

# Blessed Francis Seelos Academy Student/Parent Handbook



The school reserves the right to amend this Handbook at any time. Parents will be given prompt notice of any amendment.

**2021 Revision**

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# INTRODUCTION

## Vision and Mission Statements

### Vision Statement / North Hills Regional Catholic Elementary Schools

The teachers, school staff, and regional administration, in partnership with parents, seek to help our students reach their fullest potential and live faith-filled lives.

### Mission Statement / North Hills Regional Catholic Elementary Schools

To guide an educational system that teaches the Word of God through academic and religious education, and ensures opportunities to live the Catholic faith through service to each other and our community.

### Blessed Francis Seelos Academy Mission Statement

Blessed Francis Seelos Academy offers the parishes and surrounding communities a dynamic educational program that is deeply rooted in Catholic tradition and philosophy. We actively teach our students to be contemporary Christians and tomorrow's leaders.

## MIDDLE STATES ACCREDITATION

The Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools accredits Blessed Francis Seelos Academy. Middle States accreditation is an expression of confidence in Blessed Francis Seelos Academy'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 seven years the school is re-evaluated for continued accreditation. We will be re-accredited in 2021.

## CATECHETICS (Religious Formation)

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 each morning with simple prayers for before and after lunch and at the end of the day. 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 catechetics. Opportunities for Eucharistic Liturgies, Reconciliation, Stations of the Cross, the Rosary, and other Catholic prayers, classroom prayer and service to others are to be included. Community is at the heart of Catholic education, not simply as a concept to be learned, but as a reality to be lived.

The conferring of the sacraments is the responsibility of a family's home parish. However, the principal in conjunction with the local Pastors and the Catechetical Administrator work with the teachers in the religious development and sacramental preparation of the students. The actual receipt of sacraments is determined by the policies of the parish where the family is registered. Children wishing to receive sacraments outside of their home parish must obtain written approval from their local Pastor.

## INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

### CONTINUOUS GROWTH APPROACH TO INSTRUCTION

The Catholic Schools located within the Diocese of Pittsburgh are committed to a program of education that seeks knowledge and practice of the Catholic faith, academic excellence, moral courage and the learning of the faith in the light of social teachings of the Church.

The Catholic 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 all the requirements of the Pennsylvania Department of Education, the curriculum gives special attention to the integration of Gospel values.

Research indicates that children will achieve according to the expectancies placed upon them by their teachers and parents. Catholic school teachers place high expectations on all children so that all children are encouraged to achieve to the best of their ability.

This is particularly true in the skill areas of Reading and Math. The curricula for these subjects are so designed that students can advance through defined levels of competency according to their needs and abilities. Student achievement is evaluated at the students' grade level.

The goals of the Continuous Growth Program in Language Arts and Math are:

- to recognize and provide for differences in each student's growth patterns
- to provide an environment in reading and math classes that permits and encourages continuous progress
- to adapt the math and reading curriculum to each child so as to challenge maximum individual development
- to encourage students to exert effort so that they may experience success in their encounter with each school situation

## ACADEMIC SUPPORT

We strive to be as inclusive as possible in welcoming all students for whom we can provide an appropriate education. Therefore, we implement the Diocesan Academic Support Model to assist students who are struggling academically and/or have been identified as a person with a special need. Parents may request more information about this program from the principal or the child's teacher.

## CURRICULUM GUIDELINES

In the Catholic schools, quality academic education is dependent on an organized plan of basic content with special attention given to the integration of Gospel values.

Curriculum Guidelines for all subject areas are utilized by all Catholic elementary schools and are aligned to the State and National Standards. The guidelines endeavor to give continuity to the teaching/learning process, and are geared to meet the individual needs of students and to guide the teaching/learning process.

Flexible pacing is an important component of the continuous growth concept. This provision places students at an appropriate instructional level and then allows them to move forward in the curriculum as they achieve mastery of content and skills. Teachers will assess the instructional needs of students and provide differentiation through the use of small flexible groups.

Teachers, recognizing different learning styles, vary their presentation and assignments so as to provide for the individual needs of each child. Critical thinking skills, problem solving and research techniques are a part of instruction. Enrichment activities are provided for all students, to broaden lessons presented.

## SUBJECT AREAS

### Catechetics/Religious Education

The Catholic Church recognizes parents/guardians as the primary educators of their children. The role of the school is to supplement and complement the role of the parent. In the school, a formal catechetical program is taught daily. The Diocesan Catechetical Curriculum Guidelines, "Growing in God's Covenant" contain a balance of doctrinal content, scriptural understanding, faith formation, prayer and worship experiences.

The goals and objectives of the Catechetical program consistently enhance the spiritual formation and moral development of all students. A genuine, personal relationship with God is cultivated through worship and service. Liturgical and personal prayer are essential in the development of a strong spiritual foundation. Careful planning and programming ensures a broad and deep understanding of authentic Church Doctrine. A variety of materials and resources are used to foster both spiritual growth and moral development.

Parents are encouraged to communicate in words and actions the Church's teaching concerning human sexuality. When adults respond to their sexuality in a love-giving manner they enable their children to integrate the Church's teaching concerning human sexuality into their own lives. The Catholic Vision of Love is the Diocesan mandated Sexuality Program.



## Language Arts

The language arts curriculum presents numerous opportunities for the integration of faith, culture and life by developing an awareness of the Gospel values. 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 student.

## Mathematics

It is our mission to enable all students to learn the skills, acquire the knowledge, and develop the attitudes in mathematics and technology necessary for them to reach their full potential as morally and socially responsible citizens who can meet the demands of a changing global society. The challenge is not only to meet and 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.

Educational goals for all students are based upon the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics Standards:

- Develop the value of mathematics
- Do and apply mathematics competently
- Find and solve problems
- Communicate mathematically
- Reason mathematically
- Apply problem-solving and decision-making skills to real life situations
- Become self directed life-long learners
- Use appropriate communication and group interaction skills
- Demonstrate concern, tolerance, and respect for others

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## 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 prepares 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, both United States history through the Civil War and a study of the United States geographical regions are studied. Sixth grade students study World Cultures and World Geography with an emphasis on the countries of the Eastern Hemisphere. Seventh grade studies United States history to the Reconstruction and eighth grade studies United States history beginning with the Reconstruction to the modern day. Map and geography skills are taught at all levels. Social Studies prepares students for the future by instilling the importance of a value-oriented life perspective.

## Science

The primary goals of the teaching of science in the Catholic schools in the Diocese of Pittsburgh are to develop a respect for the sacredness of all life, the pursuit of peace and order in the world, and an awareness of the responsibility to be co-creators of life-giving designs and protectors of the environment.

In kindergarten through fifth grade, the science program covers general science topics. In grades six through eight, the students focus on specific areas including: life, chemistry/physical, earth and space. Across all grades, 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.

## World Languages

Because the Church is universal and embraces all people, regardless of race, nationality and financial status, the Catholic school encourages the study of world languages and other cultures. World language 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. Spanish is offered in grades kindergarten through eighth.

## Physical Education

The Elementary Physical Education Program addresses the needs of the individual child through a holistic approach. Spiritual, physical, psychological, social, and emotional needs are given prime consideration. The development of a positive self image through skill development and success is an important factor. An acquired skill enhances the carry-over potential of an activity to daily life. The Physical Education Curriculum Standards are progressive, building on the skills of the previous year.

Components for Physical Education are:

- Presence of God
- Balance
- Coordination/Agility
- Endurance/Fitness
- Flexibility
- Respect/Tolerance
- Skill Building
- Speed/Reaction Time
- Sportsmanship
- Strength/Power
- Teamwork

## Health

The Health curriculum provides information at each level of development to 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. Topics include: disease prevention, emotional/social/mental health, environmental and community health, family life and sexuality, nutrition, personal health and related fitness, personal safety and first aid, and substance use and abuse. Education and health for children are inextricably intertwined.

## Fine Arts

In the Fine Arts program, students have the opportunity to deepen their awareness of God's gift of creation and to respond creatively 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 and 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.

