthly updates to the school calendar. Important information will be posted on the school website, as well.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Any change of address, phone number, emergency phone number, or any other registration information should be reported immediately to the office. It is important that when moving, proper public-school transportation personnel be notified several weeks in advance.

CHURCH ATTENDANCE

St. Joseph School students will attend mass and/or prayer services as they occur.

CLOTHING IDENTIFICATION

Parents/guardians are strongly urged to mark their children's personal belongings with their names or initials. Since children do not readily claim lost items, proper identification helps us to find the owner and this saves parents/guardians the cost of replacement. The lost-and-found area is located in the school office. Parents/guardians and children are encouraged to look for lost clothing items there. All lost items, such as glasses, clothing, watches, and purses, if found, are to be turned in to the office. Items that are not claimed by the end of each school year are donated to charity.

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN SCHOOL AND HOME

To be effective in the collaborative effort between the school and the family in the education of each child, parents and school personnel must have means of clear and frequent communication. At St. Joseph School, we communicate with families in a variety of ways:

- **Principal E-mail:** Regular emails will be sent, which may include information about various school events, schedule changes, event updates, requests, instructions, answers to common questions, and more.
- **Teachers:** Communication via home letters (book bags), notices, parent-teacher conferences, etc.
- **School Website:** School calendar, school documents, student/parent handbook, teacher contact information, and more
- **OptionC Website:** Using our administration software (called "Option C") you can review grades and assignments by logging in with a name & password.
- **E-mail:** Teachers are easily reached with e-mail messages.
- **Leave a Message:** Feel free to call our school receptionist to write a message for your teacher or come to school and write a message that can be deposited in the teacher's inter-office mailbox. Teachers check their mailboxes several times per day.
- **Appointments:** Contact the teacher using one of the above means to schedule an appointment with your child's teacher. Please remember that an elementary school teacher's day is very busy, and an after-school appointment is often the best time to

meet with a teacher. Also, please refrain from even brief meetings with teachers that might distract them from their task of teaching or supervising students.

- **Refrain from Calling Teachers' Homes or Personal Cell Phones:** Parents are encouraged to contact teachers through the school in any of the above ways rather than at home or on teachers' personal cell phones *unless the teacher invites you to do so*. Like all of us, teachers need their private time at home and with family away from the school
- **Principal:** The principal welcomes all communication with parents, informally or by appointment. The principal will be communicating with parents through regular and special school publications, at school events, and during informal meetings designed to discuss such issues as curriculum, student progress, behavior, and so on. You are welcome to make an appointment with the principal through e-mail or by calling the office.

CURRICULUM

St. Joseph School offers a strong traditional curriculum. In the "Continuous Growth Program" of the Diocese of Pittsburgh, students advance through a defined curriculum according to their individual needs and abilities. In addition to meeting the Pennsylvania Department of Education Standards, the curriculum gives special attention to the integration of Gospel Values. Curriculum Guidelines for all subject areas are utilized by the Catholic elementary schools and are provided through the Department of Catholic Schools. All textbooks are selected from the list of recommended texts devised by the Curriculum Directors of the Diocese.

Language Arts: The philosophy inherent in the language arts curriculum is one of continuous growth which recognizes and nurtures the God given potential and learning style of the individual. Language, as communication, enables one to become more perceptive through listening, observing, and feeling. Language, as a skill, provides one with the important tools to speak fluently, to read and comprehend, to compose, to write legibly, and to spell correctly. An awareness of the history of language and the continuous development of vocabulary also are important phases of skill development. An appreciation of literature enriches the student through the experience of skillful authors who vicariously open new worlds to the pupil.

Mathematics: The mathematics curriculum presents numerous opportunities for the integration of faith, culture, and life by developing an awareness of the Gospel values which should permeate real-life problem-solving situations. It is our mission to enable all students to learn the skills, acquire the knowledge, and develop the attitudes in mathematics necessary for them to become morally and socially responsible citizens. The challenge is not only to meet and to exceed grade level expectations, but to excite students to explore topics on their own, to develop proof for answers, and to learn from one another.

Social Studies: In the Catholic school, social studies provides many opportunities for teachers to help students understand, appreciate, and learn how to live Christian social values. The scope of the social studies curriculum includes elements of anthropology, economics, geography, history, political science, and sociology, with emphasis on global awareness and values. An integrated interdisciplinary approach helps students develop a sense of relationship among the various social studies disciplines. A clear understanding of current events helps students to integrate the past with the present and helps to prepare them for the future. The social studies curriculum begins in kindergarten with an introduction to community helpers. It

progresses in the primary grades to the study of family and friends, and later encompasses a more in-depth study of the community. Beginning in fourth grade, the curriculum focuses on the study of the United States land regions and Pennsylvania history. At the fifth-grade level, the focus is on United States history through the Civil War. Sixth grade students study world cultures and current events with an emphasis on the countries of the eastern hemisphere. Seventh grade focuses on United States history beginning with Native Americans and ending with the formation of the Constitution. Eighth grade students study United States history beginning with the Pre-Civil War Era up to and including World War II. Map and geography skills are taught at all levels.

World Languages: The Church is universal and embraces all peoples regardless of race, nationality, and financial status. Therefore, the Catholic school encourages the study of world languages and other cultures. Students learn the sounds and syntax of the language and work toward proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. A variety of materials and methods are used for instruction. Enhancement of communication, expanding career opportunities, and community building are some of the outcomes of the world language program. St. Joseph School offers Spanish as a world language in grades kindergarten through eight. Many students qualify for year two of this language upon entering high school.

