



# Parent-Student Handbook

*Your Children, Our Students, the Nation's Future*

**St. Joseph Catholic Academy**

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# St. Joseph Catholic Academy

YOUR CHILDREN, OUR STUDENTS, THE NATION'S FUTURE

September 2024

Dear Parents and Students,

Welcome to St. Joseph!

Our teachers and staff are dedicated professionals who stand ready to provide the finest educational opportunities to our St. Joseph families.

As parents of the children enrolled in the Academy, you are their first teachers, and as their current teachers – we look forward to partnering with you – working together to ensure the academic, social, spiritual, and emotional growth of your children while they attend the Academy.

As students attending the academy, you have been given the precious gift of a Catholic education by your parents, for they appreciate the value of a Catholic education to you both now and in the future. By putting forth your best effort and assuming responsibility for your education, we will do everything we can to support and guide you – helping you to become – in the words of our mission statement - “...well-mannered, well-educated, responsible and compassionate citizens of the global community.”

To ensure a safe and productive educational environment, I ask that all parents and students adhere to the academy’s policies as provided in this handbook. Please take the time to review this handbook in its entirety. Please feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions, comments, or concerns.

The handbook remains accessible to you on the school website; it will be distributed as a hard copy upon request. Please try to check the website for the academy calendar each day, for this is a living document and changes are inevitable.

**At the end of this handbook are documents for you to review and sign, as well as an *Acknowledgement of Receipt* of this handbook. Please download, sign, and return all these documents.**

Thank you for choosing Catholic education for your children and for deciding to give them that education at St. Joseph Catholic Academy. I look forward to the opportunities that may present themselves throughout the year to thank you in person.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Lucy Alaimo  
Principal

## PHILOSOPHY AND VISION

St. Joseph Catholic Academy is a community of faith whose purpose and vision are derived from the Gospel teachings of Jesus Christ and are aimed at the spread of His message of faith, hope, and love.

We believe in the development of the whole child – the spiritual, intellectual, physical, emotional, and social. To that end, we seek to create a nurturing and supportive community and incorporate the teaching of religion along with opportunities for prayer, religious celebrations, and service to others. In addition, we strive to create a learning environment committed to academic excellence, character building, and a respect for the religious and multi-cultural diversity that characterizes our community. We believe in making the best use of current teaching and learning methodologies, advances in technology, and resources within the community to achieve our goals.

We believe that our goals are best realized when parent and teacher partner in the best interests of the child and when they, along with older students, serve as positive role models to create a community in which children care about each other and share with one another.

Finally, in order for our students to be prepared to meet the future challenges to our society and our planet, we believe that our educational program must encourage in students a desire for life-long learning, a willingness to give of their time and talents in service to others, and the development of a God-centered value system for life.

### Mission Statement

St. Joseph Catholic Academy is committed to the development of students of diverse backgrounds and faiths from nursery through eighth grade by providing a well-rounded foundation for future learning and life. Our partnership between school and home utilizes the Gospel message as well as the latest advances in technology and learning to empower students to serve God and each other by being well-mannered, well-educated, responsible, and compassionate citizens of the global community.

### A Brief History of St. Joseph Catholic Academy

In response to the mandates of the Bishop through the diocesan strategic planning process – *Preserving the Vision* – all of the current parish elementary schools across the diocese have been transitioning into Catholic academies, each separately incorporated by the New York State Board of Regents.

The concept of a parish elementary school dates back to the nineteenth century when virtually every parish opened an elementary school to educate the parish children. However, demographic shifts and financial difficulties have caused many parishes to reevaluate their ability to financially support their schools. The new academy structure is independent of the parish and has a board of directors who are responsible to insure the long term viability of the academy through long range planning, marketing, and fundraising efforts.

St. Joseph Catholic Academy opened in September 2012 in the same space formerly occupied by St. Joseph School. While the Academy is a relatively new entity, many of the traditions, including the charism of the founding religious community – The Sisters of St. Dominic, Amityville – have been preserved. One cannot fully understand the formation of the new Academy without knowing its roots in history.

St. Joseph Parish dates back to 1879 when the first church was erected as a mission of St. Mary, Help of Christians, in Winfield. The parish buildings, circa 1907, included a convent, a new church, and a rectory – all along 30 Avenue, now eastern Woodside, Queens. The current rectory was built in 1928; the convent building in 1938, now housing the parish offices and used for various parish activities.

In 1880, the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Dominic of Amityville (Amityville Dominicans) purchased a plot of ground to build an orphan home on 43 Street, opposite the parish property. The house accommodated as many as sixty children at a time and still stands though no longer associated with the parish. At that time, Father Cyprian Eisele, Pastor, approached the Sisters and asked if they would also take care of educating the children of the parish, and they agreed. Therefore, it may be said that the educational enterprise – aka St. Joseph School - had its beginnings in 1880.

The current main school building was erected in 1917, and a new wing was dedicated by Bishop Kearney in 1954. From the late 1950's through the next decade, over 1600 students were enrolled yearly in kindergarten to eighth grade. In 1966, there were thirty-four teachers, approximately 10 lay teachers and twenty-five Sisters, including the Sister Principal. Certified lay teachers were paid ninety dollars per month without benefits. Beginning in the mid-sixties, a gradual increase in the number of lay teachers and a corresponding decrease in the number of religious in the parish school occurred. When St. Joseph School ceased operations in June 2012 to transition into an academy, all teachers, including the principal, were lay personnel.

Happily, the Academy is able to occupy the same parish buildings and continues to afford a new generation of parishioners, along with families from the greater Astoria area, an education of proven excellence. For pastoral purposes, Bishop DiMarzio has aligned our Academy with the following six parishes in the Astoria/LIC/Woodside communities: St. Joseph, Corpus Christi, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Most Precious Blood, St. Rita, and St. Patrick. We welcome children from these parishes and ask them to think of the Academy as their parish school.

Continuing in the traditions and charism established by the Dominican Sisters, St. Joseph Catholic Academy develops young minds and shapes values by meeting the educational challenges of a new century for a new generation of youngsters.

Our Motto: *YOUR CHILDREN, OUR STUDENTS, THE NATIONS'S FUTURE*

### **Parental Expectation of Adherence to School Policy**

Discipline in the schools should reflect the spirit of *Vatican Council II*, as expressed in the *Documents on Christian Education and Religious Liberty*. Therefore, discipline should be geared to assist a child to develop in the understanding of self as being made in the image of God.

....Education is integral to the mission of the Church to proclaim the Good News. First and foremost every Catholic educational institution is a place to encounter the living God who in Jesus Christ reveals his transforming love and truth (cf. *Spe Salve*, 4). This relationship elicits a desire to grow in the knowledge and understanding of Christ and his teaching. In this way those who meet him are drawn by the very power of God to lead a new life characterized by all that is beautiful, good, and true; a life of Christian witness nurtured and strengthened within the community of our Lord's disciples, the Church....Dear friends, I wish to conclude by focusing our attention specifically on the paramount importance of your own professionalism and witness within our Catholic universities and schools. First, let me thank you for your dedication and generosity. I know from my own days as a professor, and have heard from your Bishops and officials of the Congregation for Catholic Education, that the reputation of Catholic institutes of learning in this country is largely due to yourselves and your predecessors. Your selfless contributions – from outstanding research to the dedication of those working in inner-city schools – serve your country and the Church. For this I express my profound gratitude. (*Address of His Holiness Benedict XVI to Catholic educators at the Catholic University of America, Washington, DC, April 17, 2008*)

Evidence of discipline exists in a school community when the students, teachers, administration, and parents/legal guardians work cooperatively to educate the whole child: spiritually, academically, socially, emotionally, and physically.

#### **I. PURPOSE OF THIS HANDBOOK**

This Parent-Student Handbook (“Handbook”) is designed to provide important information regarding rules, policies, and procedures relating to the operation and safety at our Academy. The Handbook summarizes policies and contains general guidelines and information. To the extent that anything in this Handbook conflicts with applicable law, the applicable law governs. Further, this Handbook may be changed from time to time during the academic year. An up-to-date version can be found on the academy website, and parents are expected to regularly check that version to be aware of any changes. Questions should be referred to the principal.

Parents are required to sign an acknowledgement form indicating that they have read the rules and regulations outlined in this Handbook. They agree to abide by those rules and to ensure that their children abide by the rules. Students in grades 6-8 must also sign this form. Failure to sign the form will not prevent the Academy from enforcing its policies but could result in disciplinary action being taken and/or the prevention of a student from enrolling in the Academy. This signature form can be found at the end of this Handbook.