## Library

The school library 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 correlate with the school curriculum to intensify and individualize a child's educational experiences. The Library 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 skills as the need for these skills naturally emerge from the curriculum. They plan and implement these activities so that the goals of both the content area and the library program are achieved.

The school library is open daily. Lost or damaged books must be paid for.

## Technology

Technology instruction is essential in today's educational process. This instruction includes computer awareness, literacy and internet safety. 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.

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. Students utilize various applications to a level of developmental proficiency. Google for Education is utilized in all NHRCES schools.

## Internet Use Policy

### Guidelines for Implementation and Practice

This guideline is established to ensure understanding and application of Blessed Francis Seelos Academy's Internet Use Policy. The school reserves the right to amend these guidelines at any time. It is understood that the administration will inform parents/guardians of any changes made in these Guidelines via the school's parent communication system.

**Students' parents and/or guardians are required to review these guidelines with their child(ren) and complete and return the Parent/Guardian Internet Use Agreement form. This Internet Use Agreement must be signed annually.**

This guideline includes, but is not limited to, the following areas:

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

### Etiquette

All Students are required to:

- Be polite when sending written messages to others
- Use appropriate language in all forms of messages
- Avoid anything pertaining to illegal activity
- Protect information, personal or otherwise
- Respect others' access to the internet
- Remember that deleted materials can be retrieved.

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

- 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
- Using the Internet for political lobbying
- 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 the Internet to harass another person.

## ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

Standardized tests, textbook tests, and teacher-made tests are administered to students throughout the year. These assessments require students to synthesize information, apply what they have learned and demonstrate their understanding of what has been taught.

### Acadience Reading Test

Acadience Reading is an assessment used to measure the acquisition of early literacy skills from kindergarten through sixth grade. This diagnostic test is administered three times a year to monitor growth and progress.

### Placement Test

Transferring students, after a review of academic records, may be administered an assessment to determine a child's strengths and areas of needed support.

### Achievement Tests

Students in grades 1-8 are administered a standardized test to measure progress from one year to another. A component of the standardized testing program for grades 2, 4 & 6 is a cognitive abilities section, which helps compare a student's achievement with other students of the same age, grade, and ability. If a child is absent due to illness, every attempt will be made to enable the child to make-up the tests. However, since the tests must be returned within a two-week period, make-up testing often necessitates taking more tests daily than is ideal. To prevent this, we ask parents not to schedule trips or appointments during the time of standardized testing.

### Classroom Diagnostic Tools

The Classroom Diagnostic Tools (CDT), administered to students in grades 3 - 8 is a set of online assessments, divided by content area, designed to provide diagnostic information in order to guide instruction.

### Writing Assessment

Each child in grades K-8 participates in a Writing Assessment. This allows students to respond to a writing prompt and to select and organize content, develop a style and follow standard conventions.

### Math Benchmark Assessment

Math Benchmark Tests are administered quarterly to students in Grades K-8. These tests determine if the student is making progress towards grade-level expectation.

## AUXILIARY SERVICES

The following services are offered through the Allegheny Intermediate Unit:

### Remedial Reading and Math (Title I)

The federally-funded Title I program is designed to provide additional assistance to students who are not demonstrating

grade level proficiency in reading and/or math. Referrals for the program are based on teacher referrals, standardized test results, and parent approval. Alternate strategies are planned for students in accordance with individual instructional goals and in support of the classroom curriculum to help students develop mastery of basic skills.

### Act 89 Services

Intermediate Unit personnel work with and provide support to students in remedial math and reading. These teachers, in collaboration with the classroom teacher, identify educational needs and design educational interventions and strategies to help a child succeed.

### Speech/Language

Speech and language services are also provided through Act 89 funding. This is a special service offered to students to enhance communication skills which directly impact social and academic interactions.

### Educational Psychological Testing

Educational Psychological testing is available through the student's school district by parent request or at the recommendation of the teacher in consultation with the principal. Results are formally reported to parents, principal and teachers along with a list of recommendations made by the psychologist. **This information is kept confidential** and is not shared with anyone without parent permission.

### Counseling

A certified counselor provides individual and small group counseling sessions to children in grades K-8. Children are referred by parents, principal, teacher and through self-referral. Children may see a counselor once without parent permission or knowledge. After that, individual counseling requires parent permission.

### Student Assistance Program

The Student Assistance Program was established by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania by Act 211 of 1990. It is a 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 in order 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 this 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 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.

## CURRICULAR RELATED

### Assemblies

Assemblies are held throughout the school year. The assemblies are planned in conjunction with the principal, faculty, and the PTG/HSA with a focus on education.

### Field Trips

Every class is permitted field trips during the year. Each student must have a signed permission slip before he/she is permitted to participate. Chaperones are required to complete chaperone participation form as well as being compliant with the Safe Environment Policy. 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 will be sent home by the teacher so that the parent may help reinforce the guidelines presented.

### Homework

A reasonable amount of homework, according to grade level, is of great educational value and so is assigned every day. ***Assignments are not always written.*** Study and memory work are frequently given. Homework is assigned on a regular basis for the following reasons:

- enrich school experiences
- provide practice and review
- develop good study habits
- teach responsibility, and
- foster originality

The Diocese recommends the following time schedule for home study:

Primary (Grades K-2)	10-30 minutes
Intermediate (Grades 3-5)	40-60 minutes
Upper Elementary (Grades 6-8)	70-90 minutes

Parents can assist students with home assignments in the following ways:

- Provide a quiet spot away from the television, telephone, or other distracting elements;
- Check to see what was accomplished during the designated study time regarding completeness, neatness, and correctness;
- Be willing to listen to reading, spelling, and math facts and to explain procedures, but never do the assignment;
- If the child says there is no homework too often, the parent/s should consult the individual classroom teacher.

If, for some reason, the child cannot complete an assignment, the parent should inform the teacher by written note stating the reason. Arrangements should be made as soon as possible to make up incomplete assignments.

# DAILY PRACTICES AND POLICIES

## ADMISSIONS/REGISTRATION POLICIES

Blessed Francis Seelos Academy admits students of any race, gender, or national 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, gender, or national or ethnic origin in the administration of our educational policies, admission policies, athletic or other school administered programs. Students can be admitted with a disability, if with reasonable accommodation, the student can meet program requirements. Children who are not Catholic are expected to participate in religion classes and to attend all religious functions of the school/church.

Official certificates of birth and baptism are required at the time of registration. Students entering Kindergarten must be five years of age by September 1. Those registering for grades 1-8 must fulfill the age requirement for the desired grade and present letters of recommendation from the previous school. A mini-battery will be administered to all new students to verify placement. Grade level and academic group determinations are made on the basis of school records.

Immunization records must be complete before any child may enter school. The requirements are as follows:

- 4 doses of tetanus, diphtheria, and acellular pertussis\* (1 dose on or after the 4th birthday)
- 4 doses of polio (4th dose on or after 4th birthday and at least 6 months after previous dose given)\*\*
- 2 doses of measles, mumps, rubella\*\*\*
- 3 doses of hepatitis B
- 2 doses of varicella (chickenpox) or evidence of immunity

\*Usually given as DTP or DTAP or if medically advisable, DT or Td

\*\* A fourth dose is not necessary if the third dose was administered at age 4 years or older and at least 6 months after the previous dose

\*\*\*Usually given as MMR

**ON THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL**, unless the child has a medical or religious/philosophical exemption, a child must have had at least one dose of the above vaccinations or risk exclusion.

- If a child does not have all the doses listed above, needs additional doses, and the next dose is medically appropriate, the child must receive that dose within the first five days of school or risk exclusion. If the next dose is not the final dose of the series, the child must also provide a medical plan (red and white card) within the first five days of school for obtaining the required immunizations or risk exclusion.
- If a child does not have all the doses listed above, needs additional doses, and the next dose is not medically appropriate, the child must provide a medical plan (red and white card) within the first five days of school for obtaining the required immunizations or risk exclusion.
- The medical plan must be followed or risk exclusion.

