



ST. JOHN THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

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THROUGH TRADITION SINCE

1949



## 2025-2026 Parent-Student Handbook

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## Contents

Mission Statement.....	5
Piarist History .....	5
Statement of Philosophy .....	6
Portrait of a Graduate.....	7
Announcements/ Communication.....	8
Appointments (Medical).....	8
Anti-Bullying Policy.....	8
Artificial Intelligence.....	9
Arrival/Dismissal .....	10
Attendance .....	10
Books .....	11
Cafeteria.....	11
Change of Address/Phone Number.....	12
Child Protective Investigations.....	12
Community Service Activities.....	12
Conduct.....	13
Communicable Diseases and Related Items .....	13
Conferences.....	13
Confidentiality Statement .....	13
Cooperating with Legal Authority .....	14
Curriculum .....	14
Custodial Rights.....	14
Discipline .....	14
Drug and Alcohol Policy .....	15
Electronic Acknowledgments .....	15
Electronic Devices .....	16
Emergency Closings .....	16
Field Trips.....	16
Financial Obligations .....	17
Fire Drills .....	17
Fundraising .....	17
Grading Policy .....	18
Harassment and Discrimination.....	19

Home and School Association (HSA) .....	19
Homework.....	20
Honor Roll Policy .....	20
Illness/Injury .....	20
Immunizations.....	20
Insurance of Students.....	21
Library.....	21
Liturgy.....	21
Medication Guidelines .....	22
Money .....	23
Notification of Rights under FERPA.....	23
Open Admission Policy .....	24
Parental Cooperation.....	24
Participation in Co-Curricular and Extra-Curricular Activities.....	24
Parties.....	25
Private Tutoring, Coaching or Lessons.....	25
Public Display of Affection .....	25
Release of Students .....	26
Reporting Physical/Sexual Abuse.....	26
Re-Registration .....	26
Retention/Summer School Policy.....	26
Safety in Private Spaces.....	27
School-Sponsored Events .....	27
School Pictures.....	27
Search and Seizure Policy.....	27
Section 504 – Policy Statement .....	28
Sexting .....	28
Smoking/Vaping .....	28
Social Emotional Learning (SEL).....	29
State Scholarships .....	29
Student Council.....	29
Student Withdrawal .....	29
Substance Abuse .....	30
Technology Use .....	30

Supervision and Monitoring .....	31
Unacceptable Use of Outside Technology.....	31
Telephone Calls .....	32
Testifying in Divorce or Custody Proceedings.....	32
Testing.....	33
Text Messaging/Telephone Calls.....	33
Threats of Violence.....	33
Transportation Arrangements .....	33
Tuition.....	34
Undocumented Students .....	34
Uniforms .....	34
Use of Photos .....	35
Visitors.....	36
Volunteer File .....	36
Volunteer Hours.....	36
Weapons.....	36
APPENDIX: Parent-Student Handbook Acknowledgment Form .....	37

We are blessed and honored to welcome you as a valued member of St. John the Apostle Catholic School. To answer some of your questions concerning the school's policies, the school has prepared this Parent-Student Handbook. Please read it thoroughly and retain it for future reference. The policies stated in this handbook are only guidelines and are subject to change at the sole discretion of the school, as are all other policies, procedures, or programs of the school. From time to time, you may receive updated information concerning changes in policy. However, the school has the right to add, delete or revise any school policy or procedure with or without notice. This handbook is not a contract, express or implied, and none of the policies or provisions should be construed as such. If you have any questions about the school's policies, please ask the principal for assistance.

## **Mission Statement**

Modeled after Jesus, Our Master Teacher, St. John the Apostle Catholic School is committed to providing an exceptional Catholic education while empowering our youth spiritually, academically, socially and physically to become well-rounded, faith-formed citizens of the world.

The mission of St. John the Apostle Catholic School, inspired by the Spirituality of the Order of the Pious Schools (Piarists), is to educate children to assume leadership and take initiative in our society. Through promoting hope, passion, commitment, and compassion, we aim to prepare our students to confront the challenges of our complex world.

Our educational program is designed with the ultimate goal of forming balanced and self-assured children. These students will possess the courage and confidence to respond generously, competently, and responsibly to the demands of their lives and to the needs of the world around them. Thus, by growing in greater freedom every day, they may complete the happy course of their lives and reach everlasting salvation.

## **Piarist History**

St. Joseph Calasanz, founder of the Order of the Pious Schools, also known as the Piarist Fathers, was born in 1557 in Peralta de la Sal, Spain. After being ordained as a Roman Catholic priest in 1583, he felt a deep concern for the impoverished children of Rome. In 1597, he established the world's first modern public elementary school, providing free education to all children regardless of their religious background. The school emphasized both piety and learning, reflecting the Piarist motto: "Pietas et Litterae."

On March 25, 1617, St. Joseph and fourteen others formed a new religious congregation with Pope Paul V's permission. Four years later, Pope Gregory XV elevated the congregation to the rank of

religious order under solemn vows, designating it as the Order of the Pious Schools. The Piarists, like other religious congregations, took vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, but they also honored a fourth vow to devote their lives to the education of youth, particularly the underprivileged.

In 1767, Pope Clement XIII canonized him as a saint, and in 1948, Pope Pius XII declared him the Heavenly Patron of all Christian Schools. The Piarists experienced remarkable growth during his lifetime, and they established numerous schools. Today, they have over 1,650 members educating 137,575 students across 42 countries worldwide. The General House of the Piarists is located at the Church of St. Pantaleo in Rome.

St. Joseph Calasanz's Principles of Education emphasize that education is not just about instruction but also about guiding children to know God, themselves, and find fulfillment. He believed that education should be available to every child, free from discrimination based on race, faith, or social class. The educator should respect and recognize the divine image in each student. St. Joseph saw education as a means to shape children into genuine disciples and apostles of Jesus Christ, enabling them to face life with competence and dignity. He viewed education as a powerful tool for societal reform and considered teaching a sacred vocation, leading Piarists towards sanctification in their lives.