**In this Handbook, the term “parent” refers not only to a child’s natural or adopted parent, but to a student’s non-parent legal guardian or to any person or agency authorized to act in place of a parent.**

Finally, in light of unique situations which may arise in the educational process, and because it is impossible to foresee all school issues, the Academy reserves the right to address and take appropriate action for any such situations not specifically referenced in this Handbook. Additionally, in light of the

unique and essential religious mission of the Academy, the Academy may take actions in cases where moral offenses occur which reflect adversely on the Academy, the Diocese of Brooklyn, or the Roman Catholic Church, or which interfere with the ability of the Academy to perform its religious mission or to effectively maintain the intimate working relationship of the Academy and the community of faith.

## **II. CATHOLIC IDENTITY**

### **A. Catholic Identity**

The mission of Catholic education is to form children in the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ as celebrated in the Catholic Church, while providing a comprehensive academic education that will help them reach their full human potential and contribute to the common good of our nation and the world. Ultimately, the mission of all Catholic education is to lead those entrusted to its care to find salvation in Jesus Christ.

In *Catholic Schools on the Threshold of the Third Millennium* (#11) Saint John Paul II wrote that Catholic schools are "...the privileged environment in which Christian education is carried out. Catholic schools are at once places of evangelization, of complete formation, of enculturation, of apprenticeship in a lively dialogue between young people of different religions and social backgrounds."

Diocesan academies and schools strive to emulate the words of Saint John Paul II by:

- creating an evangelizing community, where people come to have a better and deeper understanding of Christ and His Church
- recognizing the importance of multi-cultural, multi-faceted, academically sound educational programs that meet the needs of the poor and the rich, the Catholic and the non-Catholic, the wise and the not so learned
- welcoming members to the school community regardless of culture, race, or religion and celebrating the diversity that exists within our communities, churches, and schools
- creating an environment that encourages young people to grow, not separated from others, but as part of a larger community, as part of the family of God
- not only promoting and encouraging academically sound individuals, but rejoicing with children who are spiritually, theologically, and liturgically enlivened and fulfilled

### **B. Adherence to Catholic Doctrine**

The Academy is a Roman Catholic school located in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn ("Diocese of Brooklyn"), and is committed to providing quality Catholic education for both Catholic children and those of other faiths who share our commitment to Gospel values and academic excellence. Our goals include teaching Christ's truth and fostering the formation of the Academy's students by conveying the values rooted in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As a religious organization of the Roman Catholic faith, the Academy, at all times, adheres to the doctrines, customs, tenets, and teachings of the Roman Catholic Church, and the curriculum guidelines in religion from the Diocese of Brooklyn. All students and parents, including those who are non-Catholic, must accept and adhere to the standards, values, and religious tenets of the Roman Catholic faith. *All* parents are expected to support the Academy's mission and commitment to Christian principles.

### **C. Inclusion of All Other Faiths**

The presence of students from other faiths provides a wonderful diversity, and the Academy welcomes those students and their parents. However, as a Catholic institution located within the Diocese of Brooklyn, the Academy is focused on the formation of children in the Catholic faith. Parents must accept the intentional Catholic values and tenets that are the underpinning of our Academy. All students, including non-Catholic students, are expected to participate in the religious formation and education programs of the Academy, including, but not limited to, liturgies, religious functions, and religious classes. It is also expected that non-Catholic students and parents participate as fully as they can in the liturgical and prayer life of the Academy. The teachers and administration at the Academy are also committed to teaching the fullness of revelation as it is taught by the Roman Catholic Church and the Diocese of Brooklyn. While our teachers, administration, and staff value the presence of students from other faiths and respect other faiths, they always teach and model within the context of the doctrines and tenets of the Roman Catholic Church.

## **III. ACADEMICS**

### **A. Academic Expectations**

The Academy expects its students to perform to the best of their ability. Teachers evaluate students' progress on a regular basis with quizzes, tests, homework, presentations, participation, behavior in the classroom, and class presentations. After a test is graded, it may be sent home for a parent to review and sign. A parent's signature indicates that the parent is aware of the student's progress.

### **B. Curriculum & Assessments**

#### **NYS Testing**

Students in grades 4, 6, 7, and 8 will participate in the New York State Testing Program. Parents receive an Individual Student Report (ISR) which includes a breakdown of a student's performance in various skill areas within ELA, Math and Science. This helps parents understand where their child is doing well and in what areas he or she may need additional practice. Parents can use these results to guide a discussion with their child's teacher about additional supports or challenges that may be needed in the classroom, as well as ways to support learning at home.

There are no negative consequences to taking state tests as the tests are considered diagnostic. The test results are not recorded on student permanent record cards or report cards. New York State law forbids the use of state test results as the determining factor in promotion.

#### **TerraNova Testing**

Students in grades 3-8 will participate in TerraNova Testing in the fall, students in K to 2 in the spring. TerraNova testing is a nationally-normed, standardized testing program. This series of tests is used to diagnose student performance and develop student learning goals.

### **C. Religious Education**

Religion is part of all that we see, teach, and do at the Academy, and is a crucial component of students' academic learning. The Academy adheres to the current Diocese of Brooklyn curriculum guidelines in religion. Non-Catholic students are expected to fully participate in all religious education and formation programs, including, but not limited to, religion class, liturgies, and religious functions.

#### **D. Homework**

Homework is an essential part of the Academy's instructional program, as it reinforces learning and provides students with opportunities to practice the lessons taught in class. Homework may come in many forms, including, but not limited to, projects, reports, and independent reading. A student is required to complete all homework, including that assigned when s/he is absent. **Parent or other adult assistance with homework is a key to a student's academic success. In keeping with the Academy's mission to educate for responsibility, ultimately each child must be responsible for his/her own learning, and while assistance from a parent is necessary, parents should not take any action that would interfere with a child's responsibility to produce his/her own work.**

All students are expected to read independently for 20 minutes per evening (or, in the case of lower grade children, to be read to). Your child's teacher(s) will provide more detailed information regarding homework expectations.

Please keep in mind that each child works at a different pace, and the time frame for completing homework for one student may be different from that of another. Homework must be done at home and may not be done at school, with the exception of students who attend the extended day program.

#### **E. Grades**

The Academy uses the standard diocesan trimester report card to report student achievement. The determination of grades is the responsibility of each teacher. Parents and students must know and understand how grades are determined and are provided detailed information about grading policies by the teacher.

The following is an overview of grades at the Academy: Kindergarteners receive academic progress grades from 1 to 4; students in grades 1 through 4 receive letter grades A through F; those in grades 5 through 8 receive numerical grades from -70 to 100.

Parents will receive report cards three times a year, at the end of each trimester. Parents will also receive progress reports during each trimester prior to their receiving the report cards. It is vital to a student's progress that an open communication exists between parents and their child's teacher. Any concerns regarding a child's progress should be addressed first to the child's teacher.

**HONOR ROLL:** The Honor Roll (Grades 5-8) is published at the end of each trimester. Students receiving overall averages between 89 and 92 are awarded Second Honors Certificates. Students receiving overall averages between 93 and 96 are awarded First Honors Certificates. Students receiving overall averages between 97 and 100 are awarded Principal's List Certificates. To be eligible for the Honor Roll, students must have a good attendance record and not receive a score of 1 in any area of personal progress.

**ACHIEVEMENT CERTIFICATES:** Achievement Certificates are awarded to students in Grades 1 to 8 at special assemblies held at the end of the trimester – twice during the year. Among the criteria for the selection to receive a certificate are the following: follows Academy/class regulations, puts forth best effort, is punctual, is prepared for school and in uniform, puts the school's philosophy and mission statement into action.

#### **F. Make-Up Work**



Students who are absent from school are given sufficient time by their teachers to make-up classwork and homework that could not be completed during the absence.

#### **G. Protecting Instructional Time**

Maintaining school schedule and structure is of the utmost importance during the school year. As academies make their calendars and schedules, their goal is to protect instructional time as much as possible. Therefore, parents are asked to refrain from removing their child during the school day for anything but emergency situations.

Appointments should be scheduled, when possible, before or after the school day in order to avoid disrupting student learning. Vacations and family trips should also be planned for existing school vacation weeks. In the event of a necessary absence, parents should alert the school by 7:30 a.m. on the day of absence. For an extended absence, in addition to alerting the Academy office, parents must communicate with their child's teacher to create a plan for making up missed work.

#### **H. Parent-Teacher Conferences**

Parents will have the opportunity to attend parent teacher conferences at the end of the first and second trimester following receipt of student report cards. While these are formally scheduled conferences, parents are also encouraged to schedule meetings with teachers or other staff, when necessary, to discuss their child's progress and learning goals.

#### **I. Admission Policies**

Roman Catholic schools in the Diocese of Brooklyn base their educational purpose and all their activities on the Christian teaching of the essential quality of all persons as rooted in God's love.