**FOR ATTENDANCE IN 7TH GRADE:**

- 1 dose of tetanus, diphtheria, acellular (Tdap) on the first day of 7th grade.
- 1 dose of meningococcal conjugate grade dose. vaccine (MCV) on the first day of 7th grade.

**ON THE FIRST DAY OF 7TH GRADE**, unless the child has a medical or religious/philosophical exemption, a child must have had the above vaccines or risk exclusion.



## ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance at school is a major factor in determining academic success. 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. Students absent for more than thirty days during any given academic year, may be denied promotion within the existing school for the next academic school year.

Absences from school are defined as either Excused or Unexcused according to the Guidelines from the PA School Code.

Excused Absences include:

1. Illness
2. Recognized religious holidays
3. Death in the family
4. Quarantine
5. Educational tours/trips (school-sponsored)
6. Court appearance
7. Impassable roads
8. Family educational trips
  - a. Request for Excused Absence Form must be submitted to the office two (2) weeks prior to the trip for approval.
  - b. Pre Approved absences during the school year should not exceed five (5) school days unless approved by the Principal.
  - c. If no prior notice is received, the absence is classified as Unexcused.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** It is the policy of Blessed Francis Seelos Academy that a Parent/Guardian will email or call the school no later than 9:00 am to report their child(ren) absent for the day. Messages may be left on VoiceMail. A Representative from the School Office will call the home if a student is not in attendance and has not been reported absent by a Parent/Guardian.

A student is responsible for making up work when absent from school and for completing satisfactorily the courses of study prescribed by the State and the Department for Catholic Schools.

Parents should call the school office on the first day that a child is absent from school, giving the child's name, homeroom teacher, and reason for absence. Unless the absence will be for an extended period of time, please make arrangements with another child to have assignments brought home.

*According to the Pennsylvania School Code, Section 1332, "The absence of any pupil who remains out of school with or without his parent'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, "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."*

**Upon returning to school from an absence, a student must submit a written excuse to his/her homeroom teacher as required by state law. If this excuse is not submitted within three days following the absence, the absence will be classified as Unexcused.**

### **Tardiness to School**

Punctuality is important because tardiness interrupts instructional time. If a student is unavoidably tardy, a note should accompany the student explaining the reason for the tardiness. All students who are not in their assigned homeroom when the bell rings at 8: 35 am will be considered tardy and must report to the Office with a Parent/Guardian. If for any reason a the school bus is late, the students will not be considered tardy. The only excusable reason for being tardy is a doctor or dentist appointment that cannot be rescheduled for after school.

- The Parent/Guardian must come into the School Office to sign the child (ren) into school. The Sign-In Book is located in the Office.
- The student(s) must inform the Office as to their Lunch Choice for the day.
- The school will notify Parents/Guardians if tardiness becomes excessive during each 9-week period.
- Three or more tardies per each nine-week period may result in an Unexcused Absence.

### **The following definitions are helpful in clearly understanding the Attendance Policy:**

**Compulsory attendance (for Catholic Schools):** attendance at a school operated by a bona fide Church or other religious body which provides a minimum of 180 days of instruction and 900 hours of instruction per year at the elementary level (K-6) or 990 hours of instruction per year at the secondary level (7-12).

**Compulsory school age:** the period of a child's life from the time he/she enters school as a beginner, which may be no later than six years of age, until the age of eighteen or graduation from high school, whichever comes first.

**Cumulative lawful absences:** a maximum of ten days of cumulative lawful absences verified by parental notification are permitted during a school year. **Absences beyond ten cumulative days require an excuse from a physician.**

**Lawful absence:** absences for which the school has received a written excuse from the parent/guardian. This excuse should be received within three days of the absence. Absences may be excused when a student is prevented from attendance for mental, physical, or other urgent reasons, which include but are not limited to illness, family emergency, death of a family member, medical or dental appointment, authorized school activities, and educational travel of five (5) or fewer days with prior approval. In addition, lawful absences include student attendance at court hearings related to the student's involvement with the agencies that deal with welfare of children.

**Truancy:** a student is considered truant when absent for three or more days without a valid excuse.

**Unlawful absences:** absences for which the school has not received a written excuse from parent/guardian.

### **Early Dismissals/Early Arrival/Late Pick-up**

Parents/Guardians should make every effort to schedule appointments at a time that school is not in session. However, if a child must have an early dismissal, parents/guardians must submit written communication to the office. For these dismissals, parents/guardians or an authorized adult must come to the office and sign the child out at the authorized time. Children who arrive later than 10:00 a.m. will be marked absent in the morning. Children who leave school after 12:00 p.m. will be marked absent in the afternoon.

Students arriving before the stated time of arrival and/or remaining after the time normal supervision ends, will be placed in extended care and their parents will be billed at the standard rate.

## DAILY SCHEDULE

8:15	School doors open. All students enter via ____ door.
8:30	Students must be in classrooms for attendance, lunch count, etc.
8:35	late bell
8:35	Opening prayer
8:40	First class
10:40	Lunch: Grades 1, 2, and 3
11:25	Lunch: Grades K, 4 and 5
12:10	Lunch: Grades 6, 7 and 8
2:55	Closing prayer / announcements/End of last class (K-8)
3:00	Dismissal

## CAFETERIA

### Lunch

All students must bring or buy lunch. Those bringing lunch may purchase a drink i.e. milk, water, iced tea, lemonade or juice.

### Rules

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

- Remain seated until finished eating.
- Discard all papers, scraps of food, etc. at your place and dispose of them properly.
- Obey cafeteria monitors at all times.
- Speak in a conversational tone.
- Walk at all times.
- Remain in the Cafeteria until dismissed

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

## DRESS CODE

Blessed Francis Seelos Academy 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 for the following reasons:

- promote a Christian atmosphere;
- free children for academic concentration;
- de-emphasize competition among children regarding clothing;
- allow more economical dress for school, and
- provide some choice to accommodate individual differences.

### BOYS' EVERYDAY UNIFORM

Purchase from Lands' End or Schoolbelles

Shorts Navy or Khaki Dress shorts w/ belt

Pants Navy or Khaki Dress pants w/ belt

Shirts Navy, White, or Red Plain tab collar with buttons; embroidered crest, optional

Long Sleeve or Short Sleeve Embroidered crest optional

Socks Navy, Black, or White Knee socks or crew socks;

No "no-show" socks

Shoes Any Casual or Athletic Shoes; No boots to be worn at school

Fleece Navy ¼ Zip Must have embroidered crest

Cardigan Navy Buttons Must have embroidered crest

### GIRLS' EVERYDAY UNIFORM

Purchase from Lands' End or Schoolbelles

Shorts Navy or Khaki Dress shorts w/ belt

Pants Navy or Khaki Dress pants w/ belt

Jumpers Plaid only 1 Option from Lands' End,

2 Options from Schoolbelles:yoke and drop waist

Skirts Plaid, Navy or Khaki Plaid: 2 Options from Lands'End; 3 Options from Schoolbelles

Skorts Plaid, Navy or Khaki Plaid: 2 Options from Lands'End; 1 Option from Schoolbelles

Shirts Navy, White, or Red Plain tab collar; Crest optional

Long Sleeve or Short Sleeve Embroidered crest optional

Blouse White Peter pan collar – long sleeve

Tights Navy or White

Leggings and

Bike Shorts

Navy Can only be worn under skirts and jumpers

Socks Navy or White Knee socks or crew socks;

No "no-show" socks

Shoes Any Casual or Athletic Shoe; No boots to be worn at school

Fleece Navy ¼ Zip Must have embroidered crest

Cardigan Navy Buttons Must have embroidered crest

BOYS' and GIRLS' GYM UNIFORM - available from Schoolbelles or Land's End

Shirts Red w/ emblem Moisture wicking or cotton Long or short sleeve

Shorts Navy cotton w/emblem

Sweatpants Navy w/ emblem Elastic waist

Parents are strongly urged to mark their children's personal belongings with their names. Since children do not readily claim lost items, proper identification helps us to find the owner and save parents the cost of replacement. The lost-and-found area is located by the school library and in the Ryan Center Lobby. Parents and children are encouraged to look for lost clothing items there. More valuable lost items, such as glasses, watches and purses, are to be turned into the office. Items that are not claimed by the end of each school year are donated to charity or the uniform exchange program.