### **Statement of Philosophy**

Then Jesus approached and said to them, "All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age." Matthew 28:18-20

Following the Lord's commandment to make disciples of all nations, the community of St. John the Apostle School instills Christian values by modeling the teachings of Jesus. Out of respect for the mystery of God's creation in each person, administrators, faculty, and staff strive to cultivate and strengthen the unique creative capabilities of the individual student. Thus, they help all children, as they mature in faith, discover and discern their particular vocations in the Lord's special plan.

St. John the Apostle School fosters the development of the whole child. Daily, the school offers children a variety of opportunities to enhance their gifts and talents, both in and out of the classroom. These include, but are not limited to liturgy, prayer, social service projects, academic competitions, technological literacy, sports programs, social events, school clubs, leadership roles, and seasonal celebrations (both sacred and secular). As instruments of the holiness of Christ, the clergy, administration, faculty, and staff lead the students to know their faith in its fullness. A sense of responsibility and an openness to give back to the world are instilled within each student. This occurs especially through an awareness and appreciation of the sacraments, which are central to the life of this school. St. John the Apostle School has the following intentions: to provide the

student with the optimum in educational and spiritual values; to cultivate a sense of self-worth and dignity in the student; and to prepare the student to become a responsible Christian citizen of the 21st Century.

## **Portrait of a Graduate**

### **Spiritual**

- To proclaim the “Good News” and to model Jesus Christ, the Master teacher.
- To provide the children with the opportunity to develop their spiritual life by practicing their faith, participating in liturgies, parish life programs, celebrations and daily religious instruction and prayer time.

### **Intellectual**

- To recognize the varied and unique talents of our children.
- To provide them with the opportunity to develop the desire for knowledge, the habit of logical thinking, persistence, perseverance, and self-discipline.

### **Academic**

- To provide a strong academic curriculum.
- To give the children the opportunity to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to live in an ever-changing world, an ever-changing society, and the beginning of a new century.

### **Social**

- To create a community of Christians.
- To provide the children with the opportunity to accept and respect others as self, and to develop a sense of team spirit, good sportsmanship, and positive peer pressure. These sentiments stimulate the love of God, self and others.

### **Emotional**

- To create an environment where children are accepted as unique individuals.
- To provide them with the opportunity to develop self-esteem and respect for themselves and others.

### **Moral**

- To educate responsible citizens who cultivate democratic principles.
- To provide the children the opportunity to develop a sense of right and wrong within the precepts of the Catholic faith.

## **Announcements/ Communication**

Any important communication from the school will be sent through the Parents' PlusPortal. This is to keep parents informed of all school activities. Please make sure to check with your child for this information. Please sign and return the necessary documentation and keep all other communication for your reference. Please refer to the school's website, [www.sjacs.org](http://www.sjacs.org), and PlusPortals for updated news of events and the daily lunch menu.

### **Appointments (Medical)**

Regular attendance is an important part of a student's progress. Therefore, St. John the Apostle Catholic School discourages the scheduling of medical appointments during school hours. When it is impossible to schedule appointments outside the school day, parents should send a written note to the teacher in advance; the office will approve this note. For the safety of all students, the school requires that students be picked up at the office where parents can sign them out of school. Students may not be signed out after 1:50 PM. (12:00 PM on Early Dismissal Days.) This is a disruption to the end of day procedures.

### **Anti-Bullying Policy**

The school is committed to promoting a safe, healthy, caring, and respectful learning environment for all of its students. As such, bullying is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. Therefore, this policy prohibits any unwelcome verbal or written conduct or gestures directed at a student by another student that has the effect of:

- (1) physically, emotionally, or mentally harming a student;
- (2) damaging, extorting or taking a student's personal property;
- (3) placing a student in reasonable fear of emotional or mental harm;
- (4) placing a student in reasonable fear of damage to or loss of personal property; or
- (5) creating an intimidating or hostile environment that substantially interferes with a student's educational opportunities or the Catholic mission of the school.

#### 1. Definition

- a. **Bullying** is the willful and repeated harm inflicted upon another individual which may involve but is not limited to: teasing, name-calling, slurs, rumors, jokes, false accusations, intimidation, stalking, innuendos, demeaning comments, pranks, social isolation, gestures, cyber-bullying or other verbal or written conduct. Cyber-bullying includes the following misuses of digital technology: teasing, intimidating, or making false accusations about another student by way of any technological tool, such as sending or posting inappropriate email messages, instant messages, text messages, digital images or website postings (including blogs and social network sites). Bullying reflects a pattern of behavior, not a single isolated incident.
- b. This definition includes students who either directly engage in an act of bullying or who, by their behavior, support another student's act of bullying.

2. Scope

- a. This policy prohibits bullying that occurs either:
  - i. on school premises before, during, or after school hours;
  - ii. on any bus or vehicle as part of any school activity; or
  - iii. during any school function, extracurricular activity or other school-sponsored event or activity.

3. Reporting Complaints

- a. Each student and parent has a duty to report any bullying to the school immediately. If a student experiences (or a parent witnesses or learns of) any incident of bullying, the incident must be promptly reported to the school principal. The principal will provide the student/parent with the Bullying Complaint Report Form which must be completed, dated and signed by the complaining party so that the school may initiate further inquiry, when appropriate.

4. Disciplinary Action

- a. Any student found to have violated this policy may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, which may include: temporary removal from the classroom, loss of privileges, detention, counseling, parent conference, suspension, administrative withdrawal, and/or notification to appropriate authorities. The disciplinary action may be unique to the individual incident and may vary in method and severity based on the principal's discretion.

False reports or accusations of bullying also constitute a violation of this policy and may subject the offending party to appropriate remedial action which may include, but is not limited to, the assessment of costs incurred by the School in its investigation and review of any reports deemed to have been made in bad faith.

Bullying/Harassment Investigation Disclosures. While the School generally prohibits the nonconsensual disclosure of information contained in educational records, limited exceptions apply including for the disclosure to victims of bullying or harassment when disciplinary sanctions or other measures relate directly to the victim. Parents hereby consent and acknowledge that the School may, pursuant to this exception, disclose to the victims of harassment or bullying, and to their parents, any information related to disciplinary sanctions and/or bullying at issue regardless of whether the matters disclosed are part of an educational record.