The process for admission to the Academy is as follows: parents must complete the Academy application form and provide all required documents. If necessary, an interview will be held. Following an interview (if held) and evaluation of the materials, the parent will be notified if the Academy is offering the child a position.

#### **J. Transfers and Withdrawals**

If a parent wishes to transfer his or her child(ren) out of the Academy, a transfer request form must be obtained from the Academy office. Before records are transferred to another school, all financial obligations must be met in full, and all books must be returned.

When a student transfers from one school to another, or enters high school, the new school may request a copy of the permanent record and health card from the former school. The Academy may disclose a student's cumulative record (*i.e.* permanent record, attendance record, test results) to another school with a legitimate educational interest if a written request is made and when a parent has given written permission for the release of the child's records. Parent signature is required for release of a student's confidential file, which includes special education records, psychological reports, disciplinary records, and reports by a school counselor. Official records are not passed from academy to parent – only to a child's new school upon request.

#### **K. Recommendation for Next Grade Level**

The Academy considers the decision to promote or retain a student very seriously. Sometimes, testing, diagnosis and actual performance may indicate that a student cannot follow the Academy's complete course of study. In accordance with NYS Education Law, Assessment and Performance, if a student is being

considered for retention at the same grade level, teachers will discuss the issue with the principal, with whom the final decision rests. Criteria the principal and teachers may take into account as they consider a recommendation for retention include: that the student has failed to pass major subjects on each grade level and/or has not demonstrated acceptable progress toward mastery of standards, including failure to complete assignments or repeated low scores in several areas on a report card.

If a student completes all requirements for promotion or graduation, and there has been no recommendation or approval to retain the student, a parent cannot self-select that the student be retained.

#### **L. Graduation**

At the discretion of the principal, the Academy has the right not to certify a student's graduation, or to issue a diploma to the student if there has been a breach of a material condition of the educational contract, such as failure to meet financial obligations, infractions against the school's code of conduct, anti-bullying policy, or violations of the policies of the Academy and those set forth in this Handbook.

#### **M. Distance Learning**

The Covid 19 pandemic introduced educators to distance learning and provided a way to manage the delivery of instruction during the suspension of ordinary life and regular schooling. That said, distance learning – especially on the elementary level – is not a long-term solution or even a desirable temporary substitute. That said, we are prepared to revert to distance learning should another emergency force the complete closure of school buildings again for any extended period of time. Outside of that type of unexpected event, students are expected to attend school in person where their educational needs are best met.

#### **N. Extracurricular Activities**

Students are expected to follow Academy policy while engaged in any extracurricular activity. Participation in these activities is a privilege, and students are expected to fulfill their obligations in the classroom as a priority to any extracurricular activity.

#### **O. Recess**

With the exception of school-wide events, which may include Mass, daily recess will be provided. If weather permits, the students will attend recess outdoors. If not, the gym will be used. If a student has any physical limitation which may affect his or her ability to engage in all recess activities, the Academy must be notified in accordance with the Limitations of Physical Activity policy found in this Handbook.

#### **P. Summer School**

In accordance with NYS Education Guidelines a student who has received a failing grade in reading, mathematics, and language arts in three marking periods of the report card will be required to attend mandatory summer school in the low performing content areas. Summer school may also be recommended due to poor performance on standardized tests or in the classroom. Excessive absences during the school year may result in the child being required to attend summer school. The final determination as to whether a student must attend summer school rests with the principal.

The summer school report card must be submitted to the academy principal before September 1. Failure to attend summer school when required will result in retention at the same grade level or discharge of the student. It is the parent's responsibility to provide documentation that summer school has been

successfully completed. In cases in which tutoring is allowed for the summer school remediation, it must be undertaken by a qualified teacher and approved in advance by the academy principal.

#### **IV. GENERAL INFORMATION**

##### **A. Academy Calendar**

New York State Law currently requires a school calendar to provide 177 days of instruction with 3 professional days and cites the following holidays when schools may not be in session:

|                                 |                              |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Columbus Day                    | Second Monday in October     |
| Veterans Day                    | Eleventh Day in November     |
| Thanksgiving Day                | Fourth Thursday in November  |
| Christmas Day                   | Twenty-fifth day in December |
| New Year's Day                  | First Day in January         |
| Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day | Third Monday in January      |
| Memorial Day                    | Last Monday in May           |
| Juneteenth                      | Nineteenth day in June       |

On the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, the feast of the patroness of the Diocese of Brooklyn, the academy will be closed. The above and any additional academy closings will be indicated in the online calendar found on the Academy's website. To the extent any changes are made, the website will be regularly updated.

##### **B. The School Day**

**Please arrive (K to 8) for school between 7:45 a.m. and 8 a.m.** All students in grades K through 6 will enter through the main lobby doors on 44th Street only. Junior-high students will enter through the lot on 43 Street. There is no outdoor supervision before 8:00 a.m. The Academy doors will be opened at 7:45 a.m., and the students will go directly to their respective classrooms.

PreK 3 children should arrive at 8:10 a.m. and are dismissed at 2:30 p.m. Pre-K 4 students should arrive at 8:05 a.m. and are dismissed at 2:25 p.m. Dismissal doors are noted in the orientation information provided by the teachers.

**To help alleviate congestion and safety hazards, parents are asked not to congregate** in front of the entrance doors. Parents may wait across the street from the building and are asked to leave once the children have entered the building.

**If you are driving your child to/from school, please remember that double parking, parking in crosswalks or in the NO PARKING DURING SCHOOL HOURS area or driving into the SCHOOL PLAY STREET is subject to a summons. Also, please do not drive into the school yard when dropping off/picking up children. Please cooperate with us in these matters for your child's safety, the safety of the other children, and for the sake of positive community relations with our neighbors on 44<sup>th</sup> Street.**

The school day begins **promptly** at 8 a.m. for K to 8 students. After 8 a.m., children will be considered **LATE** to school. While an occasional lateness is understandable, **lateness always causes an interruption to the class and interferes with the academic progress of the latecomer as well as the rest of the**

**students.** Therefore, repeated lateness to school is an infraction that must result in some consequence. If lateness is deemed chronic, parents will be notified and the youngster will be subject to disciplinary action.

Frequent (excessive) lateness will disqualify a student from receiving achievement or honors recognition.

Unless in the event of an extreme emergency, it is not possible to interrupt classes while in session. Parents/Visitors are not permitted to go to classrooms during class time.

**In order to teach a youngster responsibility and to insure against repeated interruptions of the instructional program, any items forgotten at home will not be accepted at the school office. A child who forgets his/her lunch will be given a jelly sandwich for lunch.**

## **DISMISSAL**

Please meet children at the corners of 28th or 30th Avenues at 44th Street. Except for parents of pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students, please do not wait for your children at the school doors or along 44 Street. Please remain on the avenue away from the corners. Please do not congregate on the corner since to do so may obstruct the teacher's view when s/he is releasing a child.

Students will be walked to the corner by a teacher. Students have been instructed **NOT TO LEAVE THE LINE UNTIL THEY ARE DISMISSED BY THE TEACHER.** Therefore, for the safety and security of each child, please **DO NOT CALL OUT TO OR DISTRACT YOUR CHILD WHILE S/HE IS BEING DISMISSED.** Junior High students are dismissed via the gym exit on 43<sup>rd</sup> Street.

The Academy will not release a student to any adult that is not known to the teacher releasing the student. Parents must provide authorization for their child to be released to an individual other than themselves.

Students who proceed home on their own, either by walking, bicycle, or otherwise, must do so as safely and directly as possible **and submit written authorization signed by the parent to the Academy.** They must obey all traffic and trespassing laws, and cross at designated crosswalks. Students in **PK3 to Grade 5** will not be permitted to travel home from the Academy without a parent or other authorized adult or another pre-arranged travel accommodation (such as a school bus). In the case of a younger student traveling home with an older student, such as an older sibling, the Academy must receive written authorization from a parent. The Academy reserves the right to not release the student(s) to travel home on their own, either by walking or otherwise, if it deems that is not in the best interest of the students.

**For safety and security reasons, students will not be permitted to return to their classrooms after dismissal.**

### **C. Breakfast/Lunch Program**

Students are expected to bring their own lunch daily as well as a snack when permitted in the lower grades. Students must not bring glass containers containing their lunch or snack drink. A schedule of hot food items which are available for purchase will be published each week. Students are expected to comply with all regulations at lunchtime.

### **D. Office Hours**

The academy office is open for business from 7:30 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. daily. If your business requires more than a fifteen minute communication, please contact Mrs. Sgritto (718-728-0724 or [JSgritto@sicalic.org](mailto:JSgritto@sicalic.org)) to schedule an appointment. Please – unless in an emergency – please refrain from contacting the office between 12:30 p.m. and 1:15 p.m. Questions/concerns dealing with tuition or other payments are **not** considered ordinary business and **cannot** be handled efficiently in person during ordinary hours.