## EMERGENCIES

### Emergency Cards

At the beginning of each school year, parents are required to complete a Student Emergency Card. It is imperative that the school be able to reach a parent in case of illness or an emergency. It is also important to list the names of others who can be contacted should a parent be unavailable. Please keep the card updated by notifying the office of changes.

### Emergency Closings and Delays

If inclement weather or some other emergency requires that school be delayed or closed, this information will be announced via parent notification system, radio, and/or television. PLEASE DO NOT CALL THE SCHOOL OR RECTORY FOR THIS INFORMATION.

In the event the school has a two-hour delay, all children should report to school by 10:15am. Morning care is cancelled when school is delayed. If a district does not have a delay, the children from that district will follow their normal bussing schedule. If a public school has a delay when the school does not, those children may follow the delayed bussing schedule unless the parent/s can bring them.

Busing is the responsibility of your local school district; therefore, you must listen to their announcement and follow their directives for cancellations and delays. If your district cancels and we do not, there will be no bus service provided. Likewise, if we are on a two-hour delay and your district is running on a regular schedule, please do not put your child on the bus. **Please note that children will not be admitted to the building nor will supervision be available if students arrive prior to the two-hour delay start time.**

PLEASE NOTE: Because our attendance registers are legal indicators of a child's presence at the times we are in session, children who arrive late or are absent because of busing when school is in session will be marked as Excused Tardy or Excused Absence.

### Emergency Dismissals

In the event that we would be required to dismiss school early, that information will be announced via television and/or parent notification system. Children will be dismissed as parents are notified and transportation is arranged.

## EXTENDED CARE

For an additional fee, before and after school programs are available for parents who need child care. Morning extended day is available from 7:00 a.m. to 8:15 a.m., and extended afternoon is available from 3:00p.m. to 6:00 p.m. This service is available on a daily, weekly or yearly basis. Parents should contact the school office for the fee schedule and contact person if they plan to use this service.

## TEXTBOOKS/SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Pennsylvania's Act 195/90 is a program whereby the state purchases textbooks and instructional materials of non-religious nature. A form requesting permission to have a child use these books must be signed by a parent and kept on file in the school office. Students are responsible for the condition of the books given to them. Students will be required to pay for a book if it is damaged or lost. Books taken to and from school are to be placed in a book bag. **All books are to be covered at all times.**

For the convenience of families, supply lists are made available for the following year. Students provide their own school supplies but are expected to comply with individual teacher requirements.

## TRANSPORTATION

It is important that the school knows the ordinary means by which each child arrives and departs daily. Notification is to be sent when a change is necessary. For reasons of safety and insurance, each child is only permitted to ride his/her assigned bus.

### Bus Policies and Expectations

Student eligibility to be bused to school is determined by local public school district policies. Those who live along a route that has been declared "hazardous" are also eligible for busing. The Board of Education Transportation Division determines "hazardous route" claims. The student transportation policies and procedures of the local educational agencies responsible for busing students are applicable to all students in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Students are expected to maintain appropriate behavior while en route on the bus. Every bus follows the guidelines that are within our own discipline code. Students are expected to remain in their seats at all times. This ensures their safety and the safety of others.

If improper conduct occurs, the driver prepares a report which is sent home to alert the parents to the problem. The school will investigate, when appropriate, and provide supplemental information to the bus company. The school will work together with students, bus drivers, and families, to find a resolution. The school will support the public school district's determination. If the behavior persists, the bus company has the right to ask the school district to suspend the student's privilege of riding the bus, temporarily or permanently. This will result in the student losing bus privileges. The parent will be responsible to make other arrangements for transportation.

The following bus rules are to be obeyed:

- Use only the bus and bus stop assigned. Only the Department of Transportation can authorize changes.
- Remain seated at all times until the correct stop has been reached. If the driver has assigned seats, these seat assignments are to be honored
- Keep head, hands and feet inside the bus. Do not put anything out the window of the bus.
- In vehicles where seat belts are available, use them properly.
- Observe the same conduct as in the classroom. Quiet, respectful talking is permitted. Loud talking, etc. may distract the driver, prevent students from hearing instructions, or prevent the driver from hearing signals from emergency vehicles.
- Keep the bus clean; do not eat, drink, or chew gum on the bus.
- Cooperate with the driver. Any directives of the bus driver in addition to the above are to be followed.

## Car/Walkers

At dismissal students walking and riding cars are dismissed out the side door. Those picking children up by car should get in the pick-up lane. Do not leave your car unattended in the pick-up lane as this creates an unsafe condition.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES (Add and/or delete according to your school's activities.)

## Altar Servers

Students in grades 4 through 8 have the privilege of serving on the altar. Students who choose this privilege are expected to fulfill assigned responsibilities and be on time. Servers may be expected to be in the sacristy a few minutes before the liturgical service begins.

## Band (TBD for 2021-2022 school year)

Band instruction is available for a fee for interested students from grades 4-8. The Diocesan Program sets the monthly fee annually. The instruments may be rented with the option to buy. Small group lessons are provided one period a week and practice is held once a week. The periods are rotated so the same classes are not missed too often. However, it remains the responsibility of the student to make up missed work. A meeting is held at the beginning of each school year to provide more information for interested parents.

## Basketball

Basketball is offered at all levels, beginning with instructional teams in the primary grades and continuing with separate boys' and girls' developmental, junior varsity and varsity teams at upper levels. Fundraising for all teams is provided almost entirely through refreshments sold at games and during the summer programs and tournaments. A general organizational meeting is held in the fall to acquaint parents and students with the basketball program.

## Cross Country

In the fall students in Grades 5-8 can participate in Cross Country. A few times a week students run a two-mile course. Meets are set up with area schools and at the end of the season with a diocesan competition ending the season. As well as improving fitness, the club gives the students the opportunity to interact socially.

## Family Enrichment

The PTG has planned activities for evenings and weekends to provide enriching learning experiences for the enjoyment of the whole family; these vary from year to year.

## Soccer

The Diocesan Soccer League offers two coed levels. The varsity team is composed of students in grades 7 and 8, and the junior varsity students from grades 5 and 6. The season lasts eight weeks. If possible, the teams participate in both the fall and the spring.



## Student Council

The Student Council consists of officers from grades 6-8 and includes a president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer. Representatives are selected from each homeroom in grades 6-8. To be eligible for office, candidates need the endorsement of two of their core subject-area teachers. Candidates then prepare a speech for the office they are seeking. An assembly is held and the speeches are presented. Ballots are handed out and students in grades 6-8 vote. After the ballots are counted and the winners are announced, each homeroom selects a class representative. The officers are given charge of planning and running the meetings with the help of the faculty advisors. The organizational goal is to foster *esprit de corps* through student planning and implementation of school activities.

## Volleyball

The Volleyball Program is open to students in Grades 5-8. Junior varsity and varsity teams participate in the Pittsburgh Diocesan Volleyball League. (Add details about the program—for girls, boys, or both.) The goal of the program is to develop volleyball skills and teamwork.

# **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

## HEALTH ISSUES

### School Nurse/Nurse Practitioner for Grades K to 8.

Pine-Richland School District provides a part-time school nurse to Blessed Francis Seelos Academy. The nurse schedules vision and hearing tests and height and weight screenings as required by PA law. Health information and emergency cards are kept on file in the school office. They are available in any emergency situations.

The nurse has the following responsibilities:

- Maintain updated health records
- Make sure all immunizations are current
- Conduct vision and hearing screening
- Conduct scoliosis screening
- Contact parents/guardians if any health problems arise
- Make arrangements for physical exams for Kindergarten and 6th graders

Parents of children who have any type of pre-existing medical conditions or allergies should contact the principal, school nurse, or teachers to make them aware of the problem. It is the parents'/guardians' responsibility to secure proper medical treatment, as it is needed.