## **Artificial Intelligence**

Artificial Intelligence refers to systems that simulate human decision-making processes without direct human intervention. These systems include chatbots, machine learning algorithms, and automated tools. Generative Artificial Intelligence refers to technology that creates content including text, images, video, and computer code by identifying patterns in large quantities and training data, and then creating original material that has similar characteristics. These AI tools

have great potential but also have potential risks and ethical implications. St. John the Apostle Catholic School recognizes the growing impact of AI on education and this policy aims to guide our students in the responsible and ethical use of AI within our community.

Before using AI, students should engage in three steps: (1) Consultation. Students should always consult with their teacher prior to using any AI tool to determine if the task, assignment, or assessment can be completed with AI assistance. (2) Documentation. If granted permission to use a Generative AI tool, students must document their interaction with it by cutting and pasting the conversation into a separate document that can be shared with their teacher. (3) Citation. Where its use is permissible, students must cite the use of the Gen AI tool.

AI tools may not replace a student's work and students should be mindful to engage in ethical practices when using AI, carefully consider the validity of any AI generated content, and ensure their work product reflects their original thought and understanding. The presentation of AI generated content without a teacher's approval will be considered academic dishonesty and will result in disciplinary consequences.

### **Arrival/Dismissal**

Student arrival is from 7:00-7:45am. Breakfast is provided to all students between 7:00-7:30am. At 7:30 AM, breakfast will no longer be available. Students from VPK through Eighth Grade who come to school by car must enter the school grounds by way 4th Street, through the cafeteria. All cars, in a single file, follow the pattern of cars and exit on through the gate. Please do not get out of your car. If you have a scheduled meeting at the office, please drop your child off, drive around and park in the front parking lot. No parents of students in PK-8 will be permitted to walk their children to class. This is for the safety and security of all children.

The gates will be closed at 7:45 AM. Any child brought to school after 7:45AM must be brought to the office by their parents. The parents must park their car and walk their child to the inside portion of the office. If they arrive after 7:45 AM they will be given a Tardy Pass to class. Students may not be signed out for Early Dismissal after 2:00 PM. (11:30 AM on Early Dismissal Days.) It is a disruption to the end of the day school procedure.

### **Dismissal**

Dismissal of students begins at 2:45 PM for VPK-2nd Grade. Gates will open by 2:40PM. Dismissal for grades 3-8 will begin at 3:10. All students should be picked up by 3:30 PM. Any students not picked up by 3:30 PM will be taken to After Care.

### **Attendance**

Regular attendance is a major factor in success in school. Students who are excessively absent fall behind in academic progress.

Absence: If your child is absent from school, you must send a note with him/ her on the day he/she

returns to school. Absences of more than three (3) days require a doctor's note. Students, WITH AN EXCUSED ABSENCE\*, will be given at the number of days missed to make up the work (Ex. Student is absent 2 days, student will have 2 days to make up the work).

While the student is absent, if the teacher is updating grades, regardless of the nature of the absences, the student will receive an absent grade (AB) in the gradebook. If the absence is excused, the student will receive full credit if the student completed the assignment during the appropriate amount of time discussed previously. Any work not made up may result in a 0 grade. It is the student's responsibility to find out what work was missed. Students that are receiving a scholarship that acquire more than 20 absences in a school year will lose their scholarships. Students who miss 20 or more days in a school year may be retained, unless the time is made up in a summer school program.

**Tardies:** Any child brought to school after 7:50 AM must be brought to the office and be given a Tardy Pass to class. Entering a classroom after instruction has begun is a disruption to the teacher, the class, and the tardy student. Excessive tardy and/or excessive early dismissals as determined by the principal may require a conference with the administration. A tardy may be excused only in the case of emergencies as determined by the principal, i.e. doctor/dentist appointments (non-excessive /physician's excuse required).

Consequences for Tardies (per marking period):

1-3 tardy- Verbal Warning

4 tardies - Warning letter from school administration

5 tardies – Meeting with parent & principal to discuss solution

\*An excused absence is defined as an absence that is accompanied by a doctor's note, family emergency, death in the family. Any other excuses will need to be discussed with the teacher and principal.

## **Books**

Hard backed textbooks are the property of the school and are loaned and kept in school. It is your responsibility to care for them. They will be accounted for by the teacher and must be turned in at the end of year. While normal wear and tear is expected, excessive damage, or lost books may be charged. Parents will be charged a replacement cost for any lost consumables.

## **Cafeteria**

St. John the Apostle Catholic School offers a full-service cafeteria for its students. Our lunch program is sponsored by the USDA (United States Department of Agriculture). We will strive to provide meals which fall into the USDA Guidelines. All parents are required to fill out the application for the free/reduced program. Please note that some families may or may not qualify. It is the parents/guardians' responsibility to ensure that their children have lunch or lunch money every morning. Parents/Guardians are not allowed to have food delivered. In an extreme

emergency, parents may bring lunch to the office. No students will be allowed to receive lunch in the classroom. Menus will be posted on the website monthly. ([www.sjacs.org](http://www.sjacs.org)) Breakfast and Lunch is free for every student.

### **Change of Address/Phone Number**

The school must always be able to reach a parent or guardian in the case of an emergency. Parents must send any change of address, phone number (whether work or home) and email both to the homeroom teacher and to the school office immediately.

### **Child Protective Investigations**

Florida law provides that any person who knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is abused by a parent, legal custodian, caregiver or other person responsible for the child's welfare must report such knowledge to the Department of Children and Families (DCF). The school will cooperate with all child protective investigations by DCF or the local law enforcement agency. Reports should be made to Florida's Department of Children and Families by calling the Abuse Hotline at: 1-800-96-ABUSE (1-800-962-2873).

In addition to contacting DCF, abuse may be reported to the Safe Environment Office of the Archdiocese by calling 305-215-6635 or emailing [abuserreporting@theadom.org](mailto:abuserreporting@theadom.org).

Child protective investigations by DCF or local law enforcement agencies sometimes include interviews of students at school and may occur without advance notice. When it is reasonably possible, the school will seek to notify the parents that their child has been asked to participate in a child protective investigation. The school may also request the presence of a school staff member during investigative interviews on school property. However, please note that, under Florida law, DCF and local law enforcement have the discretion to conduct unannounced interviews and to disallow school staff member's presence during these interviews.