Science: A respect for the sacredness of all life, the pursuit of peace and order in the world, an awareness of the responsibility to be co-creators of life-giving designs, and protectors of the environment, are primary goals of the teaching of science in the Catholic schools in the Diocese of Pittsburgh. The science curriculum focuses on an inquiry-based process and fosters collaborative learning. Science education strengthens life skills such as creative problem solving, critical thinking, team cooperation, use of technology, and the value of life-long learning.

Algebra: This subject is an extension of the math course and is offered to students who have completed the requirements of the eighth-grade math course and are eligible to begin ninth grade requirements.

Health Education: This course is oriented toward the development of proper attitudes and behavior in mental and physical health. Desirable health practices are encouraged so that the student accepts responsibility for his or her own physical well-being. The curriculum presents information at each level of development that will help students make wise, moral decisions with respect for the God given gift of life. The health curriculum places holistic emphasis on wellness, fitness, behaviors, and skills for healthy, active living. Education and health for children are inextricably intertwined. Students then have the benefit of sustained learning for reducing health risk behaviors and enhancing health promoting behaviors.

Physical Education: Physical education is a vital component of the curriculum. We recognize the value of teaching students to establish healthy active lives and develop skills needed for present and future leisure. The curriculum assists students in identifying their physical strengths and weaknesses and encourages students to build on these strengths to achieve personal goals. Students learn to follow rules and to respect the rights of others through games and physical activity. Learning to channel energies constructively helps students perform successfully in life.

Fine Arts: The Fine Arts program is vital to all students. Students have the opportunity to deepen their awareness of God's gift of creation and to respond in unique ways to the beauty

and goodness of the world through music, art, and drama. Instruction in the arts contributes to the development of the whole person, promotes individual expression, allows experimentation with diverse materials and elements, enables exploration and appreciation of the works of other students, major artists, and musicians, develops an awareness and sensitivity toward the environment, and finally promotes a deeper understanding of heritage and culture. The Fine Arts curriculum provides a holistic approach to education that incorporates many aspects of the core curriculum and can be integrated into the total educational experience. The Church, in her educational mission, embraces and fosters growth in all individual and social human dimensions including spiritual, moral, intellectual, emotional, and physical. This occurs through a ministry embracing a message of faith, taught and lived in community, and reaching out in service to others.

Library/Media /Technology Center: The school library/media/technology center exists primarily to support and enrich the curriculum. It is a service and teaching agency as well as a place of purposeful learning where the use of all resources, print and non-print, correlates with the school curriculum to intensify and individualize a child's educational experiences. The library/media/technology center is an integrated part of the total curriculum and is an essential element in the development of lifelong learning skills for students. The integrated approach permits students to develop library/media/technology skills as the need for these skills naturally emerge from the curriculum. The librarian and classroom teachers are partners in the instructional process. They plan and implement these activities so that the goals of both the content area and the library/media/technology program are achieved. Our children live in the age of information. A primary objective of education is to learn how to identify, locate, organize, and present needed information in a clear, concise, and persuasive manner. As technologies change, students need to develop skills to manage complex information. The school library/media/technology program is the vehicle that provides opportunities for students to achieve these skills and to foster a life-long interest in knowledge.

Computer: Computer instruction is essential in today's educational process. This instruction includes computer awareness and computer literacy. When this instruction and awareness are mastered, the computer becomes a basic tool for teaching logical thinking and problem-solving, creative writing, communication, the handling of information, and many other aspects of the curriculum.

Since the Continuous Growth Philosophy guides instruction in schools of the diocese, students are led into phases of computer instruction according to their needs and abilities. Teachers of computer literacy look beyond hardware and develop an awareness of values such as relationships, collaboration, ethical conduct, responsibility, and creative expression. As in all other areas of the curriculum, the integration of the Gospel values is a part of the teaching/learning process in the computer lab and classroom.

Guidance: The guidance curriculum is integrated throughout all subject areas. Its goal is that all children will develop self-understanding and a feeling of self-worth. Teachers play an important role in helping the student come to an understanding of his/her personal strengths and weaknesses and in developing their self-confidence. The service of a guidance counselor is available on a limited basis. Psychological testing may also be requested. School personnel are aware of mental health agencies located in the neighborhood and local community.

CUSTODIAL/NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

Every student must have at least one custodial parent or guardian while he/she is enrolled at St. Joseph School. The student must reside in a home with the parent(s) or legal guardian(s). The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act gives full rights to each parent, unless the school has been provided with evidence that there is a court order, state statute or legally binding document relating to such matters as divorce, separation or custody that specifically revokes these rights. Such an order is to be on file in the school and those persons responsible for the child(ren) are to be informed of the circumstances. Every effort is made to keep the non-custodial parent apprised of the progress of the child(ren) through reports, report cards and parent/teacher conferences.

DISCIPLINE

St. Joseph School administration and faculty are committed to teach and model Gospel values to encourage students to live their lives as a reflection of Christ. The philosophy of the school strives to recognize and respect the dignity of each person and to offer a positive, Christ-centered, safe learning environment based on the Social Teachings of the Church. Discipline is considered an element of moral guidance, not as a form of punishment.

Discipline is fundamental in Catholic education. Parents must assist the teachers in guiding the children in the acceptance of responsibility. It is important to teach the child early and consistently to accept the consequences of his/her actions. Discipline is essential to learning and the key to good conduct and respecting the rights of others. The purpose of the discipline code is to foster the growth of self-discipline, to enable students to be responsible for their own actions, to develop self-control, and to accept consequences for inappropriate behavior. All members of the faculty and staff share the responsibility to model appropriate behaviors, to support the structure necessary for learning self-discipline, and to maintain these standards throughout the school community. Students are encouraged to assume responsibility for their actions, develop self-control, and accept responsibility and consequences for inappropriate behavior.