## Dentist/Dental Hygienist

The Dentist/Dental Hygienist will visit our school when necessary, and dental records are maintained in the nurse's office. The Pennsylvania School Health Law requires dental examinations for students entering grades K, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>. These grades were selected because they represent critical periods of growth and development in a child's life.

We recommend that your family dentist do these examinations. School dental health evaluations will be provided for students who do not furnish proof of a private dental examination within the previous six months. These forms are given out to the students before school ends so that appointments can be scheduled over the summer.

## Illness

It is often difficult to decide if a child should stay home from school when complaining of illness. An objective sign is an elevated temperature. Please be vigilant in measuring your child's temperature. If it is 100.4° or greater they need to stay home. A child is to be kept home from school until the temperature has remained normal (below 100°) without fever reducing medication for 24 hours. All cases of head lice should be reported immediately.

If a child has a temperature of 100.4° 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. Communications will be sent home with the other children to warn parents of contact and incubation of communicable diseases as necessary.

## Accident and Injury

In the case of an accident or injury 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**.

## Medication

Whenever possible, medicine is to be given at home, and parents are to request the physician to adjust 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:

- The medication must be delivered to the school office by a responsible adult.
- Medication brought to school must be in a container labeled by a pharmacist or doctor. The label must include the student's name, the name of the physician, date of prescription, dosage, and frequency of administration.
- Parents must sign an Indemnity Agreement which has been prepared by the Legal Office and distributed through the school office.

## COVID-19

The novel coronavirus (COVID-19) has been declared a worldwide pandemic by the World Health Organization. COVID-19 is extremely contagious and spread mainly person to person through respiratory droplets. COVID-19 can cause long-term medical problems and death, regardless of age. Therefore, the School has implemented a Health and Safety Plan in compliance with the most recent guidance from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, PA Departments of Education and Health, Allegheny County Department of Health, American Academy of Pediatrics, and Children's Hospital of PA Policy Lab in an effort to reduce the risk associated with COVID-19. As a condition of enrollment and participation in in-person instruction and School extracurricular activities, all members of the School community understand and agree that they shall act in full compliance with the terms of the Health and Safety Plan. School community members likewise understand and agree that the School cannot completely mitigate the transfer of a communicable disease when involved in in-person instruction or extracurricular activities and acknowledge and accept any risk associated with the same.

## Disruption of School Operations

Parents/Guardians acknowledge and agree that events beyond the School's control, including but not limited to fire, power outage, act of God, war, governmental action, acts of terrorism, pandemic, and epidemic, may disrupt School operations, and that such disruption does not relieve Parents/Guardians of their financial obligations to the School or entitle Parents/Guardians to a refund. In response to such events, the School may, but is not required to, modify, relocate, reschedule and/or cease its operations in full or in part, and/or continue certain operations through alternative means (for example, the School may choose to extend or shorten the School Year; extend, shorten or reschedule breaks; and/or institute distance learning).

## SAFETY ISSUES:

### Asbestos Notice

Pursuant to the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Act (AHERA), our school was inspected by a certified AHERA Inspector. A Management Plan was developed and submitted to the PA Department of Education. A copy of our Asbestos Inspection Report and Management Plan is on file in the school office.

The school is re-inspected by a certified AHERA Inspector every three (3) years. The maintenance and custodial staff have received two (2) hours of Awareness Training and conduct a periodic surveillance twice a year, in December and June.

## SAFETY DRILLS:

### Fire Drills

Fire drills are held monthly. Exit directions, which are posted in prominent places in each room, are to be followed. No one—teacher, student or other personnel—may remain in the building during fire drills. When the students hear the bell, they are to leave the room quickly and quietly in single file. Students remain outside until summoned back to class.

Students are to remain in absolute silence during all fire drills. Misconduct of any nature is to be reported to the principal. Misbehavior during fire drills is a very serious offense and will be dealt with immediately.

## Lockdown Drills

Lockdown drills are practiced throughout the year. Teachers and students follow the protocols and procedures that have been put in place.

## Weather Emergency Drills

Weather emergency drills are practiced yearly. Teachers follow the policy governing weather emergencies for student safety. Students must maintain silence at all times during a weather emergency drill. Any student needing assistance will be supported by faculty and staff.

## Safe Environment Program

The purpose of the Safe Environment Program of the Diocese of Pittsburgh is to take reasonable measures to assure 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 the school must be compliant in the requirements of the safe environment policy:

All School Volunteers must complete the following steps by visiting the following website:

<https://diopitt.org/school-volunteers>

- Safe Environment Database
- PA State Police Clearance
- Code of Pastoral Conduct
- Child Protective Services Law
- Child Abuse History Clearance
- Protecting God's Children
- Mandated Reporter Training
- FBI Clearance (lived outside of Pennsylvania within 10 years) OR  
FBI Clearance Waiver (if Pennsylvania resident for 10 years or more)

## Security/Visitors

All doors to the school will be closed and locked during school hours. Parents and visitors should use the buzzer on the main school door to gain entrance to the building.

For security reasons, anyone entering the school is to report to the office immediately regardless of the purpose for the visit. For the safety of all students, a visitor's badge must be worn.

Communication with teachers and students will be handled by the school office and will be done in a manner that is the least disruptive.

Parents/Guardians are not permitted to visit classrooms unannounced. Any articles or items to be left for a student will be

held in the school office. This will eliminate any unnecessary interruptions to classes and instruction.

## Recess

Every school day, weather permitting, the students enjoy an outside break supervised by a staff member and/or volunteer monitors. If inclement weather makes it necessary to stay indoors at lunchtime, indoor recess rules are to be observed. These are determined by the supervising teacher/monitor.

Students are never to leave the recess area without the knowledge of the recess monitor. In case of illness or accident, the student will be sent to the school office by the recess monitor.

Recess monitors have the responsibility of enforcing rules. They are to be obeyed and treated respectfully.

The following rules are to be observed during recess time:

- Not to re-enter the building unless for an emergency
- Display good sportsmanship and exercise self-control
- Play in assigned areas.
- Stay on school grounds (This includes not retrieving a ball that has gone off school grounds.)
- Obey the directives of the recess monitors, courteously and promptly.
- Stop playing at once when recess ends and follow instructions to re-enter the school building.

# **DISCIPLINE**

## Introduction

The 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. Social skills, both interpersonal and intrapersonal, are taught, modeled, practiced, and infused into the daily life and experience of the school community. Discipline is considered an element of moral guidance, not a form of punishment.

Every teacher and staff member shares the responsibility to model appropriate behavior and to support the structure necessary for learning self-discipline. Students are encouraged to assume responsibility for their actions, develop self control, and accept responsibility and consequences for inappropriate behavior.

A Christ-centered school environment fosters the following behaviors:

- Recognizing and fostering the uniqueness and dignity of each individual
- Nurturing respect in all relationships involving school community
- Developing a sense of rights and responsibilities and commitment to the entire school community.

## Guiding Principles

The following seven principles are the basis of Catholic Social Teachings and guide us in all of our interactions:

- We believe in the life and dignity of the human person. Each person is sacred.
- We believe we are called to family, community, and participation. It is our duty to support each other by our actions.
- We believe that we have rights and responsibilities. Every person has the fundamental right to life and responsibility to and for one another.
- We believe that we have an obligation to the poor and vulnerable. We are called to put the rights of others before our own.
- We believe that we are called to care for God's creation. We are all stewards of the earth..
- We believe that solidarity is our call. We are one family regardless of our differences.
- We believe that workers have rights and that work has dignity. Work is a form of participating in God's creation.