### **Community Service Activities**

Community service activities are not school activities and St. John the Apostle Catholic School does not mandate or direct any specific location or locations in the community where these services are to be performed. Students are free to select the location where they wish to perform community service so long as the location and the activity meet the requirements of the school. St. John the Apostle Catholic School does not operate or control the locations where students choose to perform community service and consequently the school, its agents, and affiliates do not assume responsibility for any injuries, damages, or losses incurred in the course of performing these services in the community. Students perform these services at their own risk.

## Conduct

St. John the Apostle Catholic School is committed to maintaining a safe, respectful, and disciplined learning environment. In order to uphold these standards, the school administration is empowered to fully investigate allegations of student bullying, misconduct, threats of violence, and other concerns that may impact the school community. As part of this process, school administrators may conduct inquiries, review relevant information, and interview students as necessary. Students are expected to cooperate fully with any investigation. The school may also involve parents or guardians at its discretion. The failure to comply with an investigation or provide truthful information may result in disciplinary action.

In addition, students and Parents are expected to behave consistent with the mission, philosophy and spirit of the school and the moral teachings of the Catholic faith as determined by the Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Miami. Because the school cannot anticipate all conduct that violates this policy, it reserves the right to take any form of (1) student disciplinary action, including administrative withdrawal, and/or (2) restrictions against any behavior that violates this policy, even if not specifically stated in this handbook.

## Communicable Diseases and Related Items

Attendance at school and participation in school activities poses some risks including the transmission of communicable diseases. Although the school has taken various measures to reduce the risks of transmission, the possibility of infection from communicable diseases is nonetheless present. Parents expressly assume such risks by allowing their children to attend school and participate in school activities and/or by coming onto the school campus and attending school activities themselves.

In the event of a natural disaster, disease outbreak, or any other circumstances which in the judgment of the school administration make it unfeasible, unsafe or otherwise imprudent to continue campus- based education, school educational programs shall resume as soon as practical by way of distance learning and/or other methods adopted by the school administration and faculty. Due to the school's continuing financial obligations related to its operations, there will be no suspension, reduction, or refund of tuition in these circumstances.

## Conferences

Parents are always welcome to discuss their child's progress with teachers and/ or the principal. Appointments should be made when a conference is deemed necessary. Please communicate with the teacher to schedule a meeting by contacting the school office or via email. Meetings must be scheduled AT LEAST 24 hours in advance.

## Confidentiality Statement

School officials including teachers, administrators and other paraprofessionals in the performance of their duties will have access to student educational records. **Parents/Guardians by executing the acknowledgment of receipt of this Handbook, HEREBY AGREE AND CONSENT** to the

disclosure of such records including the nature and existence of a disability, a medical/educational diagnosis, or any associated minor adjustments or accommodations made to such school officials with a legitimate educational interest in the information.

### **Cooperating with Legal Authority**

It is the practice of the school to cooperate with any local, state or federal investigators or law enforcement officers who contact the school in the course of a criminal investigation. The school will attempt to notify the parents of any student sought to be interviewed in the course of a criminal investigation on the school premises, unless directed by an investigator or law enforcement officer to the contrary, which is usually the case involving sexual or physical abuse. The school will attempt, as well, to have a representative present during such an interview, unless the investigator does not permit this, which is usually the case involving sexual or physical abuse.

### **Curriculum**

St. John the Apostle Catholic School follows the Archdiocesan guidelines, offering Religion, Reading, Language Arts, Social Studies, Math, Science, Spanish, P.E., Technology, Art, and Music.

### **Custodial Rights**

In the case of divorced parents, the school will interact with the parent who has legal custody of the child. The school ordinarily will deal with the parents having legal custody in matters of absence, lateness, truancy, early dismissal, disciplinary issues, school records, etc. Access to in-person and the records and information pertaining to a minor child, including, but not limited to school records, may not be denied to a parent because the parent is not the child's primary residential parent. Full rights apply to either parent unless a court order specifically revokes these rights. In the latter case, it is the custodial parent's responsibility to provide evidence of such a court order.

### **Discipline**

Students must be aware that disrespect, inappropriate behavior, and the failure to conform to rules are not acceptable. Proper discipline occurs when training in the learning environment and the home reinforces this awareness. It is the school's policy to involve parents in disciplinary actions of a serious nature. All direct measures of action are in accordance with Archdiocesan policy.

The following improper behaviors are not tolerated, and action will be taken accordingly:

1. Lack of respect to any supervising adult, such as, talking back to a teacher, leaving the classroom without permission, etc.
2. Physical contact, fighting
3. Lack of honesty – lying, cheating, plagiarism

4. Improper appearance, such as nonconformity to the uniform code
5. Verbal, physical, or written obscenity
6. Possession, use, or sale of any controlled substance or dangerous object
7. Destruction, damage, or vandalism of any school property
8. Negative participation in any social networking site (i.e. Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, TikTok)
9. Chewing gum during school hours or on school property.

### **Suspension and Expulsion**

Cases of expulsion & suspension will be handled on an individual basis, and parents will receive ample warning. The school asks that parents be fully cooperative with school policies and disciplinary actions.

### **Drug and Alcohol Policy**

The use or possession of illegal drugs or illegal mood-altering substances, alcoholic beverages, drug-related paraphernalia, or the abuse of prescription or over-the-counter drugs by any student on school property or while attending or participating in any school-sponsored activity or at any time the student is wearing a school uniform is forbidden. Transgression of this rule will result in disciplinary action, which may include administrative withdrawal from the school, even for a first offense.

Any student selling drugs on school property or at school functions may result in a disciplinary response, up to and including administrative withdrawal.

The school is committed to a drug-free environment. This commitment may, under some circumstances, prompt a need for testing of students for evidence of substance abuse. It may also involve the use of drug dogs and other methods in the discretion of the school administration which seek to deter the use and/or distribution of illegal drugs or alcohol.