To create a Christ-centered environment that fosters good discipline, efforts at home and school should seek to model and instill the following behaviors:

- 1) recognizing and fostering the uniqueness and dignity of everyone;
- 2) nurturing respect in all relationships;
- 3) developing a sense of rights and responsibilities and commitment to the entire school family and community; and
- 4) teaching, modeling, practicing, and infusing social skills into daily life and experience.

The school and the parents are partners in the education of children/adolescents. If, in the opinion of the administration, that partnership is no longer viable, the school reserves the right to require the parents to withdraw the student from the school. Every teacher has the authority and responsibility to apply appropriate disciplinary measures to a student violating any of the school's regulations or policies.

In an effort to help students make positive choices and to create a positive climate for learning, St. Joseph School will implement a merit and demerit system to address behavior. This system will provide rewards for positive behaviors and consequences for negative behaviors. This system is intended to assist students in making good choices thus producing well-behaved students. Our ultimate goal is to develop students who are self-disciplined and good citizens.

Teachers and administrators are expected to handle minor discipline incidents in the classroom, as well as in common areas of the school such as the hallways, cafeteria, and during assemblies. While verbal reprimands and redirection are usually appropriate and sufficient to correct minor misbehavior, some incidents may be disruptive enough or persistent enough to warrant interventions such as losing privilege/favored activity, losing recess, being placed on lunch detention, or receiving demerits. An accumulation of 5 demerits will result in after-school detention on a pre-determined day. Major infractions may result in disciplinary action that is not addressed through the use of demerits.

This system will help parents, guardians and students to be more aware of expected student conduct and the consequences of violations of the code of conduct. Demerits provide for a fair and consistent school discipline policy. This system provides for weekly communication between school and home.

EARNING MERITS (REWARD COUPONS)

Students who demonstrate the following POSITIVE behaviors can earn MERITS:

1. Trustworthiness (honesty, returning lost items)
2. Respect (value others' opinions and property)
3. Responsibility
4. Fairness (cooperation, accountability)
5. Citizenship (pride in school)
6. Caring (manners, holding the door, helping a classmate)
7. Outstanding behavior during assemblies and emergency drills
8. Any other positive behaviors recognized by faculty members

DISCIPLINE DEMERITS

(Demerits will be "reset" to zero at the beginning of each report card period.)

One (1) Demerit:

- Uniform violation
- Late to class
- Gum chewing
- Minor disruptive behavior in class
- Throwing objects
- Inappropriate behavior during emergency drills
- Unexcused tardy
- Incomplete homework
- Use of unkind words towards others
- Argumentative/rudeness

Three (3) Demerits:

- Inappropriate behavior during Mass
- Failure to report for after-school detention
- Improper language (cursing/vulgar)
- Deliberate disobedience
- Throwing objects and hitting someone
- Physically hurting someone
- Leaving area without permission
- Dressing inappropriately on NUT days
- Destruction of school, church, or others' property
- Use of personal electronic devices during school hours
- Bullying
- Unacceptable use of school's electronic devices
- Refusal to comply with direction from an adult
- Lying
- Cheating
- Obscene gestures
- Repeated class disruptions
- Disrespect for authority
- Verbal peer harassment

5-10 Demerits:

- Fighting
- Violent or threatening behavior
- Harassment
- **Truancy
- **Pulling fire alarm at an inappropriate time

Out of School Suspension and/or Expulsion:

- Fighting, violent or threatening behavior
- Assault
- Possession of tobacco, alcohol, drugs, vaping tools, etc.
- Smoking
- Being under the influence, using, possessing, or selling alcoholic beverages/illegal drugs on school property and at school functions/activities
- Chronic undesirable conduct detrimental to the physical and/or moral well-being of self or other students as evidenced by an accumulation of three (3) suspensions
- A single serious incident, event, or situation involving disregard for or a clear violation of a school rule or regulation
- Conduct judged by the principal as seriously contrary to the purpose of Catholic education, the goals of the school, the physical or spiritual welfare of the students or members of the school community.

Immediate Expulsion:

- Possession of knives/illegal weapons

In areas where a specific Diocesan policy exists, those policies apply and can result in referrals to law enforcement or other government agencies:

1. Weapons policy
2. Drug/alcohol policy
3. Any purposeful action that results in bodily harm to another

In the case of expulsion, the procedures outlined below are followed unless waived by the parents:

1. The student is suspended with written notice to the parents that expulsion is under consideration;
2. The principal and teacher meet with parents/guardians;
3. The proposed action is reviewed by a committee consisting of the pastor, principal and two non-involved faculty members;
4. The review committee discusses the question, giving its opinion and reasons in writing;
5. The opinion of the review committee is then reviewed by the Pastor. If the pastor confirms a decision for expulsion, it is submitted to Department for Catholic Schools for review and confirmation;
6. The parents/guardians are informed of the decision and notified of the opportunity for further review of the matter by Diocesan authorities;
7. If the decision is for expulsion, dismissal is immediate.

DRESS CODE

Uniform Policy: St. Joseph School is a Catholic elementary school, which maintains the right to establish a uniform dress code for its students. It is recognized that proper school attire and good grooming are conducive to a student's educational and social development.