## Expectations

As a matter of safety, students are expected to behave in the following manner:

### Before school

- dress according to the school dress code
- arrive after 8:15 a.m. except to attend the extended care program
- gather in the designated area
- engage in quiet conversation or study
- line up quietly when the school bell rings

### In school

- walk quietly through the halls
- use proper language at all times
- follow the dress code for school days and dress up/down days
- respect school property and the property of other students
- have a note from their parent/guardian if they change their mode of school transportation

### In the classroom

- follow the classroom rules of each teacher
- be responsible for submitting homework on time and making up assignments missed
- have a respectful attitude toward teachers and one another
- be responsible for appropriate supplies
- be honest in all communications
- use computers and school equipment appropriately
- refrain from eating or drinking unless specifically permitted to do so
- leave or do not enter a classroom at any time without a teacher or designated adult present

### During recess

- refrain from reentering the building unless for an emergency
- display good sportsmanship and exercise self control
- include all classmates in play activities
- play in assigned areas only
- stay on school grounds at all times (This includes not retrieving a ball that has gone off school grounds.)
- use equipment properly
- avoid throwing harmful objects
- obey the directives of playground monitors, courteously and promptly.

### During lunch

- remain seated until finished eating and your are dismissed
- clean up, pick up all papers, scraps of food, etc., and dispose of them properly
- obey cafeteria monitors at all times
- speak in a conversational tone
- walk at all times

### After school

- follow dismissal procedures;
- walk to assigned place to wait until bus or car ride arrives;

- avoid running or playing games on the school grounds;
- sign in at the extended care program if not picked up by 3:15 p.m.

#### At athletic events and assemblies

- practice good sportsmanship as spectators and participants
- show respect towards coaches, referees, and visiting teams
- maintain an appropriate silence during special performances

#### Outside school

- to behave responsibly off school property
- If the principal is made aware of misconduct off school property of a child recognized to be a student in our school, parents may be contacted; however, it is important to note that the school is not responsible for students actions that occur off school property.
- Any behavior outside of school that impacts the operations of the schools will be addressed accordingly.

#### Bus/Van

- use only the bus and bus stop assigned
- remain seated while the bus in motion
- talk quietly and make no unnecessary noise
- refrain from talking to the driver unless it is necessary
- refrain from placing objects or body parts outside the windows
- refrain from littering inside the bus or from throwing anything out the window
- Principals will forward disciplinary notices given by public school bus drivers to parents to support the disciplinary report of the bus driver. Continual infraction of rules will result in loss of bus transportation privileges.
- See also [TRANSPORTATION](#)

#### Fire Drill

- walk quickly in a single file
- keep arms at sides
- observe silence!

Any staff member will correct students who do not follow expectations.

#### Consequences

Please be aware that inappropriate behavior will be addressed. The severity or repetition of non-compliance will determine the appropriate consequences. To remediate unacceptable behavior, the following actions may be taken:

- Teacher/student conference to develop a plan for remediation
- Loss of recess
- Notification to parents
- Detention
- Administrative referral
- Referral to the E-SAP Team



- Denial of participation in school activities, including sports
- School probation
- Suspension

Should the student receive a detention, the parent/guardian will receive a written notice with at least a 24-hour notice. It is in the best interest of the student that home and school work together for the child's academic and social development.

In the event of a serious act of misbehavior or repeated acts of misbehavior, a student may serve either an in-school or out-of-school suspension. If misconduct continues, a student may be asked to leave the school. These decisions rest with the administration and may be necessary for the benefit of the total program.

The following behaviors will result in immediate administrative referrals and can result in referrals to law enforcement or other appropriate agencies:

- Violations of weapons policy
- Violations of the drug/alcohol policy
- Any purposeful action that results in bodily harm to another
- Any threat to harm others or property
- Death threat of any kind
- Threat or discussion of self-harm

### Elastic Clause

Because it is impossible to foresee all problems that arise, this clause empowers the administration and faculty to take disciplinary action for any behavior that violates the spirit and philosophy of the school even though it is not specified in the Discipline Policy.

The principal is the final recourse in all disciplinary situations and may waive any regulation for just cause, at his or her discretion.

## STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Depending on the severity or frequency the consequences may advance to the next level.

➤ **Level One Violations (General Nuisance and Disruptive Behavior)**

Level One Violations will result in a teacher reprimand which may also include a conduct or disciplinary referral form which must be signed by a parent/guardian and **returned to the teacher the next day. If requested, a plan of action to prevent future violations must be communicated to the teacher.**

➤ **Level Two Violations (Disruptive or Potentially Harmful Behavior)**

Level Two Violations may result in a **Detention**. The detention slip must be signed by the parent/guardian and returned to the teacher the next day. **If requested, a plan of action to prevent future violations will be created during the conference with the teacher/principal/parent/student.** The type of Detention (in-school, after school, lunch time) will be determined by the Principal and the teacher.

➤ **Level Three Violations (Harmful Behavior)**

Level Three Violations will result in **one or more Detentions, or possible suspension**, and a conference with the parent/guardian/student to determine a plan of action to prevent future violations. Repetitive Level Three violations may result in loss of privileges (attendance at school dances, sporting events, assemblies, field trips).

➤ **Level Four Violations (Unlawful Behavior)**

Level Four Violations may result in a 1-10 day suspension or possible expulsion depending upon the severity of the infraction. If necessary, the infraction will be referred to the appropriate legal authority.

During a suspension, the student is not permitted to participate in any school activity or athletic events until after the suspension has been served. The student may not return to school until the parents have a conference with the principal.

**Examples of Behaviors:**

**The examples are illustrative, but not exhaustive, of possible behaviors and resulting consequences.**

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Arriving late or unprepared for class</li> <li>▪ Chewing gum in school</li> <li>▪ Eating food at inappropriate times</li> <li>▪ Minor violation of teacher/classroom policies</li> <li>▪ Running or making noise in any area of the school that is disruptive</li> <li>▪ Minor disorderly behavior during lunch</li> <li>▪ Minor disruptive classroom behavior</li> <li>▪ Violation of dress code</li> <li>▪ Wearing hats, caps, hoods in the school building, cafeteria or gym</li> <li>▪ Talking during a fire drill or other drills.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Repetitive Level 1 violations</li> <li>▪ Violation of the computer “Acceptable Use Policy”(AUP)</li> <li>▪ Disrespect for faculty and staff/any adults in authority/volunteers</li> <li>▪ Disrespect toward other students</li> <li>▪ Use of obscenity, profanity, or abusive language (written, spoken, or gestured)</li> <li>▪ Disruptive behavior during field trips and other school events</li> <li>▪ Serious disruptive behavior anywhere on school property</li> <li>▪ Inappropriate behavior during liturgy or any formal prayer service</li> <li>▪ Bullying another student</li> <li>▪ Using any type of electronic devices on school grounds (cell phones, etc.) unless approved by faculty</li> <li>▪ Repeated request to stop talking and/or disruptive behavior during a fire drill or other drills.</li> <li>▪ Defacing school property</li> <li>▪ Failure or refusal to complete homework or classwork</li> <li>▪ Cheating/Plagiarism (credit for the assignment/test, if any, will be determined on an individual case basis)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Repetitive Level 1 and 2 violations</li> <li>▪ Physical Acts of violence such as (but not limited to): kicking, tripping, hitting, pushing</li> <li>▪ Verbal abuse or harassment towards staff, volunteers, or students</li> <li>▪ Fighting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Intentional actions resulting in physical harm to others.</li> <li>▪ Violations of the Diocesan Weapons Policy</li> <li>▪ Violations of the Diocesan Drug and Alcohol Policy</li> <li>▪ Stealing</li> <li>▪ Vandalism to the school or another individual’s property</li> <li>▪ Repeated bullying of another student</li> <li>▪ Bringing indecent materials to school</li> <li>▪ Possessing smoking materials such as cigarettes, lighter, matches, etc.</li> <li>▪ Using racial or ethnic slurs</li> <li>▪ Leaving the school grounds</li> <li>▪ Blatant and repeated disrespect toward teachers, staff, or other students</li> <li>▪ Serious violation of the computer AUP policy</li> <li>▪ Verbal assault on a teacher, staff member, or another student</li> <li>▪ Threatening or intimidating a student with physical harm</li> <li>▪ Sexual harassment</li> <li>▪ Refusing to comply with school rules and regulations</li> <li>▪ Inappropriate use of cell phone ex. Pictures/text messaging.</li> <li>▪ Endangering students during all drills</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Texting/ communication which adversely affects the school in any manner.</li> </ul>
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**BULLYING POLICY**

In keeping with the teachings of Christ, North Hills Regional Catholic Elementary Schools will provide a safe, caring and supportive school environment, free of bullying, for all members of the school community.