If a student exhibits the symptoms, or is suspected of substance abuse, the school may require that the student undergo substance abuse testing at the parents' expense. If the results of the test suggest abuse (and the substance was not used on or brought to campus or a school-related activity), the school will normally use this information to help the student seek assistance. Refusal to participate in such a test may result in administrative withdrawal from the school.

At times, the school may choose to conduct random drug testing of the student body at the parents' expense.

A school may conduct random searches as set forth in this handbook.

### **Electronic Acknowledgments**

Periodically, the school may require that parents or guardians make electronic acknowledgments

confirming the receipt and/or acceptance of various policies, procedures, notices, releases or updates. Any time a parent/guardian makes an electronic acknowledgment by clicking “submit” or “accept” on an electronic document, that individual is agreeing that he/she has read, understood, and agrees to be bound by the contents of the electronic document. Electronic acknowledgments and signatures are valid and binding and may serve as consent to the contents of any electronic communication. Parents and guardians are responsible for reviewing the contents of any electronic document prior to making any electronic acknowledgments. In addition, **Parents/Guardians, by executing the acknowledgment of receipt of this Handbook, HEREBY AGREE** to receive and be bound by electronic acknowledgments.

## **Electronic Devices**

Students should not be in possession of their electronic devices during school hours unless given permission from the teacher for school activities. Students are not permitted to take pictures or videos with any electronic device without permission from the teacher. Students who violate the cell phone/electronic devices policy may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action based on the principal’s discretion, including having the cell phone/electronic device taken away until further notice or taken away and returned on the last day. If any student is found using a cell phone during school hours, or has a cell phone anywhere the phone will be taken to the office until a parent or guardian claims it. The school is not responsible for lost, stolen or damaged electronic devices.

## **Emergency Closings**

If school must be canceled due to inclement weather or other emergency, St. John the Apostle School will follow the directives of Miami-Dade County Public Schools. Parents are asked to monitor local news broadcasts for bulletins from M DCPS or the Archdiocese of Miami Department of Schools. More specific information may be found on line at the Department of School's website [www.miamiarchschools.org](http://www.miamiarchschools.org) and following prompts. When possible, notices may be posted on the school website: [www.sjacs.org](http://www.sjacs.org)

## **Field Trips**

Field trips are an integral part of the curriculum and will always have an educational component, however students may be denied participation if they fail to meet academic and/or behavioral requirements. Parents have the right to refuse to allow their child to participate in a field trip. However, alternative assignments may be required to make up for the educational component of the activity.

Students that are not going to a field trip are still required to attend school, if a student does not attend it will be an unexcused absence.

No parents may be chaperones on field trips if they do not have a complete volunteer file. (Volunteer application, cleared fingerprints, and have completed the Archdiocese VIRTUS training. [See VOLUNTEER FILE])

Students must return the official school permission slip in order to be allowed on the field trip. Verbal permission will not be accepted in lieu of written permission. A faxed/email form does not take the place of an original signature. If you fax the form to the school, your child may go on the field trip, but the original must be returned to the school the next day. Archdiocesan policy discourages field trips which extend beyond school hours for elementary schools and forbids overnight field trips for elementary schools.

## **Financial Obligations**

The satisfaction of all financial obligations to the school, including tuition and fees, constitutes a material condition for continued enrollment in the school. The school may disallow students from taking quarterly, semester, or final examinations if the parents or legal guardians fail to meet any financial obligation to the school. In addition, the school may withhold the issuance of transcripts or any other student records and/or disallow participation in or access to school activities, and/or administratively withdraw the student if any financial obligations are not met.

**Parents/Guardians, by executing the acknowledgment of receipt of this Handbook, HEREBY AGREE** to be responsible for the full balance of tuition and any related fees regardless of any scholarship that may be available. Should such scholarship awards not cover the entire balance due or otherwise not become available, Parents/Guardians agree that they remain responsible for the full tuition amount and fees. Additionally, with respect to these scholarships, any student with a disability does not have an individual right to receive some or all of the special education and related services that the student would receive if enrolled in a public school under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), as amended.

## **Fire Drills**

St. John the Apostle Catholic School conducts regular fire drills, as well as other disaster, drills during the school year. The students review directions for prompt and orderly exit from the building. Procedures are posted in the classrooms.

## **Fundraising**

All families are required to support the school by selling \$100.00 worth of raffle tickets per family for our Parish Festival and participate in our Fall fundraiser. In addition, each family is encouraged to support other fundraisers we may have throughout the year. Tuition alone does not cover all of the operating costs of a Parochial School. We want to be able to provide the best for your child and we count on your help to be able to do so.

No student or family member may solicit funds in the school's name unless such solicitation has been authorized in writing by the principal.

## Grading Policy

### Grading Scale

**Pre-Kindergarten through second grade** will not receive a percentage grade. The student will be evaluated on a performance scale with 4 as the exceeding expectations level and 1 as emerging skills level. The scale is:

- 4 Exceeding grade level standards
- 3 Proficient in meeting grade level standards
- 2 Development in meeting grade level standards
- 1 Emerging in the development of grade level standards

**The goal is for every student to reach a level 3 to be a proficient learner in grade level standards by the end of the school year.**

The standards (under each subject) will be measured by:

- + Area of strength
- Area of weakness
- S Satisfactory
- NA Not assessed at this time

**Grades three through eight** will receive a percentage grade.

The grading scale is:

- A 100-90
- B 89-80
- C 79-70
- D 69-60
- F 59 or lower

The standards (under each subject) will be measured by:

- + Area of strength
- S Satisfactory
- Area of weakness
- NA Not assessed at this time

Students will receive a percentage grade in all subjects.

The Active Learner Traits for K-8 will be measured by:

- + Area of strength
- S Satisfactory
- Area of weakness

**Additional Notes Regarding Grades:**

- Each core subject (Religion, English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies) will receive a percentage grade.
- Each enrichment subject (Art, Music, Physical Education, and World Language) will receive a percentage grade.
- Standards under each subject will receive plus (+) for area of strength, minus (-) for area of weakness, ( ) for satisfactory performance, or (NA) for not assessed at this time. These standards demonstrate what students are expected to learn at each grade level.
- Active Learner Traits are identified as plus (+) for area of strength, minus (-) for area of weakness, or ( ) for satisfactory performance. These traits include the development of learning skills and work habits that are an integral part of a student's learning but not considered in the assessment, evaluation, and reporting on the student's academic achievement.
- An "M" next to a particular grade denotes a modified curriculum

**Cheating**

Cheating on any schoolwork is a serious infraction. Any student found cheating will receive a zero for that grade; the work may not be made up, and the student will be referred to administration for discipline.