This Dress Code was developed:

- To promote a Christian atmosphere
- To free children for academic concentration
- To de-emphasize competition among children regarding clothing
- To allow more economical dress for school
- To provide some choice to accommodate individuals' differences

This dress code is required of all students, Kindergarten through Eighth grade. The cooperation of every parent and student is necessary in order to avoid any embarrassment for the children who come to school out of uniform. Parents will be called to bring the required uniform to school if the student is out of uniform. The wearing of uniforms for all students instills a sense of equality that is free of competitiveness. Regardless of sex, religion, race, or economic status, all students are relieved of added stress and peer pressure. Occasional "NUT" (no uniform today) days are scheduled throughout the year.

Uniforms may be purchased at Schoolbelles at Ross Park Mall or www.schoolbelles.com. Some uniform items may be found at local department stores.

JUMPERS/SKIRTS FOR GIRLS: Khaki, navy-blue or plaid jumpers or skirts (Knee length) purchased through Schoolbelles.

PANTS: Khaki, black, or navy-blue pants with pleated or flat front. Jeans, cargo pants, athletic type pants, and painter /carpenter type pants are NOT permitted. Pants are not permitted to be skintight or low riding. Leggings/yoga pants are not permitted. The following restrictions apply: no flared legs, no zipper pockets, no back pockets (except slit style). Corduroy pants are permitted.

Boys must wear standard black or brown belts in grades 4-8.

SHIRTS AND BLOUSES: Shirts are to be solid white, navy, or powder blue. Shirts may be polo, oxford, or white turtleneck. No corporate logos are permitted. Shirts must always be tucked in.

SHORTS: Walking khaki, black, or navy-blue shorts are permitted to be worn until the weather turns cold. Announcements will be sent from the office when pants will be required. Belts must be worn with shorts.

SWEATERS: Cardigans or sweaters must be navy blue. NO corporate logos. Navy sweatshirts with the St. Joseph logo may be worn with a uniform shirt underneath. **No hooded sweatshirts are permitted.**

SOCKS: Solid white, black, gray, or navy-blue socks must always be worn. Ped/no-show type sport socks are not permitted. White, navy, or black tights may be worn.

SHOES: Must be black or brown dress leather that are low cut, below the ankle, and are distinctly non-athletic. All black athletic shoes are acceptable if the brand mark is also colored in black. Brightly colored, neon, or highly decorated shoes are not permitted. Cowboy boots, sandals, knee high boots, Uggs, clogs, hiking boots, heellies, or high heels are not permitted.

HAIRSTYLE: Hairstyles for both girls and boys must conform to good grooming standards and be its natural color. NO graphic or cut out designs are permitted in either boy or girl hairstyles. Hair for our young men should be clean, neatly combed, and not below the collar. Girls may wear a small headband or small bow of a color that corresponds with our school uniform.

JEWELRY: Minimal and conservative jewelry is permitted. Pendants should be Christian in nature. Girls may wear post-type earrings only. Boys are not permitted to wear earrings.

MAKE-UP: No obvious make-up is to be worn. Girls may wear neutral or clear fingernail polish.

GYM UNIFORM: All students must keep a clean pair of sneakers (with white or non-marking soles) at school to use on gym days. Students will need to purchase gym attire through the school office. The gym uniform consists of solid, navy-blue shorts or navy-blue sweatpants (no logos or brand names), gold shirt with SJS emblem, and indoor athletic shoes as described above. On gym days, students are permitted to wear gym uniforms with their own sneakers to school.

UNIFORM EXCHANGE PROGRAM: If your child has outgrown his/her current uniform items, you may donate them to St. Joseph School. If your child needs new uniform sizes, please help yourself to our donated supply of shirts, jumpers, skirts, dress pants, and sweaters.

SPECIAL DRESS DAYS: Throughout the school year, special dress days will be announced. "NUT" days, "Sunday Best" days, School Spirit days, and theme days are some examples of non-uniform days. There may be a nominal cost to participate. All money collected will be donated to a charitable or other worthy cause. All such days are strictly optional. If a student chooses, they may wear their school uniform on these special days. Dress down days may be casual wear, jeans, jogging outfit, T-shirts with no graphics, etc. NO short shorts or tank tops, and **no hooded sweatshirts may be worn.**

EARLY DISMISSALS

Parents/guardians should make every effort to schedule appointments at a time that school is not in session. If an early dismissal is necessary, parents should send a note to school with the child so that the teacher and student can prepare for the early dismissal. We kindly ask parents to help us with an orderly dismissal and safe accounting of all our students by not interrupting the dismissal process at 2:42. For early dismissals, parents/guardians, or an authorized adult, must meet the child at the office and sign him/her out at the authorized time. Students who leave school before 11:15 A.M., on full day sessions, and do not return that afternoon, will be marked absent for the afternoon (1/2 day).

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

No student is permitted to have any personal electronic devices (including cell phones) on his/her person during school hours. Students must turn off the power and leave these items in their backpacks. Electronics/cell phones should be clearly marked with the student's name. Student use of any communication devices, cell phones, laser pointers, remote control devices, or any other such items, is prohibited during school hours. Students who do not follow this policy will have their devices held in the office until the end of the school day.

EMERGENCY CLOSINGS AND DELAYS

Whenever there is a question of school being in session because of inclement weather, St. Joseph School follows the decision of the Penn Hills School System. The TV stations and their websites post information about the Penn Hills Schools as well as St. Joseph School. KDKA, WPXI, and WTAE TV will have the most current information. Please do not call the school or parish office. If the Penn Hills Schools call for two-hour delay due to inclement weather, St. Joseph School students will have a two-hour delay as well.