#### **E. Early Dismissal Schedule – (Modified Schedule Day)**

Unless otherwise specified, early dismissal means that school is in session from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. – with a staggered dismissal beginning at 12:35 p.m. with kindergarten. For PreK 3 and 4 students, early dismissal is at 12:30 and 12:25 respectively.

#### **F. Extended Day Programs**

The Academy offers an Early Morning Drop-Off Program (7:10 a.m. to 8 a.m.) and an Extended Afternoon Program (dismissal to 5:45 p.m.). These programs are an extension of the academic day, and students are expected to follow all academy policies and procedures. Directors of individual activities held after hours may also issue rules of behavior, which recognize the special nature of non-classroom activities. Parents are expected to make arrangements to pick up their children at the end of the program or activity. **Students will be released only to a parent or a person previously specified by the parent.** Program fees are expected to be paid in full upon being invoiced. Past due balances may result in a student not being allowed to participate in the program until the account is brought up to date.

#### **G. Attendance**

The Academy has developed an attendance policy in accordance with New York State Education Law. This comprehensive attendance policy will help us uphold the philosophy and mission statement of our Academy.

Education Law of the State of New York mandates school attendance for all children between the ages of 6 and 16, and the responsibility for compliance rests with the parents. The academy is required to keep an accurate record of daily attendance, absence and tardiness in the register of attendance in a manner approved by the Commissioner of Education. When a child has been absent, a written excuse is required from his or her parent. If a student is absent without an excuse, or if the school has reason to suspect the validity of the excuse, the principal will investigate the situation.

Doctor or dental appointments should be scheduled for after regular school hours. Family vacations should not be planned for days when school is in session. Rather, students receive vacation time throughout the year. Teachers are not required to give assignments in anticipation of family vacations, and are not required to give make-up tests for absences due to vacation trips.

#### **H. Early Release**

Students are expected to be in attendance for the complete session each school day. If for any reason a student must leave the Academy before the regular dismissal time, a parent or a person authorized by the parent must come to the Academy office to sign out the student and escort the student out of the building. Parents must provide authorization for their child to be released to an individual other than themselves.

## **I. Use of School Grounds**

Unless students are formally registered for before or after school programs, including Academy after school activities, the school does not have staff available to supervise students outside the general school hours.

## **J. Dress Code**

The wearing of a uniform allows everyone to be seen for who they are, not by what they have. The purpose of a uniform is a means of consistency in student dress, while keeping costs to a minimum for parents. It also reduces the problem of competitive dressing. Students, unless otherwise notified by administration, will wear the school uniform.

All students are expected to keep themselves well-groomed and neatly dressed at all times. A clean and healthy appearance is important. Any form of dress which is considered by the administrations to be contrary to good hygiene or which is distracting or disruptive in appearance and detrimental to the purpose or conduct of the Academy will not be permitted. All clothing should be clean, neat, and in good repair.

The academy has contracted with Flynn and O'Hara Uniforms (800-441-4122) and Da-Bar Too shoes.

## **K. Grooming Code**

Hair must be its natural color, clean, neatly combed, not totally covering the ears or eyes. Facial hair is not permitted. Students are not allowed to wear make-up. Only appropriate modest and inexpensive jewelry (including ear rings for girls only) is allowed. Students may maintain natural hair/hairstyles that are closely associated with their racial, ethnic, or cultural identities.

Parents will be notified if a child comes to school consistently in an unkempt manner. If no improvement is noticed within a reasonable amount of time, an appointment with the parents and the principal or designee will be arranged.

## **L. Non-Uniform Days**

There may be occasions in which students are allowed to wear non-uniform attire. Students are reminded to dress with modesty. Students should adhere to the following attire:

- Appropriate length skirt, shorts or dress
- No spaghetti strap tanks, midriffs, tube tops, etc.
- No non pre-approved logo type T-shirts

## **M. Field Trips**

Written permission must be obtained from parents of students who wish to attend scheduled trips. Information to the parents will include the date, purpose and destination of the trip, the expense, the means of transportation, and probable time of return.

Adults who wish to chaperone must complete Virtus training prior to accompanying students. Please see section on Volunteering, Chaperoning and VIRTUS training for further information about this process.

Field trips are considered an extension of the school day and the code of conduct and anti-bullying policy will apply. All disciplinary rules pertaining to students equally apply to students during school field trips.

Students who engage in poor behavior on field trips may be required to be escorted by a parent on future field trips or may lose the privilege of attending field trips. Individual teachers in consultation with the principal reserve the right to restrict or deny student participation on any field trip due to, but not limited to, poor academic performance, violation of the code of conduct or poor behavior, or violation of school policy.

All medications given on field trips must comply with the Administering Medication Policy. For a student with prescription medication and/or necessary medical-related treatments, a trained individual needs to be present on a field trip. This can include a parent, a designated family member to ensure care in the case of an emergency, or the school nurse *if* the nurse is attending the field trip. Given the needs of the Academy, the Academy cannot guarantee that the nurse will attend the trip. If a trained individual of the Academy cannot attend the field trip, it is the responsibility of the parent to provide a trained individual to accompany the student on the field trip. Any adult accompanying the student must complete Virtus training prior to accompanying the student.

The Academy reserves the right to cancel academy-sponsored field trips at any time and for any reason, including inclement weather and safety risks.

#### **N. Care of Academy Property**

Students will be held responsible for the proper care of all books, supplies, devices, accessories or equipment furnished to them by the Academy. Students who damage, lose, or deface Academy property shall be required to pay for the damage or loss.

Desks, lockers, and any other area on Academy property where students store items are Academy property and subject to searches by school authorities to protect the safety of all.

#### **O. Books and Supplies**

Each child is responsible for keeping his or her books in good condition. Books that are lost or defaced become the liability of the student and his or her parents. Contact paper is NOT to be used to cover any books obtained under the New York State textbook loan. Parents are responsible for providing their children with supplemental materials listed on the yearly supply list for use in the classroom.

#### **P. Telephone/Cell Communication**

If a parent needs to reach a student, the parent must call the office at 718-728-0724. Similarly, if a student seeks to call his or her parent, the student must make the request – initially to his/her teacher to ask to go to the office. **Under no circumstances should a parent or child call or text each other during school hours from a cell phone.**

#### **Q. Personal Property**

The Academy is not responsible for valuables that are lost or damaged. Therefore, it is strongly advised that students do not bring valuables into the school building including cell phones. Personal electronic devices such as iPads, chromebooks, etc. are not permitted. The Academy will supply each student with an Academy-owned electronic device to be used only for educational purposes each day.

#### **R. Announcements**

Informational announcements are handled through the Academy's P.A. system. Students must courteously listen when a message is presented over the P.A. system, especially when prayers are recited.

## **S. Flyers and Informational Brochures**

Students may, upon approval by the principal, distribute, at reasonable times and places, unofficial material, including petitions, buttons, or other insignia. However, all such material must be in accordance with the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. Failure to comply will result in confiscation of the material and possibly disciplinary action. Further, any such material may not be obscene, libelous, contain indecent or vulgar language or content, advertise a product not permitted to minors by law, constitute insulting or fighting words the purpose of which may be to injure or harass other people, or present a high likelihood of causing a disruption at the Academy. Further, parents may not distribute, either through their child or otherwise, any material not authorized by the principal.

## **V. EXPECTATIONS AND BEHAVIOR**

### **T. Student Behavior and Code of Conduct**

All students are expected to thrive toward excellent behavior at all times. Behavior problems include disrespecting authority, including teachers, staff, and other students, teasing, bullying, socially unacceptable behavior, or behavior contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church or the mission of the Academy. If behavioral issues persist, a disciplinary conference may be required with the parent.

Students are expected to be present, punctual, properly attired, honest, cooperative and respectful toward one another and to all adults in the school. Students are expected to be cooperative with all policies of the school, their teachers and any adult in a supervisory capacity in the school.

Failure to meet these expectations will result in disciplinary action that may include detention, suspension, or dismissal from St. Joseph Catholic Academy. A parent will be notified if and when a student is to be so detained in school or out of school for disciplinary reasons. For serious acts of misbehavior, the student may immediately be suspended for a period of one to five days at the determination of the principal.

In addition, each teacher will publish expectations for student performance and behavior in her/his classroom. The teacher at the Parent Orientation/Information Meeting in September will explain these expectations. Students and parents are responsible to be aware of these guidelines and to comply with them. To the extent a teacher finds it necessary, parents will be notified of classroom problems. As partners in education, parents should work with the teacher to ensure that inappropriate behavior is addressed and corrected.