**Harassment and Discrimination**

The school is committed to providing an environment that is free of discrimination and harassment. In keeping with this commitment, the school will not tolerate harassment or discrimination on the basis of a person's protected status, such as gender, color, race, ancestry, national origin, age, physical disability, mental condition, marital status, veteran status, citizenship status. All employees, faculty members and students are protected under this policy. In addition, this policy applies to all conduct occurring on school grounds, at assignments outside the school, or at school-sponsored events. All students are responsible for helping to assure that any harassment or discrimination is reported. If a student witnesses or learns of any conduct that violates this policy, the student must immediately report the incident to his/her principal. If, however, the principal is the individual who is believed to have engaged in the inappropriate conduct, the student should notify the Superintendent of Schools of the Archdiocese of Miami. If an investigation reveals that inappropriate conduct has occurred, the school will take corrective action based on the circumstances.

**Home and School Association (HSA)**

HSA is an organized medium of communication between the parents, and the faculty, staff and administration. Membership is open to all families of St. John the Apostle Catholic School. Meetings are held during the school year. You will be informed of the meeting times through the communication folder. HSA assists the school in fund raising, the planning of school functions,

and the promotion of school spirit. All parents are encouraged to become active members of HSA.

## **Homework**

Homework should be reinforcement of the day's lessons, preparation for the day ahead, or long-term projects, including Accelerated Reader and IXL programs. Parents, as the primary educators are encouraged to check homework, reports, projects, and tests in order to evaluate their own child's progress. Students are strongly encouraged, through the use of an agenda, to write down homework, project and test dates provided by the teacher, in class.

## **Honor Roll Policy**

Honor Roll is awarded to students in Grades 3-8.

### **Principal's Honor Roll**

A's in all subjects  
4.0 GPA

### **First Honors**

All A's and 1 B in all subjects 3.9 GPA

### **Second Honors**

A's and up to 3 B's in all subjects 3.7-3.8 GPA

Students must demonstrate acceptable Active Learner Traits with no minus (-) signs in areas of Personal and social growth and/or effort and study skills as determined by the teacher and/or principal. Honor Roll will be awarded to students with no suspensions in the current marking period.

## **Illness/Injury**

If a student becomes ill or injured during the school day, or in After Care, a parent or specified emergency contact will be notified. It is VERY IMPORTANT that your phone numbers are kept up to date. If there are any changes in phone numbers, please, let the school know. We need to be able to reach you.

## **Immunizations**

The Archdiocese of Miami requires that, prior to attendance in school, each student present or have on file with the school a certificate of immunization for the prevention of those communicable diseases for which immunization is required by the Department of Health. A Florida Certificate

of Immunization (Form DH 680) completed by a health care provider licensed in the state of Florida and participating in Florida Shots is required to document the administration of prescribed immunization doses.

The Archdiocese of Miami does not accept immunization exemption requests based upon religious, philosophical, personal, or other reasons. Medical-related immunization exemption requests are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Such requests must be made through submission of the Florida Certificate of Immunization (Form DH 680) and signed by a health care provider licensed and located in the state of Florida. Medical exemptions are only approved for legitimate documented medical needs. The Archdiocese reserves the right to not accept any medical exemption request.

Should there be an outbreak of a communicable disease at school, students with medical immunization exemptions may be asked to remain home throughout the incubation period of the disease.

### **Insurance of Students**

The Archdiocese of Miami purchases insurance which covers the students in all of the Archdiocesan owned schools during the times that students are in school sponsored activities or traveling to or from a school-sponsored activity. The Archdiocese of Miami also arranges with an independent company to provide an opportunity to the parents to purchase additional 24-hour insurance which covers their child when they are not in school-sponsored activities. You will receive this information in your school communication folder when it is available.

### **Library**

The library is a place for learning, reading, research and enrichment. Students are expected to follow all rules and regulations while in the library.

- Students in First through Eighth Grade may check out one book at a time.
- Equipment and reference books may not be removed from the library.
- Books lost, defaced or damaged must be replaced at the parent's expense.
- Overdue books may carry a fine.

### **Liturgy**

The Christian faith is the foundation of a Catholic's life, and is the basis for the existence of St. John the Apostle Catholic School. Parents are strongly encouraged to share in the Holy Mass with their children each Sunday, in order to celebrate the faith as a family. The school leads a Sunday mass one Sunday every month, all students are encouraged to attend that mass at a minimum. The entire student body shares in the Holy Mass on the Fridays we are in school and Holy Days of

Obligation. Parents are cordially invited to join the school in these celebrations.

**Second Grade:** Baptized students in Second Grade are prepared for the sacraments of Reconciliation and First Communion. If your child is not baptized and you wish this sacrament for your child, contact the rectory.

**Seventh Grade:** Students in Seventh Grade, who have been baptized in the Catholic Church and have received their First Communion, are prepared to receive the sacrament of Confirmation. They participate in retreats and are expected to participate in service-learning projects in preparation of the sacrament.

**Sacraments for Students in Other Grades:** Students who are out of sequence the sacraments may be prepared jointly through CCD and the school's religious education programs, if they have been baptized in the Catholic Church. It is the parents' responsibility to bring this to your child's teacher's attention. If your child needs to be baptized, you must contact the church office to make this arrangement.

Students in Grades Three through Eight are given the opportunity to receive the sacrament of Reconciliation several times during the school year. All students receive the blessing of throats on the Feast of St. Blaise, reception of ashes on Ash Wednesday, Participate in the Stations of the Cross during Lent, Advent services, Feast Days and Holy Days of Obligation. Parents are always cordially invited to join the school at these celebrations.