EMERGENCY DISMISSALS

In the event of weather or other emergency once school is in session, Penn Hills School officials notify the school and the news media that Penn Hills schools will be closing, and students will be bussed home as soon as possible. If possible, you will receive an alert on "Option C." Your children may stay at school until you or another authorized adult can come, or they can go home on the buses when they arrive. We will follow the directive you give on the Emergency Information Card. The school office may not be able to take individual calls. If you have chosen to have your child take the bus, you must make plans for such an emergency. Please make arrangements and alert your child where to go if he/she arrives home in your absence. Please do not depend upon school phone lines and availability of staff to address individual needs.

EMERGENCY DRILLS

Emergency procedures, such as fire drills, extreme weather drills, partial and full-lockdowns, reverse evacuations, and "shelter in place" drills are held regularly. Exit directions, which are posted prominently in each room, are followed. Students maintain silence during all drills. Teachers instruct the students regarding the directives for drills.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

At the beginning of each school year, parents are required to complete an Emergency Information Card. It is imperative that the school can reach you to inform you of illness or an emergency situation. It is also important to list the names of others who can be contacted should you be unavailable or who have your permission to take your child in the event of an emergency. Please keep the form updated by notifying the office of changes.

EXCHANGE OF MONEY

Nowhere on school property are students permitted to exchange currency for the purposes of buying or selling merchandise from other students. Students are not permitted to solicit money from other students in the cafeteria or anywhere else on school or church premises.

FIELD TRIPS

Every class is permitted field trips during the year. Each student must have a signed Diocesan permission slip before he/she is permitted to participate. Transportation, in accordance with Diocesan directives, is provided by bus, and a fee may be charged to cover costs. Guidelines for both students and chaperones are in effect for each field trip. A copy of the student guidelines should be sent home by the teacher so that the parent/guardian may help reinforce the guidelines presented. ALL CHAPERONES must be compliant in our Safe Environment Database.

FOOD

Holiday party food and party logistics will be orchestrated by the homeroom parent and the teacher. Please do not send your students with any food on party days unless approved by your child's teacher. Students will be given an approved drink and snack during the celebration. Birthdays may be celebrated with food consumption. Please clear this with your child's teacher in advance. Birthdays can also be recognized by donating a book to our school library by your child, and/or small trinkets like erasers, stickers, pencils etc. can be passed out by your child. Your teachers have a variety of suggestions on how to recognize your child's birthday here at school.

FUNDRAISING

St. Joseph School families will be able to receive a rebate on their tuition in an amount up to \$595 through fundraising.

HEALTH SERVICES

Whenever possible, medicine is to be given at home. Parents should request that the physician adjusts the schedule for administration so that it can be given before and after school hours. If medicine must be administered at school, the following guidelines apply:

1. The medication must be delivered to the school by a responsible adult along with a physician's written request for distribution during school hours.
2. Medication brought to school must be in the original container. The label must include the student's name, physician's name, date of prescription, dosage, and frequency of administration.
3. Students will self-administer their medication with staff supervision.
4. In the case of asthma, the school should have written prescription from the doctor indicating the child's prescription. Inhalers may be kept in the office. Some medications, such as epi-pens, may be kept in the office. Forms, to be completed by both the physician and the parent/guardian, must be obtained from the school office.

If a student becomes ill during the school day, the school secretary will phone the parent. NO CHILD is permitted to leave the school until a parent, or an adult designated by the parent,

comes to the office to receive the child and signs for the student's release. Identification may be required.

A school nurse assigned from the local school district is responsible for:

1. Keeping updated health records for all students
2. Screening students for hearing
3. Ensuring the completion of physical examinations before the entrance to school and in 6th grade.
4. Vision screening annually
5. Scoliosis screening in grade 7
6. Recording height and weight for students annually
7. Recording required immunizations

The Pennsylvania School Law requires dental examinations for students entering grades K, 3, and 7. We recommend that your family dentist perform these examinations and complete the required forms that can be submitted to the school. School dental health evaluations will be provided for students who do not furnish proof of a private dental examination.

HONOR ROLL/HIGH HONOR ROLL

Students in Grades 6-8 may qualify for the St. Joseph School Honor Roll or High Honor Roll. A special Academic Awards ceremony is held in May. A student qualifies if he/she receives the defined grades in all the first three nine weeks and up to the progress reports for the fourth quarter.

ILLNESS

It is often difficult to decide if your child should stay home from school when complaining of illness. An objective sign is an elevated temperature. It is recommended that a child be kept home from school until the temperature has remained normal (below 100 degrees) for 24 hours. If a child has a temperature of 100° or more, skin rash, diarrhea/vomiting, strep throat, or evidence of lice, the child will be sent home. Parents are asked to use discretion in sending their children to school if they display any of these symptoms. Please inform the school office if your child becomes sick with a contagious illness. Notes will be sent home with the other children to warn parents of contact and incubation of communicable diseases.

INTERNET USE

Internet access is available throughout the school for all computers. The following guidelines have been established to ensure the correct use of the Internet. Parents and/or guardians are asked to review these guidelines with their child/children and complete and return the parent/guardian "internet use agreement" form. The guidelines include, but are not limited to, the following areas:

- Information and news from a wide variety of sources and research institutions
- Public domain and shareware software of all types
- Discussion groups
- Access to any educational institutions and libraries
- Acceptable use of camera

Etiquette:

- Be polite when sending written messages to others.
- Appropriate language is expected in all messages.
- Anything pertaining to illegal activity is expressly forbidden.
- Do not reveal access information, personal or otherwise.
- Do not disrupt others' use of the internet access.
- All users should remember that deleted materials can be retrieved.