Infractions in the following areas may result in recess or after school **detention**: repeated lateness, dress code violations, failure to complete homework, unsigned tests or homework, failure to present an absence note after an absence, possession/use of any items deemed distractions to learning (radio, walkman, CD player, laser pointer, any balls or toys, etc., uncooperative or disrespectful behavior, defacing property, gum chewing, eating without permission). **Students are not permitted to bring any electronic entertainment devices to school. These serve as a distraction to the academic nature of the school day and are not permitted. Such items will be confiscated and will be returned only to the parent. The Academy does not accept liability for loss or damage. A cell phone is permitted in school provided that the student keeps it in the OFF position and it is NOT used by anyone during school hours in school or outdoors around the school. SMART watches are NOT permitted in school. If the**



**phone/watch regulation is abused, the phone/watch will be confiscated and returned to the parent only. The academy does not accept liability for loss or damage of any electronic devices.**

Offenses which are grounds for **suspension** include, but are not limited to the following: cheating/forgery; destruction of property (repair or replacement of vandalized property will be the responsibility of the parent of the offender); fighting, bullying, cyber bullying or harassing/threatening another in word or demeanor; any behavior that may cause harm to self or others; insolence or grave disrespect; stealing; disregard for school authority; truancy; leaving school property without permission while under the jurisdiction of the school; violations of the acceptable use policy (Internet); gambling of any kind (including dice and card games) for money or anything of value; any pattern of repeated infractions of school behavioral guidelines or of those established for the class by a teacher; smoking while under the jurisdiction of the school.

Suspension may be of two types: in-school and out-of-school. A student placed on an in-school suspension is required to be present in school, but will not be allowed to attend classes and activities with the other children during the duration of the suspension. Parents will be notified of the reason for and duration of the suspension. A parent conference may be required.

In the case of an out-of-school suspension, the parent will be notified and the student will not be permitted to attend school for a period of up to five days per suspension. A disciplinary conference with the student, parent and principal will be required before the student is permitted to return to school. Any child so suspended is automatically excluded from participation in special school activities during the time of the suspension. Corrective measures decided by the principal will be required in order for a child to resume classes and remain at the Academy. In cases of vandalism, the parent must pay the full cost of the repair or replacement of the item before the child may return to the academy. In cases of theft, the item is either returned in good condition or the cost of replacement is borne by the parent before the child can return.

Offenses which are grounds for **dismissal** include, but are not limited to the following: threatening harm in words or deeds, assault of an adult or another student; the possession, use, or sale of alcohol or drugs of any type in school, on school grounds, or off school grounds when the student is under the jurisdiction of the school; possession of a weapon of any kind in school, or on school grounds, or off school grounds while under the jurisdiction of the school; gambling of any kind (including dice and card games) for money or anything of value; repeated offences against the rules; repeated suspensions.

Individual-directed threats of violence or harm communicated directly or indirectly by any means, as well as building-directed threats of violence or harm communicated directly or indirectly by any means (e.g., shooting, bomb threats), or to harm students, employees, or visitors are taken seriously. Upon knowledge of the threats, the Principal will notify the Office of the Superintendent and call the parents. The administration will determine the course of action to be taken up to and including calling law enforcement, requiring a mental health referral, and/or expulsion.

Lastly, a child's arrest for a crime on or off of school grounds, within or beyond the vicinity of the Academy, at any time could result in the child's suspension or expulsion. A child's conviction of a crime on or off of school grounds, within or beyond the vicinity of the Academy, will likely result in a child's expulsion.

#### **U. Anti-Bullying Policy**

The academy communities within the diocese believe in the sanctity of human life and the inherent dignity of the human person. We believe that all students, school employees and volunteers have a right to a safe and healthy academy environment. All members of our community, in turn, have an obligation to promote mutual respect, tolerance and acceptance. Research shows that students who learn in a safe and supportive environment succeed academically. Students have a right to learn in an environment free of any harassment that substantially interferes with their education.

Bullying, bias-based harassment/intimidation are intentional, repeated, hurtful acts (physical, verbal, written) committed by one or more persons towards another person or persons. It usually involves an actual or perceived imbalance of power which can be physical, emotional or verbal. If not addressed, bullying can lead to the creation of a hostile, offensive or intimidating environment and can affect a student's educational opportunities. The behaviors include but are not limited to:

- *Physical:* physical violence, stalking, threats, aggressive or menacing gestures, exclusion from peer groups which is intended to humiliate or isolate the target (relational bullying).
- *Verbal:* taunts, teasing, derogatory language, derogatory jokes, name calling, slurs, spreading rumors
- *Written:* written or graphic material including graffiti containing comments or stereotypes that are electronically written and transmitted via internet, social messaging sites, blogs, instant messaging, text messages, cell phone, webcams. This would also include forwarding such messages if received. This generally constitutes cyber-bullying.

#### *Reporting Procedures:*

- The targeted student, parent of a student or other students in the school (bystanders), or any school staff who believes that bullying has occurred should report the incident to the principal.
- The principal or designee will conduct an investigation by interviewing all parties separately.
- The parents of all involved students should be notified.
- If it is determined that bullying has occurred, the child who bullied will be subject to consequences per the academy's disciplinary code.
- Parents will be advised to contact the appropriate law enforcement agency if the situation warrants such a report.
- Referral to counseling will be made for all identified parties if deemed necessary.
- The principal will follow up to see that the offending conduct has stopped.
- All students will be notified that retaliation against anyone who makes a report will not be tolerated and those that retaliate will be subject to disciplinary actions.

#### **V. Cyber Bullying Policy**

In accordance with New York State Law on Cyber-Bullying, inappropriate, defamatory, or content found to be injurious to an academy community member may result in disciplinary action, even if done outside of Academy premises or using devices not owned or controlled by the Academy. All instances of such behavior must be reported immediately to the administration, which will investigate the matter and enforce the consequences deemed appropriate.

Violation of this policy in whole or in part may result in any or all of the following and will be issued at the discretion of the Academy principal:

- Loss of use/privileges of school/academy technology.

- Disciplinary action including, but not limited to, detention, suspension, expulsion, and /or legal action
- Compensation for damages, both physical and punitive, incurred due to actions in violation of this policy.

#### **W. Alcohol and Drug Free Zone Policy**

The New York City Tobacco Products Regulations Act of 1994 curtails exposure to tobacco use on school grounds. For the purpose of this legislation “school grounds” means the “buildings, grounds or facilities, or any part thereof, owned or occupied by public or private institutions for the primary purpose of providing educational instructions to students at or below the twelfth grade level.” Tobacco use is not permitted on academy grounds at any time. A “tobacco product” is any substance which contains tobacco including but not limited to cigarettes, cigars, pipe tobacco, and chewing tobacco. New York City regulations are far more stringent than the regulations promulgated by New York State. However, schools subject to the rules of this municipality, as are the academies of the Diocese of Brooklyn/Queens, must follow the local laws. Thus, smoking is prohibited on ALL ACADEMY PREMISES AT ANY TIME.

For the safety of our students, alcohol is also prohibited from being consumed on academy premises at any time.

#### **X. Impermissible Items**

Students must conduct themselves at all times in a courteous manner in accord with Catholic principles. To that end, and also in the interest of safety of the students and protection of the Academy’s property, the following items are among those NOT allowed at any time:

1. Any type of permanent marker
2. Spray cans, smoke bombs, stink bombs, powders/choking agents or chemicals or any kind.
3. Gum
4. Alcohol or drugs of any kind, and matches or lighters, and drug paraphernalia
5. Laser pointers, knives/box cutters, or any type of weapon
6. Any type of toy weapon
7. Nail files
8. Energy drinks and caffeine
9. Extreme jewelry
10. Makeup of any kind
11. Personal electronic devices (cell phones while permitted are strongly discouraged and may NOT be used during school hours)

The presence of any of these items can lead to disciplinary action, up to and including suspension. The presence of alcohol, drugs, or weapons is a criminal offense and the police will be notified.

#### **Y. Respect for Life**

A fundamental belief and tenet of the Roman Catholic faith is that human life must be respected and protected from the moment of conception. All students and parents are expected to live and follow Gospel teachings and the Catholic faith in this area.

#### **Z. Parental Involvement**

Home is the first place where a child learns love and respect for God and neighbor. Parents, by choosing a Catholic school to continue the education begun at home, have responsibilities as well as opportunities to share in the continuance of their children's education.

Parental involvement consists of parents and staff meeting together because of common interest in the child. It is expressed in many ways such as sharing in student supervision in the lunchroom or playground or serving as library or teacher aide. In some instances, parents may be asked to assist in advocacy in all areas that would benefit the academies, including programs that request government assistance, in consultation with the Office of the Superintendent. The involvement of the total family is also a means of communicating the academy's performance to the total parish community.