**Bullying is defined as:**

Someone repeatedly and/or purposely saying or doing mean or hurtful things to another person who has a hard time defending himself or herself

**Bullying Prevention Rules:**

**Rule 1:** We will not bully others.

**Rule 2:** We will try to help students who are bullied.

**Rule 3:** We will try to include students who are left out.

**Rule 4:** If we know that somebody is being bullied, we will tell an adult at school and an adult at home.

**Three Major Components of Bullying:**

- Bullying is an intentional, negative act
- Bullying is usually repeated behavior
- Bullying involves a power imbalance

**Different Forms or Kinds of Bullying include:**

- Being verbally bullied
- Being socially excluded or isolated
- Being physically bullied
- Being bullied through lies and false rumors
- Having money or other things taken or damaged

- Being threatened or forced to do things
- Racial bullying
- Sexual bullying
- Cyber-bullying (ex. via cell phone, Social Media, Instagram, the Internet etc.)

Includes but is not limited to the following behaviors:	Potential Consequences are dependent upon severity of the infraction as determined by the Principal		
<p><b>Teasing</b> (name calling, or other behavior that would hurt others' feelings and make them feel bad about themselves; including retaliation against another student for reporting bullying)</p> <p><b>Destruction of another's property</b> Damaging, extorting or taking a student's personal property.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lunch detention</li> </ul> <p><i>Parents possibly notified</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•After-school detention</li> <li>•Parent/Teacher Conference</li> </ul> <p><i>Parents notified</i></p>	<p>Conference with parents to determine consequences TBD</p>
<p><b>Hitting</b> (pushing, slapping, kicking, grabbing)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Detention</li> <li>•Parent/Teacher Conference</li> </ul> <p><i>Parents notified</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detention</li> <li>•Parent/Teacher Conference</li> </ul> <p><i>Parents notified</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•1-10 day suspension</li> </ul> <p><i>Parents notified</i></p>
<p><b>Severe Hitting</b> (punching and similar behavior that may injure others).</p> <p><b>Harassment</b> (racial, ethnic or sexual name calling, catfishing, threats or other forms of severe harassment)</p> <p><b>Inappropriate touching</b></p> <p><b>Inappropriate requests</b> of another student including dares, verbal abuse, profanity, any physical abuse.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Detention or Suspension</li> </ul> <p><i>Parents notified</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Detention or Suspension</li> </ul> <p><i>Parents notified</i></p>	<p>This is a level 4 Behavior Violation.</p> <p><i>Parents notified</i> Refer to the Behavioral Code Possible expulsion</p>

## **PARENTS**

The basic principles of the philosophy of a Catholic School flow from the obligation of parents to be the primary educators of their children. To fulfill this responsibility, the parent must become an educational partner with the school.

To help the parents' partnership in education become a reality, the school endeavors to help parents to

- have a clear understanding of the philosophy of a Catholic School
- have a working knowledge and a commitment to the philosophy of the local Catholic school
- establish mutual cooperation concerning all aspects of their child's education
- provide home experiences that will complement, reinforce, and extend the formal religious and academic instruction received in school

## **RIGHTS OF NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS**

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's 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 if requested by the non-custodial parent and not prohibited by the court.

## **PARENT ORGANIZATIONS**

### School Advisory Council (SAC)

The School Advisory Council is an advisory body to the regional administrator and principal. The Council consists of appointed members. The principal and one SAC member serves on the Regional School Advisory Council. The SAC assists the school administration in long-range planning and fundraising for the school in conjunction with other stakeholder groups. The Council has seven areas of concentration—Spirituality and Ministry, Finance and Development, Curriculum Enrichment, Extracurricular Programming, Cultural Connections, Grounds and Buildings, and Alumni Relations.

### Parent/Teacher Organization

The Parent Organization is intended to provide opportunities for parents to fulfill their God given role as educators and to give mutual support through collaboration with the school. The membership of the parent organization consists of the parents/guardians, principal, and the faculty of the school. It is not intended to replace the School Advisory Council. The Parent/Teacher Organization's mission is to enrich the activities of students and parents within the school by organizing and running various events. These include, but are not limited to, classroom parties, field trip support, organizing social events, assisting in communication of school activities, over-seeing volunteer services, etc.

## Athletic Association

All sports programs are the responsibility of the Principal. The Athletic Director is accountable to the Principal. Coaches are selected by the Athletic Director and approved by the Principal and serve on a volunteer basis. The Diocesan Guidelines for Elementary Catholic Schools Sports programs guide the policies. Parent interest and willingness to serve on the Athletic Association are vital to the continued success of the program, but all school associations and advisory boards are under the supervision of the principal.

## FINANCIAL INFORMATION

### Scholarship Monies

All diocesan financial aid opportunities are handled through an application completed through the FACTS online system. The application is due by March 15th of the application year. Scholarship monies are available for eligible families based on an independent evaluation from FACTS. Awards and amounts are determined by the Diocese of Pittsburgh. Awards are granted from the Bishop's Education Fund and the Scholastic Opportunity Scholarship Fund. Parents will be notified of their eligibility and any financial aid awards directly from the Diocese of Pittsburgh. Individual schools do not determine eligibility or amounts of financial aid given to applicants.

### Tuition

Parents who register a student enter into a contractual obligation with the school. Tuition is paid July through April. Parents are reminded that the operational budget of the school is dependent on timely fulfillment of this obligation. Parents whose tuition is in arrears will receive a notice indicating the past due amount. Registration for the next school year, final grades, and transfers of academic records will not be processed if there is an outstanding balance. It is Diocesan policy that no student be readmitted to a new school year if there is an outstanding tuition from the previous year.

Because of the importance of maintaining a continuous cash flow to meet ongoing school expenses, it is necessary that the payment plan be enforced. If a family is temporarily burdened by a financial problem, a parent should contact the principal in advance of the due date. If such unusual circumstances exist, the school authorities will arrange for an alternate payment plan.

If payments for tuition and fees are not made on schedule and parents have not contacted the school, the following steps may occur:

1. Access to the on-line grading system may be denied.
2. Report cards may be withheld.
3. The student may be asked to transfer at the end of the second quarter or at the end of the year.
4. Student academic records will not be sent to another school.
5. The student may not receive transcripts or an 8th grade diploma.
6. The student may not participate in extracurricular school activities.

## Fundraising

The Diocesan policy for funding elementary Catholic schools calls for each school to have fundraising activities to generate a minimum of 10% of the total operating budget. This enables tuition rates to remain at 60% of the total cost. School parents are expected to participate in these fundraising activities to the best of their ability through monetary donations, purchases and/or volunteer work.

## SCRIP Gift Card Program

The Gift Card Program was adopted by parents and encouraged by the Diocese of Pittsburgh as a way to manage the increasing cost of tuition in Catholic Elementary Schools. Essentially the program created an opportunity for families to earn tuition credits through purchasing gift cards. The school purchases gift cards at a discount from hundreds of merchants. The school passes this discount to the school families as tuition credits. Families will receive a full description of the Gift Card Program at the beginning of the school year.

We strongly encourage participation in the Gift Card Program to offset the cost of your tuition as there is no limit to the amount of tuition credits you can generate from Gift Card purchases. The Gift Card Program Tuition credits are distributed twice per year via adjustments to your monthly FACTS payments. If you pay your tuition in full, then your tuition credits will be applied to the following school year.

## HOME/SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS

### On-going Communication

School information is communicated electronically on a regular basis. Some information may be sent home with your child, as well. A monthly calendar and our monthly hot lunch menu are sent electronically and posted on our website.

An automated parent notification system is used for emergencies and other time-sensitive issues.

Parents are informed of the student's progress as follows:

- On-line grading
- Interim Reports
- Quarterly Report Cards
- Parent/student/teacher conferences
- Conferences on request
- Conduct referrals

Any questions concerning your child should be directed to the teacher via email. Positive communication between teacher and parent is vital to our total educational program. Parents are asked not to call teachers at their homes or on the teachers' personal cell phone.