The following actions, which are not inclusive, are considered unacceptable:

- Using camera without permission
- Placing unlawful information on the Internet
- Using the Internet for non-school related activities
- Sending messages that are likely to result in loss of the recipients' work or systems
- Using the Internet for commercial purposes
- Sending or receiving copyrighted material without permission
- Plagiarism
- Using Internet access to send or retrieve pornographic material, inappropriate file text, files dangerous to the integrity of the system, violent or threatening material or messages
- Circumventing security measures on school or remote computers or networks
- Vandalism
- Falsifying one's identity
- Using social networking sites

Conduct, whether inside or outside the school, which is detrimental to the reputation of the school, staff, or students can result in discipline. Therefore, defamatory or threatening statements and images exchanged on social media can result in discipline of the student account holders. No one may use the school name, logo, or motto on any type of social media or in any other way, e.g. putting the name on tee-shirts, for example, without the written permission of the principal or pastor.

LEGITIMACY OF STUDENT WORK

It is expected that students complete and submit assignments that reflect their own understanding of the concepts taught or studied. Some students may require the assistance of adult or peer tutors, parents, guardians, or other resources. However, any assignment submitted must be a true reflection of the student's own work, vocabulary, and understanding. Teachers have the right and responsibility to question the legitimacy of homework, research papers, reports, etc. Homework that is copied from another student, completed by family members or friends, downloaded from the Internet, or is otherwise clearly beyond the student's own academic ability, is subject to question by the teacher. A student who engages in such instances of illegitimate or plagiarized work is subject to disciplinary action and will be required to resubmit legitimate work.

LOST and FOUND

The school is not responsible for money or valuable items, i.e. electronics, brought to school by the students. Money should be placed in a sealed envelope marked with the student's name, room number, amount, and the purpose for which the money is to be used. Lost items that are labeled are returned to the owner. Lost items of value, such as watches, glasses, keys, jewelry, etc., are kept at the office.

MIDDLE STATES ACCREDITATION

St. Joseph School is accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools. Middle States accreditation is an expression of confidence in our school's mission, goals and objectives, performance and resources and validates publicly the excellence in education. The Middle States Evaluation is an ongoing process requiring the submission of updated plans every three years. After eight years the school is reevaluated for continued accreditation. St. Joseph School was recently re-accredited in 2017.

NON-DISCRIMINATION

Saint Joseph School admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

OBSCENE MATERIAL

Any material that is considered by the school to be pornographic or offensive, whether printed, or on the internet, pictured, drawn, or recorded, is unacceptable and strictly forbidden on school property or at school-related activities. St. Joseph School reserves the right to decide what constitutes a violation. Consequences, as stated in this handbook, will be employed.

PARTIES/PARTY INVITATIONS

The Homeroom Parents organize parties for special occasions during the school year. No other instructional time should be used for parties without the principal's permission. Birthday treats must be store bought and preapproved by the homeroom teacher. Please do not send party invitations to school to be distributed for your child's birthday. This causes hurt feelings among the students who are not invited. The only exception to this is if every girl and every boy (all the students) in your child's room are invited.

PHOTO RELEASE FORM

At the beginning of the school year, parents must sign a parent release form to allow or not allow their child to be photographed for news stories, yearbooks, or any other type of marketing for our school.

PLAYGROUND

Every school day, weather permitting, the students enjoy an outside break. Organized play is encouraged. Rough games are not permitted. Students are never to leave the playground area. In case of illness or accident, the student is to report to the on-duty staff/teacher. Staff/teachers have the responsibility of enforcing rules. They are to be obeyed and treated respectfully. When the bell rings to end the playground session, the students will be met by their homeroom teachers and move to their classrooms quietly. Food and drinks are not permitted to be taken out of the cafeteria. Do not reenter the building unless for an emergency. Stay in assigned areas. Display good sportsmanship and exercise self-control. Always play fairly. Refrain from all types of fighting, name calling, etc. Courteously and promptly, obey the directives of the playground supervisors. Stop playing at once when the bell rings and walk quietly to line. If inclement weather makes it necessary to stay indoors at lunchtime, recess will be held inside. The same rules are to be observed.

PROCEDURE FOR COMPLAINTS AND CONCERNS

If you have a concern, problem or question relating to a classroom or school situation, please speak first with the person involved. If your concern or problem is with a particular teacher, contact that teacher first. Generally, most problems can be resolved at this level. However, if you are not satisfied with the solution after discussing the matter with the person involved, you may then ask for an appointment with the Principal. If after going through these steps you are still not satisfied, the last recourse for the unsettled concern would be a request from the parent for a meeting with the Pastor. You are also free to contact the Diocesan Education Consultant, who works closely with Catholic school principals in our diocese. You may also contact the Superintendent of Catholic Education and/or the Bishop of the Diocese of Pittsburgh (though you will likely be encouraged to work with his appointed staff first). Except in the most serious of circumstances, most discussions at the highest levels will be reviewed with the pastor and principal, and the discussion will continue at the level of the Pastor.

P.T.G. (PARENT-TEACHER GUILD)

The St. Joseph Parent-Teacher Guild's objective is the advancement of Catholic education and the welfare of the school children. It also attempts to enhance the parent's role in the educational development of the child. St. Joseph School has an active PTG directed by an elected Board. Ad hoc committees are organized for various functions.

PUBLICITY

All information that is sent through our school MUST be cleared through the office. This includes notices from PTG and fundraising information.

REPORT CARDS/CONFERENCES

Parents are informed of the student's progress through interim reports, quarterly report cards, conferences, and conduct referrals. Any questions concerning your child should be directed to the teacher. Please call the school office and the teacher will be notified to contact you. You can also email the teacher. If you have a concern of a general nature, please feel free to contact the principal directly. Report cards are issued four times a year.