#### **AA. Parental Communication**

Regular communication between the Academy and parents is a crucial component of a child's educational experience. Scheduled parent teacher conferences allow teachers and parents to discuss student achievement as well as to develop means to assist students in areas of difficulty.

A parent may request a meeting with a teacher at any time by simply sending a note/email to the teacher in question and the teacher will arrange for this meeting outside class time at a mutually convenient time. Teachers will not discuss serious issues on the street at arrival or dismissal times. It is also recommended that a parent communicate with a teacher regarding any concerns prior to involving the administration. Initiating an open communication with the teacher first continues a positive relationship between families and teachers. A parent seeking to meet with the Principal should contact the academy office to set up an appointment.

Additionally, the Academy may communicate with the parent in many ways, including: Email, phone messages and posts through the FACTS Family Portal. Important information about events, activities, and calendar items may be found on the academy website: [www.sjcalic.org](http://www.sjcalic.org). Occasionally, teachers or administration at the Academy will send hard copy information home with your children. Please check your child's backpack/folder **daily** to check for any information sent home by the Academy.

#### **BB. Home Academy Association (HAA)**

The purpose of the HAA is the educational enrichment of parents and teachers. The goal of the Home Academy Association is to foster a clearer understanding of the mutual responsibilities of parents and teachers regarding the education of the students.

An added responsibility of the Home Academy Association will be to assist in the fundraising efforts of the Academy. This is done in coordination with the administration. No organization may hold title to accounts nor have access to funds raised for the Academy. Any fundraising program must have the approval of the principal.

#### **CC. Volunteering, Chaperoning & VIRTUS Training**

Parent volunteers and chaperones are an integral part of the academy community. All parents and other adults in this capacity must sign a Code of Conduct and complete VIRTUS training which includes a background check. Background searches will be rerun every 5 years for volunteers

#### **DD. Custody and Guardianship Orders**

Parents must provide accurate custodial information to be kept on file at the Academy. Non-custodial parents do have rights. The law protects non-custodial parents and maintains that parents do not cease to be parents when they no longer have custody of their children. The Academy abides by the provisions of the Buckley Amendment with respect to the rights of non-custodial parents. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, the Academy will provide the non-custodial parents with access to academic records and other school information regarding his or her child. If there is a court order specifying that there is to be no information given, it is the custodial parent's responsibility to provide the school with a court certified copy of that court order.

#### **EE. Contacts with Media**

Throughout the academic year, the Academy may take pictures or videos and release personal information about students for promotional purposes. This might include:

- where a special event or program at the Academy is covered by a newspaper or television station, resulting in student interviews and pictures;
- award-winning students who may have their names and photos published in a local newspaper; or
- if the Academy posts pictures of school activities on web pages and social media.

Parents have the right to exclude their children from videotaping, audio recording, school pictures, other photography or participation involving printed materials or on the Internet. If a parent chooses to exclude his/her child, the parent must provide written notification to the administration.

Parents who do not object must fill out the media authorization release form, attached at the end of this Handbook. Without a completed form on file, the child may be excluded from certain group photographs or otherwise taken in connection with the school day or other Academy functions.

#### **FF. Medical Requirements**

The New York City Department of Health requires that all new students entering nursery through grade 12 show proof of having received a complete medical evaluation. Children who transfer from one school to another in New York City are not considered new students. These requirements may change from year to year.

New York State Law states that all students in grades nursery through 12 must be immunized as directed by the New York State and New York City Departments of Health. New students may enter school provisionally with documentation of **an initial series of immunizations**. Once admitted provisionally, a student has a certain amount of time to continue and complete the medical requirements. Students who fail to complete the necessary requirements within the appropriate time frame **must be excluded from school by law**. Parents must provide records of immunization to be kept on file at the Academy. Any exemptions to the immunization requirements must be approved by the Academy with documentation being kept in the student's health records. Only medical exemptions are permitted per New York State Law. **Religious exemptions are no longer permissible.**

For pre-k programs--between July 1 and December 31 of each year, all children between the ages of 6 months and 59 months and attending a group child care or school-based child care program must receive one dose of influenza vaccine.

## **GG. Health Services**

The academy enjoys the services of a full-time nurse through the New York City Department of Health. The nurse is available to students in need of nursing services during school hours. For the child's safety, it is imperative that the parent keeps the nurse informed about any medical condition that may require the services of the nurse. The nurse may not administer medication to a child unless a current, correctly completed **504 Medication Administration Form** is on file in the medical room. All questions regarding medication and services should be directed to the nurse at (718) 267 – 9307). **The principal will defer to the nurse and department of health regulations in all situations that involve the medical condition of the child.**

A current physical examination is required for students in pre-kindergarten, kindergarten and new admissions regardless of grade. Children without a current physical and required immunizations will not be permitted to participate in recess and gym class and may be excluded from attending classes.

**Regarding school trips, students receiving nursing/medication services (e.g. epi-pen, inhaler, oral medication) who are not capable of self-administration will not be permitted to attend a trip unless accompanied by the parent or another responsible adult designated by the parent in writing.**

## **HH. Illness and Medical Conditions**

The following provides an overview and not meant to be exhaustive but rather explanatory. In the case of any unnamed illness or medical condition, or if there are any questions, please contact the principal. The policies in this section may be altered or superseded by policies in light of COVID-19.

**Parents are reminded of the NYC Department of Health Core Practices for reducing illness in school:**

- **Keep your child home if sick**
- **Practice good hand washing hygiene**
- **Practice good respiratory hygiene by covering coughs and sneezes**

Allergies: Parents must notify the Academy of any documented allergies(including nut allergies) that a student may have.

Asthma: Parents are required to notify the Academy of the medical needs and protocols of any student who has asthma or a related condition.

Clearance to Return: In certain instances, the Academy may require medical clearance for the child to return to the Academy. If requested, the medical clearance note must specifically state that the child may return to the Academy and resume all activities including gym and playground. Clearance notes will be required for severe illness, including hospitalizations and ER visits, surgical procedures, head injuries, cardiac/respiratory concerns, fractures, sprains, or significant changes in a child's health state which may impact physical activities.

Contagious Illness: To the extent a child has a contagious illness, please notify the Academy as soon as possible so that we may alert others who came in contact with your child. We also may be required to notify the department of health. A student with a contagious illness should not arrive for school. This applies even if the parent has not received confirmation that the child's illness is contagious, but the child is exhibiting signs of a possible communicable disease, such as a suspicious skin rash, suspicious open wounds, redness of the eyes with intense itching/burning and a thick drainage, painful, reddened sore throat, and a constant cough accompanied by other symptoms. Students with a contagious illness should

remain home from school until a doctor advises that he or she is no longer contagious and can resume normal activities.

Diarrhea/Vomiting: Students who are exhibiting vomiting and/or diarrhea should not arrive for school. Rather, they should stay home until they are free from symptoms for at least 24 hours.

Epinephrine: Severe allergic reactions leading to anaphylaxis are a life-threatening and time sensitive medical emergency. Therefore, and in accordance with New York State and City Departments of Health recommendations, the Academy will work with local health providers to receive training on the administration of epinephrine. For more information, see the administering epinephrine policy below.

If a child is at risk of anaphylaxis, the parent MUST notify the school of the risk. Additionally, the parent must: 1) inform the Academy whether the student can self-administer epinephrine; 2) supply the Academy with two epinephrine devices in its original packaging; and 3) replace the devices when expired, has been used, or shows any other signs of defect, such as discoloration.

Fever: If your child has a fever of 100 degrees or higher, he or she must stay home. Your child may not return to school until fever-free *without any fever-reducing medication* for at least 24 hours.

Lice: A student who has contracted lice must stay home from school until the parent has treated the condition in accordance with the New York City Department of Health Regulations. This is to protect the health and safety of all students and staff given the highly likelihood that others can also contract head lice. In any cases where a student is infected, a letter will be sent out to the entire class of that student. The student's name will not be revealed. If you are aware of a lice infection at home, do not send your child to school. The Academy does not pay for lice treatment regardless of where exposure may have occurred.

Mobility: As a matter of safety, and in accordance with all applicable laws, the Academy may not be able to accommodate in-person learning for a child who is immobile, such as a child who is utilizing crutches or in a cast. The Academy will endeavor to provide a reasonable accommodation whenever possible, but must ensure the safety of the student and all other students and be in accord with fire safety laws.

## **II. Administering Medication**

With DOH approval, the School nurse may administer over-the counter-prescription drugs to students with written consent and medical authorization from a parent. The nurse may administer prescription medication that has been prescribed by a physician but must be provided with:

- Medical authorization from the parent consenting to administering the medication
- A medical plan developed by the child's parent and health care provider detailing the proper administration of the medication, details regarding the child's medical concerns, and other pertinent details.