## **Lost and Found**

It is very important to label ALL your child's belongings. Every effort will be made to return lost items. An area will be designated for items lost on the school grounds. After two weeks, unclaimed items will be donated to the needy. Encourage your child to check this area if they have lost something.

## **Medication Guidelines**

Except as authorized by the school, students are not permitted to carry or distribute any prescription or non-prescription drugs or treatments, including aspirin, on the school grounds or at any school function. The administering of medicine to a student outside the doctor's office or a health institution is a parental responsibility and should only be delegated to school personnel when necessary and authorized by the school. Parents should ask their physicians if it is possible to prescribe medication so it can be administered at home. Only when necessary will the school allow the administration of medication on campus, and only under the following guidelines:

1. An authorization form must be completed and submitted by a parent or legal guardian of the student. The name of the medication and dosage should be indicated on the form.
2. Medications to be dispensed at school should be labeled with the child's name and the exact dosage. The name and telephone number of the physician should also be on the label.

3. While the school may monitor a student taking the medication, the school will not remind students to come and take their medication.

Exceptions to this policy may be made for the use, supply and administration of an epinephrine auto-injection (EpiPen), or as otherwise authorized in writing by the school. In particular circumstances, the school may agree to administer medication or otherwise provide health care interventions that go beyond a minor adjustment for a particular student. In those cases, Parents hereby release the school, the Archdiocese of Miami, and their corporate members, officers, employees, affiliates, and agents from any claims or liabilities that allegedly arise from or are related to the provision of those health care interventions that are beyond minor adjustments.

## **Money**

There is no need for students to have large sums of money on their person during the school day. If money is sent to the student to pay for a school related fee, please execute this action in the school office before or after school.

## **Notification of Rights under FERPA**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age (“eligible students”) certain rights with respect to the student’s education records. These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student’s education records within 45 days of the day the School receives a request for access.

Parents or eligible students should complete the Request for Release of Student Records and submit it to the School principal (or appropriate school official) identifying the record(s) they wish to inspect. The School official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

2. The right to request the amendment of the student’s education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student’s privacy rights under FERPA.

Parents or eligible students who wish to ask the School to amend a record should write the School principal (or appropriate school official), clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed. If the School decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the School will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student’s education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the School as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person or company with whom the School has contracted as its agent to provide a service instead of using its own employees or officials (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. Upon request, the School discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.

4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the School to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202-5920

## **Open Admission Policy**

The school has an open admission policy. No person, on the grounds of race, color, disability or national origin, is excluded or otherwise subjected to discrimination in the receiving of services. Nor does the school discriminate in hiring, promotion, discharge, pay, fringe benefits, job training, classification, referral and other aspects of employment on the basis of race, color, disability, age, gender, or national origin.

## **Parental Cooperation**

The school views the education of a student as a partnership between the parents and the school. Parents and students are expected to comply with the school rules and policies, and to accept and support the authority of school officials, whether it be at school events, on or off school campus, or on social media or other public forum. Just as a parent can withdraw a child from the school if desired, the school has the right to administratively withdraw a student if it determines at its discretion that the parent or student partnership with the school is irretrievably broken.

## **Participation in Co-Curricular and Extra-Curricular Activities**

The school recognizes the following co-curricular and extra-curricular activities (including official athletics activities and school dances):

**[INSERT BULLET POINT LIST]**

Parents acknowledge that participation in these co-curricular and extra-curricular activities may be inherently dangerous and, the school cannot ensure the safety of all students involved in its activities and programs.

Prior to participation in any athletic activity, each student must complete the Parent Consent and Release of Liability form and a physician's certificate to the effect that the student is physically fit for participation in the sport. Participation includes pre-season conditioning, open gym, tryouts and practice. **Parents, by executing this acknowledgement of receipt of this Handbook, HEREBY RELEASE the school, the Archdiocese of Miami, and their corporate members, officers, employees, and agents, from any claims or liabilities that allegedly arise from or are related to participation in any co-curricular or extra-curricular activities, including all athletics activities and school dances.**

The school is not responsible for student participation in any co-curricular and extra-curricular activities not identified above. Parents hereby acknowledge that students who participate in any such program or activity do so at their own risk. Parents further acknowledge that the school does not control or sanction any such program or activity and that it shall not be held liable for any injuries or damages sustained by students or others arising from participation in such program or activities.

For purposes of this handbook, a co-curricular and extra-curricular activity is defined as a group of individuals dedicated to a particular interest or activity, and a league is defined as a group of teams or individuals participating in an athletic activity.

## **Parties**

Parties tend to disrupt the academic climate of a school. Therefore, as a rule, parties will not be allowed.

## **Private Tutoring, Coaching or Lessons**

Except as specifically noted in this Handbook, the school does not sponsor, oversee, or otherwise provide private tutoring, coaching, therapy or other similar private lessons or services. Parents who engage school staff members for the provision of these services do so at their own risk and expense and are hereby advised that such services are outside the scope of the staff member's employment with the school. **Parents, by executing the acknowledgment of receipt of this Handbook HEREBY RELEASE the school, the Archdiocese, and their corporate members, officers, employees, affiliates, and agents from any claims or liabilities that allegedly arise from or are related to the provision of private tutoring, coaching, therapy or other similar private lessons or services, regardless of where they may occur.**

## **Public Display of Affection**

The Catholic school promotes friendship, charity, kindness, love and respect for self and others. However, student inappropriate displays of affection, such as kissing or embracing which connote more than simple friendship, are not permitted in school, at school dances, or at any school event.

Those who violate these rules may be subject to disciplinary measures, including detention, suspension or administrative withdrawal. The administration reserves the right to determine what is, or is not, appropriate behavior in a Catholic school.

### **Release of Students**

Students will be released only to those people who are listed on the registration papers. Parents must be sure that the school is notified in writing of any changes occurring with that information. Any situation involving court orders and legal documentation must be filed in writing. Other than the regular school dismissal procedures, students will be dismissed from the office only. This is a must. If a parent/ guardian goes to the classroom to pick up a child, they will be directed back to the office. There will be no exceptions. Please advise your child's teacher in the beginning of the year who will be picking up your child. If on a given day this change, please send a note in the morning. Students are discouraged from calling home at the end of the day to make "last minute" arrangements.