## Reports and Conferences

Reporting student progress to parents is one of the primary responsibilities of the school. In addition to posting grades on-line, the school combines parent conferences with reports of a student's progress. Reports are issued four times a year, with the exception of Kindergarten which is issued three times. Parent-teacher conferences are formally conducted twice per year.

Parent teacher conferences have the following goals:

- enable home and school to meet the needs of the student more effectively;
- establish a working relationship with parents in the interest of the student;
- interpret to parents their child's academic growth and progress;
- suggest ways parents can help students succeed in school.

Efforts are made to provide every parent with an opportunity for a conference. Students may be dismissed early to facilitate meeting with parents. Evening conferences may be scheduled.

## Telephone

No child is permitted to use a telephone, including cell phones or other digital devices, at any time throughout the day. In an emergency, the office will call the parent. Parents must call the office to contact your child for any reason. Please do not call, text or email your child(ren) during the school day.

## Birthday Party Invitations

Please do not send party invitations to school to be distributed for your child's birthday unless ALL students within that grade are invited. This may cause hurt feelings among the students who are not invited. The only exception to this is if every boy or every girl or all students in your child's room are invited. Class treats for birthdays should be distributed during lunch or recess. Consideration must be given to students with allergies. Non-edible birthday treats are preferred. A note should be sent to the homeroom teacher the day before the treat will be sent to school for approval.

## **VOLUNTEERS**

The help of volunteers is always appreciated in the school and at school-sponsored events. Please consider donating some of your time and talent to help enhance our quality program. The possibilities are endless. Parents play an integral role in the education of their children through the PTG/HSA, School Advisory Council, athletics, fund-raising activities, homeroom parents, playground/lunchroom monitors and field trip chaperones. This partnership is invaluable to the success of our school.

The Safe Environment Program of the Diocese of Pittsburgh takes reasonable measures to assure 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 must be compliant in the requirements of the safe environment policy:

- Complete application at <https://diopitt.org/school-volunteers>, which processes the PA State Police Criminal Record Clearance;
- Read and sign the Code of Pastoral Conduct;

- Complete Mandated Reporter Training
- Receive the Department of Public Welfare Child Abuse History Clearance;
- Obtain FBI Fingerprint clearance, or if applicable the waiver form
- Attend the Protecting God's Children Program.

Please contact the school office for more details to begin the Safe Environment Program.

# Appendix

## Diocesan Policies

### Weapon Policy - 560.04

PURPOSE: To protect students from physical harm caused by another with a weapon

APPLICABILITY: All Catholic elementary and secondary schools in the Diocese of Pittsburgh

DEFINITION: Weapon- Gun, knife or any article which may be used to cause bodily harm to another individual

#### POLICY AND PROCEDURE

A. Any person carrying a weapon onto school property, including, but not limited to, a school building, outdoor areas, outdoor facilities, vehicles used to transport students, or school related activities poses a clear and present danger to other students and staff.

A.1. If a student is found to be in possession of a weapon, his/her parents will be immediately notified.

A.2. The matter will be referred to local police authorities if, in the sole discretion of the school administration, such a referral is appropriate.

A.3. If the school will decide upon the appropriate disciplinary measures to be taken.

A.4. The disciplinary action taken may result in expulsion.(cf. Catholic School Safety and Security Manual, Chapter Seven)



It is important that parents/guardians, students and staff know the policies and procedures of Blessed Francis Seelos Academy. To ensure that the process of communication is complete, please review the revised Parent/Student Handbook with your children.

When you have reviewed the contents, please sign and return this form to the school office via your child's homeroom teacher.

**Family Name** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Children's Name(s):** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**I have read and agree to be governed by the Parent/Student Handbook of Blessed Francis Seelos Academy.**

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

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

Please sign and return the Blessed Francis Seelos Academy Internet Use Policy which follows. This signed document will permit your child access to the computer lab Internet system.

## **Parents/Guardians Internet Use Agreement**

Parents/Guardians:

Be advised that your child(ren) will not be permitted to access Blessed Francis Seelos Academy's Internet access until this agreement is signed, dated, and returned.

I have read and discussed Blessed Francis Seelos Academy's Policy on Internet Access and the guidelines established from that policy with my child(ren). I fully understand and agree that my children will abide by the policy statement and the guideline statements expressed or implied. I agree to not hold school administration and faculty responsible for materials my child(ren) acquires as a result of inappropriate Internet use.

I accept full responsibility if and when my child(ren) access the Internet without an account on equipment provided on the school site.

Please list below each child in the household who attends Blessed Francis Seelos Academy.

Child's Name	Grade Level
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**Parent/Guardian Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

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

Return this document to Blessed Francis Seelos Academy via your child's homeroom teacher.

Note: One Document Per Family

## Request for Excused Absence for Students Taking Non-School Educational Tour or Trip with Family or Other Approved Adult Sponsor

### **Criteria/Guidelines**

Regulations of the state of Pennsylvania provide that, upon written request from the parents/guardians of the student involved, a student may be excused from school attendance to participate in an educational tour or trip not sponsored by the school when the trip is evaluated by the superintendent as educational, and if the adult supervision is acceptable to both the superintendent and the student's parents/guardians. The building principal has been designated by the superintendent to make the initial decision, based on the information provided.

In order to provide guidance to parents/guardians, the following procedure for non-school educational trips/tours has been established:

1. This form must be submitted to the principal a minimum of ten (10) school days prior to the trip (except in an emergency). Parents/Guardians will be notified in any case in which the request is denied.
2. Requests will be approved only if it can be determined that the trip/tour is of educational value to the student.
3. If more than one child in a family will be taking the trip/tour, a separate request for each child shall be made to each child's principal if the children attend separate schools.
4. No more than five (5) school days per student will be approved for educational trip/tour requests in any school year. (Special requests with unusual circumstances or exceptional opportunities for learning should be discussed personally with the building principal well in advance of the requested dates for absence.)
5. Unless there are unusual or emergency circumstances, such requests will NOT be approved for the first ten (10) school days of the year, during periods of standardized assessments, when a student has accumulated an excessive number of unexcused absences, or when a student is in academic jeopardy. Please consult the district website, school calendar, or contact your building principal for specific assessment dates.
6. All schoolwork missed during the trip/tour must be made up at the initiation of the student immediately upon returning to school. Failure to complete schoolwork will result in a lack of evidence toward learning targets and will negatively impact a student's characteristics of a successful learner/citizenship/employability skills score.
7. Days that are not approved for an educational trip are unexcused and may therefore result in any or all of

the following actions:

1. First legal notice
2. School Attendance Improvement and Truancy plan
3. Citation from district court

\*\*Be advised that if the family trip combined with the total number of absences to date exceeds 10 days, you will be required to provide a doctor's note for each subsequent absence.

# EDUCATIONAL TRIP REQUEST FORM Page 1

PLEASE REVIEW CRITERIA AND GUIDELINES PRIOR TO COMPLETION

Name of Parent or Guardian (print): \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Student (print): \_\_\_\_\_

Phone#: \_\_\_\_\_

School: Blessed Francis Seelos Academy Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Brief description of trip (include location):

Educational value of trip:

Date(s) of trip:

\_\_\_\_\_ Student(s) to be accompanied by Parent or Guardian? Yes No

Student(s) to be accompanied by other adult (in lieu of parent or guardian)? Yes No

If "Yes," what is the adult's name? \_\_\_\_\_ Phone#:

\_\_\_\_\_ Name of sponsoring organization, if any:

Signature

Date

**THE STUDENT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL WORK MISSED.**



\*\*\*\*\*

***FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY:***

Total Number of School Absences to Date:

Number of Days Absent for Trip: Excused-                      Unexcused-

Academic Status:

Principal's (or designee) Decision: \_\_\_\_\_ Approved \_\_\_\_\_ Not Approved (Parent/Guardian will be contacted if NOT approved)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Principal's (or designee) Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date