The Academy reserves the right to call 911 in any case of a medical emergency.

### **JJ. Administering Epinephrine**

Parents will supply their own epinephrine auto-injector and must provide written consent and medical authorization for its use. The Academy must have an up-to-date medical statement on file for each child in care. For a child with identified allergies or with special health care needs, the Academy must have a copy of an individual health care plan developed by the child's parents and health care provider. Parents must make program staff aware of the individual health care plan on their child's first day at the program.

It is the responsibility of the parent of the student who is at risk of anaphylaxis:

- to notify the academy that the student is at risk of anaphylaxis and is in need of the presence of epinephrine on academy premises
- to indicate to the academy if the student is capable of self-administration of the epinephrine device
- to supply the academy with the epinephrine device\* in its original packaging as received from the pharmacist
- to replace the epinephrine device when it expires, discolors or has been used

\*It is recommended that two epinephrine devices be supplied, the second functioning as a back-up in case of malfunction or if an extra dose is necessary in accordance with medical documentation.

#### **KK. Administering Epinephrine on Field Trips**

In the event of a school trip or school event conducted outside of the school premises, it is the responsibility of the parent (or a designated person who appears on the child's emergency contact list) to attend with the child/student for the purpose of epinephrine administration, if necessary.

#### **LL. Accommodations**

A student requiring medical accommodations throughout the school day (including physical education, dietary conditions, physical limitations and medical interventions) must submit a statement from his or her licensed medical provider stating the need for such accommodation each academic year. The Academy will attempt to provide the accommodation in accordance with all applicable laws, and will inform the parent if it is unable to do so. If the Academy is unable to do so, it may withdraw the child's enrollment in accordance with law.

#### **MM. Emergency Services in the Event of a Serious Injury**

In the event of a serious injury, the Academy may call 911 and an ambulance may take the child to the hospital. The ambulance staff will determine the hospital based upon the severity of the emergency. A staff member will accompany the child in the ambulance and the parent will be notified to meet the child at the hospital. The Academy, its staff, and the Academy officials shall be held harmless from any liability, costs or expenses associated with any emergency services and such costs or expenses shall be the responsibility of the injured party or, if a student, the student's parents.

#### **NN. Counseling Services**

The Academy provides counseling services for the students and families.

#### **OO. Accident Policy**



If a student is seriously injured, the parent will be notified by the Academy as soon as reasonably possible, taking into consideration such factors as the apparent severity of the accident/injury and the priority of providing assistance to the student.

If an accident results in a medical condition/injury, the Academy is authorized to render reasonable first aid if such direct medical assistance would, in the opinion and judgment of the Academy, minimize the severity of the student or injured person's condition. The Academy may secure a professional diagnosis and/or treatment if such action, in the opinion and judgment of the Academy, appears to be reasonably warranted. The Academy, its staff, and the Academy officials shall be held harmless from any liability, costs or expenses associated with any treatment of first aid provided (including, but not limited to the cost of transportation), and such costs or expenses shall be the responsibility of the injured party or, if a student, the student's parents.

## **VI. TECHNOLOGY**

### **A. Acceptable Use Policy**

The use of technology is permitted on academy premises under limited conditions as authorized by the principal for the sole purpose of enhancing academic achievement while respecting the dignity and safety of all members of the Academy community.

In using the information and technology in safe, legal, and responsible ways, the following conditions of being a digital citizen within the Diocese of Brooklyn are expected:

#### *Respect One's Self*

- Public names should be appropriate
- Be mindful of any and all content you post including photos, personal views, comments, personal information, etc.
- Do not seek out and/or view inappropriate content
- Do not engage in potentially harmful activities such as communicating with persons unknown to you or Internet challenges

#### *Respect Others*

- Be mindful of comments, posts, photos or any content directed toward or including others
- Refrain from engaging in inflammatory, harassing, or any other such disrespectful behavior
- Do not perpetuate inappropriate content by sharing it with or sending it to others
- Warn others of potentially disturbing or harmful content that should be avoided

#### *Protect One's Self and Others*

- Report any and all cyber-abuse committed against you or others to parents, teachers and/or administrators
- Keep groups with friends private to avoid potentially inappropriate or dangerous content and communications from unknown sources

#### *Respect Intellectual Property*

- Cite sources when using any content not originally authored by you

Members of our community must remember that when telecommunicating with individuals, groups, or institutions, you are doing so as an individual. You should not represent yourself, your views, ideas, questions, or actions as representing the Academy without the expressed permission of the principal.

### *Security of Technology*

The Academy assumes no responsibility for the theft, loss, repair or replacement of any technology device brought onto academy property, whether it is lost, stolen, damaged, or confiscated.

Although there are safeguards in place to protect all users from inappropriate content, we are not responsible for failures in filtering that result in a bypass of our program and/or access to objectionable content. If any inappropriate content bypasses these safeguards, any parties involved should turn off the monitor and report the security breach immediately to a system administrator, teacher or the principal. Additionally, a student shall not:

- Use another's credentials for any reason
- Gain or attempt to gain unauthorized access to Diocesan or academy computers or computer systems.
- Download or install any software application without prior authorization.

### *Administrative Rights (To monitor use of technology)*

The academy reserves the right to monitor student use of technology and computer accessed content. Due to the evolving nature of technology, the Catholic Schools and Academies of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn reserve the right to amend or add to this policy at any time without notice.

### *Personal use of Social Media*

All references to academy personnel, students and/or any member of the academy community in social media platforms or technology related mediums such as web pages or email which is deemed to be conduct injurious to the moral tone of the academy are violations of this policy. Personal posts must use appropriately respectful speech, and refrain from harassing, defamatory, abusive, discriminatory, threatening or other inappropriate communications.

Parents must sign this Acceptable Use Policy which effectively gives permission for their child to use the Internet and the Academy's technology resources for educational purposes and also understands and accepts the Academy's guidelines. The acknowledgement of the Acceptable Use Policy to be signed by parents and, where applicable, students, is attached to the end of this Handbook.

## **B. FACTS Family Portal**

The FACTS Family Portal will be your one-stop destination to view student academic information, school announcements, school calendar and your FACTS payment plan and incidental billing information. You will conveniently be able to access all this information in one centralized location, eliminating the need for multiple log-ins. Once you create your user profile, you will be able to access the FACTS Family Portal from any device, including your smart phone whether it is an Apple or Android device. All parents are required to provide the school with emergency information that is kept on file.

Please report a change in address or emergency number (including business and cell numbers) by using the interactive forms available on the web site: Change of Address Form, Emergency Contact Form. It is essential for your child's health and safety that home and emergency contact numbers are correct and up to date at all times.

## **VII. SAFETY**

### **A. Commitment to Safety**

The Academy maintains a high standard for safety requiring periodic drills and exercises. In order to maintain a safe environment, the Academy requires safety be practiced in hallways, when passing during class, while on staircases, when using restrooms, during recess and physical education, during after school programs and extracurricular activities, when outside the academy building, during arrival and departure.

### **B. Emergency Drills**

Per New York State laws, academies are required to conduct emergency drills, including lockdown drills, over the course of the school year. Students are expected to follow all directives provided to them by school teachers and staff. Failure to comply or act appropriately during emergency drills will result in disciplinary action.

### **C. School Closings**

The Diocese of Brooklyn will base their closings on the New York City Public School System. If the New York City school system closes due to inclement weather, the academies within the Diocese of Brooklyn are closed. Notwithstanding such closures, the Academy may close school based on inclement weather or other hazardous conditions (infrastructure issues, flooding, property damage, etc.). Parents will be notified as soon as possible.

### **D. Crisis/Emergency Information**

Should a crisis require evacuation from the building, the students will be brought to the church or to PS 70 located on 42 Street between 30 and 31 Avenues. Parents will be notified to meet them at either location as appropriate. The Academy utilizes the FACTS portal to notify parents directly about the crisis.

### **E. Visitors**

All visitors must be admitted to the building by main office staff. Visitors should proceed to the main office to sign in and receive a visitor pass if the visit requires movement beyond the main office. Prior to leaving, visitors should return to the main office, sign out, and leave through the main lobby doors to 44 Street. Visitors must not exit through any other doors in order to ensure that building security is maintained. During COVID-19, special visiting procedures will be in place.

### **F. Video Surveillance/Photographs**

The Academy employs video camera surveillance on Academy property to monitor the health, welfare, and safety of all staff, students, and visitors to the property, and to safeguard facilities and equipment. Video cameras are placed in locations as deemed appropriate by the principal.