The first report card is given to parents at the first conference of the school year. Subsequent report cards are distributed directly to the students. Conferences are scheduled for two report periods. If additional conferences are needed, teachers are available by appointment before or after school. Appointments can be arranged by calling the school or sending a note with your child. Sufficient time should be allowed for arrangements to be made. Because of the importance of class time, no teacher is to be called from class to meet with parents. Following the Tuition Policy, reports cards will be held and access to Option C will be restricted when tuition is overdue.

RETURN CHECK POLICY

There will be a \$35.00 fee for any check returned from the bank for insufficient funds in addition to the amount of the check. Only cash or money order will be accepted as replacement. We will not accept a personal check to replace a returned check. If two (2) checks are returned during a school year, we will no longer accept a personal check for any payments (i.e. tuition, lunch tickets, etc.). Only cash, money order or cashier's check will be accepted. Please do not ask us to accept post-dated checks.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN

The purpose of the SEP of Diocese of Pittsburgh is to take reasonable measures to ensure that adults who have contact with minors (1) are committed to providing a safe environment for children and youth and (2) are capable of identifying and preventing abuse of children and (3) have no personal history of behavior that would be a threat to children.

Adults (18 or older) volunteering with children at St. Joseph School must be compliant in the requirements of the safe environment policy:

- Register in the Diocesan Safe Environment Database www.diopitt.org which processes the PA State Police Criminal Record Clearance
- Receive the Department of Public Welfare Child Abuse History Clearance
- Complete the Protecting God's Children training offered by the Diocese
- Read and sign the Pastoral Code of Conduct
- Read and sign The Child Protective Services Law documents
- FBI Clearance or Waiver/Disclosure Form
- Complete Mandated Reporter Training (3-hour training certificate)

SCHOOL ENTRANCES

All doors to the school will be locked during school hours. Parents and visitors should use the doorbell at the main school door to gain access to the building. Students have been trained not to open doors for visitors. School entrances are equipped with camera surveillance.

SCHOOL REGULATIONS--GENERAL

Electronic/Cell Phones: No student is permitted to have any electronic device/cell phone on his/her person during school hours. Students must turn off the power and leave these items in their backpacks. Electronics/cell phones should be clearly marked with the student's name.

Hallways: When in the hallways and stairwells, students are to behave in an orderly fashion. No running, loud talking, pushing or shoving is permitted.

Lockers: Lockers and desks are school property and the school reserves the right to inspect them if circumstances arise which seem to warrant such action.

Restrooms: Restroom breaks are provided for the students. Any disruptive behavior and wasting of time will result in a Demerit issued according to policy.

School Property: When damage or defacement of any school property occurs through deliberate abuse, carelessness, or neglect, the person responsible will pay the cost of the repair or replacement.

Office Telephone: The office phone is available for use as deemed necessary. Students may use the office phone to call home if necessary and with the permission of the principal and/or a note from the teacher. When children forget personal items such as gym clothes/shoes, band instruments, lunches, etc., phone calls to parents are subject to the discretion of the principal.

Textbooks: Lost, damaged or defaced books must be paid for by the student. In order to prevent damage to textbooks, please use a cover.

Water Bottles: Students are permitted to use individual water bottles during warm months. Once the weather turns cooler, only students with medical reasons will be permitted to carry water bottles. All students are given water breaks during the day.

SECURITY/SAFETY

During school hours, parents and visitors must enter the school through the main school entrance and use the buzzer system. Once buzzed in, visitors must report straight to the main office. All visitors must sign-in. Alumni are always welcome to visit St. Joseph School. Please call ahead to make arrangements.

SEXUAL MISCONDUCT POLICY STATEMENT

The Diocese is committed to providing for its students an educational environment which is free from physical, psychological, sexual, or verbal harassment or misconduct. In this context, the diocese rejects and condemns all forms of sexual misconduct by school employees or volunteers. The diocese will not tolerate such behavior. Diocesan policy is strictly adhered to.

SPORTS PROGRAMS

St. Joseph School offers opportunities for students to be involved in a great sports program. Currently, we offer girls/boys basketball and girls/boys volleyball. Our students are also invited to participate in the track and cross-country programs at St. John's. To participate in our sports program, the following guidelines must be met:

- If a student receives a failing grade on a Progress Report or Report Card, the student will be removed from extra-curricular activities (Student Council, athletics, etc.) for 2 weeks and then will be re-evaluated. If there is no improvement, the suspension from extra-curricular activities will continue for 2 additional weeks.
- If a student receives a "D" on a Progress Report or a Report Card, the student will be put on probation. He/she may participate in practices and games while the homework, class work, and test performance are monitored. The student's progress will be re-evaluated after 2 weeks. A lack of improvement may result in an extra-curricular activities suspension of 2 weeks.

STEALING/THEFT

Stealing is considered an extreme breach of personal conduct and honor and will not be tolerated. Severe disciplinary measures will be taken, including the possibility of expulsion. Students must immediately turn in any item found to the office.

STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Student Assistance Program (SAP) is mandated in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania by Act 211 of 1990. It is a comprehensive program of prevention, intervention, and support for students in grades K-12. The members of the TEAM are the principal and faculty members of the school who have received special training through Approved Agencies. The program exists to promote the growth and development of the child. The team members work with students who are experiencing behavior difficulties which impact their social, emotional, and educational progress.

Referrals for the program are made by faculty and/or parents. Once a referral has been received by the Team, classroom teachers are asked to complete a form which helps identify the behaviors. The Team then makes informed assumptions as to what is needed to help the student, conveys the information to classroom teachers, parents/guardians, and evaluates the results. If necessary, after consultation with parents, appropriate referrals are made to outside agencies. Team members must maintain all information regarding students and their families under "safeguard of privacy and confidentiality." Access is limited to those who have a legitimate educational interest.