Violations of diocesan policies, administrative regulations, building rules, or laws that images, video and audio capture through surveillance may be used as evidence that may subject violators to appropriate disciplinary and legal action, including, but not limited to, disclosure to law enforcement.

The Academy recognizes that parents will often want to document their child's life at the Academy, including by taking pictures or video recordings. The Academy requires parents to exercise caution, however, to not take pictures of other children without the express consent of those children's parents. Parents and students are not permitted to take pictures or video recordings on Academy grounds without express consent of the principal.

## **G. Child Lures Prevention Program**

The Child Lures/Teen Lures Prevention programs are presented to the children. This program is tailored to different age groups and covers topics such as staying healthy and safe, kindness and respect, trusted adults, my body belongs to me, child luring, choosing grown-ups to help, children are special, and abuse is never a child's fault (topics will vary based on age level appropriateness). For older students, topics include sexual assault, harassment, dating violence, bullying/cyberbullying, sexting, identity theft, online luring, suicide and human trafficking with the goal of facilitating authentic conversations to bring awareness to the topics.

Each program provides teachers with the resources to facilitate appropriate conversations. Parents will also be provided with a link to access parent guides digitally to continue the conversations within their homes.

## **H. Child Abuse Laws**

Under NYS law, teachers are all **mandated reporters** and are legally required to report any suspected case of child abuse or neglect to the proper agency. The teacher will make a judgment that the child may be presenting signs of abuse or neglect.

## **I. Child Reporting Abuse to Parents**

If a student reports any form of abuse at the Academy to his or her parent, the parent must notify the principal. Any information shall be treated as confidential, to the extent permitted by law. This will permit the principal to investigate the situation and will ensure that the alleged abuse or harassment does not occur to other students.

# **VIII. TUITION AND FINANCES**

## **A. Tuition Policies**

The viability of our Academy relies on the commitment of our families to make Catholic education a financial priority. The Academy has full-year contractual and financial obligations that must be met, such as teacher salaries, utility bills, building maintenance and improvements, and other expenses. Therefore, families that seek enrollment are required to satisfy the annual tuition by specified due dates.

These policies are not intended to deprive anyone of a Catholic education. It is our desire to maintain a fair approach to collection of tuition and to provide a sound financial policy for the overall welfare of our families. We encourage all responsible parties to maintain open communication with the principal to ensure a complete understanding of each family's financial obligations. The goal of our Academy is to provide a Catholic education to every student who desires one, but only by mutual cooperation can we make certain that this goal is met. Parental non-payment or delinquency in meeting financial obligations creates an additional burden for the Academy.

The Academy will collect tuition and fees over a ten month period. This ten month period will typically extend from May, prior to the start of the school year, through February.

The Academy reserves the right to place severely delinquent accounts in the hands of a collection agency or its attorneys for collection. It is not our desire that any family should incur unnecessary legal fees or suffer embarrassment or inconvenience in this regard, so we encourage prompt communication with the Academy in response to delinquency notices in an effort to avoid litigation.

#### **B. Resources for Tuition Assistance**

Catholic education is meant to be available to every Catholic family. Every family desiring a Catholic education for their child(ren) is expected to participate to the extent capable in the cost of providing that education.

Each family in need of tuition assistance must complete a scholarship application through Futures in Education, which may currently be found at: [www.futuresineducation.org/scholarships](http://www.futuresineducation.org/scholarships) . The one exception is families returning to the Teddy Forstmann program coordinated by Children's Scholarship Fund.

If the family requests additional assistance beyond the awarded amount, the request should be made to the Tuition Assistance Committee of the Board of Directors. Its review will be completed as early as possible.

#### **C. FACTS**

FACTS is a tuition management company designed to make tuition collection simpler for families as well as the Academy. There will be one FACTS record per family, and each student must be listed separately. This provides valuable detail about the charges and discounts each student is receiving. In turn, this provides the Academy better reporting. A major benefit of FACTS is the ability to process automatic drafts of the payer's bank account or credit card. There is a 2.85% convenience fee on credit card transactions. FACTS does offer an invoicing option as well. With this option, FACTS will send an invoice to the payer (via email or postal mail) 20 calendar days prior to the payment due date. The payer must then initiate payment either by using a credit card or bank account online, over the phone, or by mailing a check directly to FACTS. Families are encouraged to pay via automatic draft. FACTS also allows for flexible payment options.

Students may be excluded from attending class should any financial balance be past due.

In order to participate in graduation activities, all debts for eighth grade students must be cleared by the first Monday of June. Eighth grade transcripts will not be released to the high schools if the financial obligations have not been met.

All fees must be paid in full before records or progress reports will be processed. It is the sole discretion of the academy to withhold trimester exams, report cards, transcripts, records, and diplomas until all financial obligations are satisfied in full.

### **IX. TRANSPORTATION**

#### **A. Bus Procedure**

While students are being transported to and from the Academy, it is expected that they will uphold the behavior expectations of the Academy as well as rules set forth by the bus driver or bus company. Students who continuously disregard bus procedures and rules are at risk of losing their access to bus transportation. The Academy does not assume liability for transportation not operated by it, such as Ubers, car service, private cars/buses or van services.

## **X. RECORDS**

### **A. Change of Information**

For student safety, it is imperative that parents immediately alert the Academy to any changes in address or phone number. Parents must also provide the Academy with at least two emergency contacts with up to date information.

### **B. Educational Records Request**

In the event of a student transferring to a different academy, parish school, or public school, the Academy will provide student records to the place of transfer – not to a parent. Requests can be made in writing by the parent or by the school of transfer.

### **C. Authorization to Release Records**

Academies may not release the records of students without the written consent of the parents to any individual, agency or organization other than the following:

- Other academy or parish school officials who have legitimate educational interests.
- Officials of other academies or parish schools in which the student intends to enroll.
- Officials of the courts with lawfully issued judicial process, i.e., subpoena, court order, etc.
- Please note health records are the property of the Department of Health.

**PARENTAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT**

I acknowledge that I have received and read the Parent-Student Handbook and all subsequent forms (“Handbook”).

I have read and understood the contents of this Handbook, and will act in accord with these policies and procedures. I have explained the contents of this Handbook to my child. I agree that I am responsible for my child’s adherence to the policies in this Handbook.

I understand that this Handbook supersedes any other previously issued handbook and personnel manual and that all previous versions are hereby revoked.

I understand that the Academy reserves the right to add, amend, modify, or discontinue any of the policies and procedures as set forth in the Handbook at any time, with or without notice.

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Name of Child(ren) and Grades: \_\_\_\_\_

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**FOR STUDENTS GRADES 6-8**

I have read the Parent-Student Handbook, have discussed its contents with my parent, and agree to abide by all its terms.

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

**ELECTRONIC SIGNATURE AUTHORIZATION**

*If a parent chooses to sign any form electronically, the following **MUST** be submitted beforehand to the Academy with an original, and not electronic, signature:*

I authorize the Academy to accept my electronic signature.

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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



**ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY**

**Parent**

As the parent of a student at the Academy, I have read the Acceptable Use policy and agree to abide by its terms, and to ensure my child abides by its terms. I understand that computer and Internet access at the Academy are designed for educational purposes. I am aware that it is impossible for the school to restrict access to all controversial materials, and I will not hold the Academy responsible for materials acquired in use. Further, I accept full responsibility for supervision if and when my child's use of the Academy's technology resources is not in a school setting. I hereby give permission for my child to use the Academy's technology resources and certify that I have reviewed this information with my child.

Parent Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

**For Students Grades 6-8**

I am aware of and will comply with the Acceptable Use Policy in this Handbook.

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**MEDIA AUTHORIZATION AND RELEASE**

I hereby consent to the taking of photographs, movies, videos, and images capable of reproduction in any medium of me or my children or children of whom I am the designated guardian by the Academy, Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn, and/or Department of Education and their parents, affiliates, trustees, directors, members, officers, employees, volunteers, agents and contractors (the "Parties").

I hereby grant the Parties the right to edit, reproduce, use and reuse images for any and all purposes including, but not limited to, advertising, promotion and display, and I hereby consent to the editing, reproduction, use and re-use of said images in any and all media in existence and all media yet in existence including, but not limited to, video, print, television, Internet, and podcasts.

I forever grant, assign, and transfer to the Parties any right, title and interest that I and/or my child/children may have in any images, including negatives, taken of me and/or my children by the Parties. I hereby agree to release, indemnify and hold harmless the Parties from any and all claims, demands, actions or causes of actions, loss, liability, damage, or cost arising from this authorization.

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Name and Grade of Child/ren: \_\_\_\_\_

**If you are choosing to opt out of this policy for the child/ren named above, please sign the acknowledgement below and return it to the principal.**

I have read the Media Authorization and Release Policy and am choosing to opt out.

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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