TARDINESS

Students who arrive at school after 8:07 are considered tardy. Every parent must sign the tardy child in at the main school office. Chronic tardiness will result in a conference with the principal and can translate into days absent. An "Excused" tardy is granted for doctor's appointments with a doctor's note. Other reasons for tardiness (traffic, oversleeping, running late) are considered "Unexcused." Students who arrive after 11:15 will be marked as absent for the morning session (1/2 day).

TUITION

Tuition is established by the pastor, school board, principal, and Finance Committee and is reviewed annually. Tuition options are offered to meet family needs. Parents who register a student in the school enter a contractual obligation with the school. They are expected to make payments promptly according to the plan chosen or a late fee may be added. Prompt payments are required for the school to operate in a fiscally responsible manner. A late fee may be assessed monthly on all delinquent accounts. Families experiencing difficulties which affect tuition payments must contact the school office to address their situation. Families with a three-month delinquency will have ten (10) days to bring their account current. Failure to meet this payment obligation could result in dismissal from school. Children of families with a delinquent account will not receive a report card nor will they have access to the online reporting on grades (Option C). No report cards/ academic records will be sent for eighth graders or transferring students until all financial obligations have been met.

TUITION ASSISTANCE

Scholarship money is available for families that qualify. The FACTS application is used and must be completed online. The applications, which are assessed by an independent evaluator, are generally due by mid-March 15th, and are used for Extra–Mile Scholarships, Bishop's Education Fund, OSTC, EITC, Bravo Foundation, and the St. Joseph Angel Fund.

VISITORS

For security reasons, anyone entering St. Joseph School is to report to the office secretary, regardless of the purpose of the visit. For the safety of all students, anyone going beyond the office must sign the visitor's log and wear a visitor's pass. Communication with teachers and students will be handled through the school office and will be done in a manner that does not disrupt the educational process in the school. Any articles or items to be left for a student during the school day should be left in the school office. This will eliminate any unnecessary interruptions to classes and instruction.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

The help of volunteers is always needed in the school and at school-sponsored events. School volunteers can include parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings (18+ years old), neighbors, etc. Please consider using some of your time and talents to help enhance our quality program. Volunteers are immediately needed in the following areas: cafeteria workers, lunch/recess monitors, field trip chaperones, homeroom parents, yearbook, coaching, library aides, and fundraising efforts.

WEAPONS POLICY

No weapon may be brought on to school property, including but not limited to, the school building, outdoor areas, outdoor facilities, or school busses, or to any school related activity. A weapon shall include but not be limited to any knife, cutting instrument, cutting tool, nun chuck stick, firearm, rifle, or any other tool, instrument or implement capable of inflicting bodily injury, which is possessed under circumstances not manifestly appropriate for lawful uses for which it might have. This includes firearms which are not loaded or lack a clip or other components to render it immediately operable. A person in possession of a weapon on school property violates the state criminal statutes and school regulations, and shall be subject to the following discipline and penalty:

- Parents will be immediately notified.
- The local police will be called.
- The student may be expelled.

WITHDRAW FROM SCHOOL

The education of a student is a partnership between the parents and the school. Just as the parent has the right to withdraw a child if desired, the school administration reserves the right to require withdrawal of a student if it is determined that the partnership is irretrievably broken. The pastor and principal (after review and consultation) may ask that a student withdraw from St. Joseph School for the following reasons:

1. Irreconcilable differences over the implementation of the mission of the school, the direction of the school as determined by its leadership or over matters of interpretation of policy (whether diocesan or school)
2. Poor or low personal and academic achievement:
 - a. The student is not achieving academic or disciplinary goals.
 - b. The teacher, after working with the student on setting and achieving goals agrees that progress is not being made and cannot be made under current circumstances.
 - c. The student is becoming a disruption to other students in the class.
3. Nonpayment of tuition or other bills
4. Serious disciplinary matters
5. Retention is recommended, and no seats are available in the grade for the next year

Dear Parents and Guardians,

St. Joseph School's administration and faculty are committed to teach and model Gospel values to encourage students to live their lives as a reflection of Christ. The philosophy of the school strives to recognize and respect the dignity of each person and to offer a positive, Christ-centered, safe learning environment.

Our goal is to make your child's educational experience both meaningful and productive. To accomplish that goal, every family must be informed of school policies and procedures. This handbook serves as the primary reference source for questions about the operation of St. Joseph School.

It is important that school personnel know that you have received this handbook. We ask that you read the handbook thoroughly and keep it accessible. Please become familiar with its contents. Of course, if you still have questions after referring to this handbook, please feel free to call the office.

The Handbook is an evolving document. If changes are necessary throughout the year, updates will be sent to you. Please sign and date this page and have your oldest child return it to his/her homeroom teacher. Furthermore, please sign and return the School Internet Use Policy. This signed document will permit your child access to the computer lab Internet system.

Sincerely,

St. Joseph School Administration

SAINT JOSEPH SCHOOL HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Please sign and return.

It is important that parents/guardians, students, and staff understand the policies and procedures of St. Joseph School. To ensure that the process of communication is complete, please review the revised Parent/Student Handbook with your child and sign/return this page to the school office via your child's homeroom teacher.

Child's name (please print): _____

(Please list all siblings attending SJV)

Child's Grade: _____

(Please list all grades of siblings)

We have read and agree to be governed by the contents of the Parent/Student Handbook.

Parent/Guardian's Signature: _____

Student's Signature: _____

(Please have all siblings sign)

Date: _____