### **Reporting Physical/Sexual Abuse**

Any employee who suspects that a child has been subjected to child abuse or neglect by any person, including another employee, must report this to the Principal of the school. Together with the assistance of other authorities, they will determine if there is sufficient information to have "reasonable cause to suspect" the abuse or neglect. If they conclude that such a reasonable cause exists, the Principal, or the Legal Counsel for the Archdiocese, will report this to the Department of Children and Family Services.

That report may be made by calling the toll-free state-wide child abuse or neglect registry or by calling the local Department of Children and Family Services office responsible for receiving such reports. If the individual employee does not concur with the conclusion of the Principal and any advisors consulted, that employee has the right and responsibility to report the matter directly to the Department of Children and Family Services and immediately inform the Principal of this report.

### **Re-Registration**

Re-registration for the following school year is held in the Spring. In order to register, a family must be current with its financial obligations. A non-refundable fee will be collected at this time. You will receive information about the dates and deadlines for re-registration. Once the deadline has passed, registration will be opened to the community and your child's seat may not be guaranteed.

### **Retention/Summer School Policy**

Diligent effort is made to assure that all children can succeed at St. John the Apostle Catholic

School. However, students who receive a final average of D in two (2) or more major subjects may be recommended to complete a Summer School program. Students who fail one (1) or two (2) major subjects (math, reading/literature, English, Religion) will be required to attend Summer School at St. John the Apostle Catholic School, or show written evidence that at least 20 hours of tutoring in an approved program for each subject failed was completed, in order to be promoted. Students, who have absences in excess of 18 days, may be required to attend Summer School to make up for the missed days. Students who fail more than two (2) major subjects may be retained.

### **Safety in Private Spaces**

St. John the Apostle Catholic School complies with the requirements of §553.865, Florida Statutes, The Safety in Private Spaces Act. Except where facilities are specifically designated as unisex, the school's bathroom and locker room/changing facilities are designated exclusively for use by biological females or biological males. Any student who willfully enters a school restroom or locker room/ changing facility designated for the opposite sex and refuses to depart when asked to do so by any school personnel will be subject to disciplinary consequences as established by the school principal unless a specific statutory exception applies. This handbook provision shall be considered a part of the school's code of student conduct.

### **School-Sponsored Events**

The school does not sponsor, oversee, or in any way control parties or social functions at private residences. School-sanctioned events, including all field trips, excursions, or parties, are specifically identified in this Handbook or are identified in the school calendar and/or written notices generated and distributed by the school.

**Parents, by executing the acknowledgment of receipt of this Handbook, HEREBY RELEASE the school, the Archdiocese of Miami, and their corporate members, officers, employees, affiliates, and agents, from any claims or liabilities that allegedly arise from or are related to attendance at parties or social functions at private residences or from participation/attendance at events not identified in the school calendar or in written notices from the school, including field trips, excursions, or parties.**

Students engaged in conduct that is contrary to the mission and philosophy of the school may be subject to disciplinary action regardless of whether the conduct occurred at a school-sponsored function.

### **School Pictures**

School pictures and yearbooks are pre-paid. Notifications will be sent home.

### **Search and Seizure Policy**

The principal and his/her designee has access to any lockers, handbags, electronic devices, cell phones, book bags, desks, cars or any other object that is brought onto the campus of the school or any school-sponsored event, and may remove or confiscate any object which is illegal or contrary to school policy.

### **Section 504 – Policy Statement**

St. John the Apostle Catholic School complies with the mandate of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in certain programs and activities. Pursuant to the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act, St. John the Apostle Catholic School will make those minor adjustments that can accommodate students with disabilities to the school's educational programs and activities.

The school's designated 504 Coordinator and contact information are as follows: Dr. LaTonya White, 305-762-1269. Parents with questions regarding the school's disability accommodations or related items should contact the 504 Coordinator. Parents may file a grievance as to any decisions related to a disability accommodation and request an internal hearing and review by sending a written notice addressed as follows:

Dr. LaTonya White, Associate Superintendent  
Office of Catholic Schools  
Archdiocese of Miami  
9401 Biscayne Blvd  
Miami Shores, FL 33138

The internal hearing and review will seek the prompt and equitable resolution of disability discrimination complaints.

### **Sexting**

The electronic transmission or receipt from one minor to another of any photograph or video that depicts nudity may constitute illegal sexting. Students engaged in sexting will be subject to serious disciplinary consequences which may include administrative withdrawal from school. In addition, the school administration may report instances of sexting to the Florida Department of Children and Families or local law enforcement for appropriate investigation as to violations of law. The electronic transmission of sexually explicit language by a student may also constitute grounds for disciplinary action.

### **Smoking/Vaping**

It is a violation of Florida law for any minor to knowingly possess any tobacco product, nicotine product, or nicotine dispensing device. In addition, the use of tobacco products, electronic cigarettes, and vaping carry known health risks that can be very serious. The use of any tobacco products, electronic cigarettes, and/or vaping in any form is prohibited on school property and at

any school events. Violation of this policy will result in disciplinary consequences which may include administrative withdrawal from school.

### **Social Emotional Learning (SEL)**

The school provides a social emotional learning instructor, on staff, through Catapult Learning. Any parent who should not want their child to be seen by our counselor, please indicate this wish in writing at the beginning of the year to the principal. By the same token, at any time during the year you feel your child will benefit by speaking to the counselor, please let the child's teacher know.

### **State Scholarships**

St. John the Apostle Catholic School accepts the Step Up for Student/AAA Scholarships to assist parents in paying for their child's education. Please understand that the amount of the scholarship may not cover all the tuition, parents are expected to cover the difference in the fees. Please consult the office about current fees.

### **Student Council**

Student Council is the heart of student involvement at the St. John the Apostle School. Input from students can lead to positive changes. Students in grades Four through Eight can vote in Student Council elections and run for office.

The Student Council is composed of elected and appointed members. The elected positions are: President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary. Homeroom Representatives are appointed. Meetings are held on a regular basis.

The purpose of the Student Council is to:

- Promote school spirit
- Provide a forum for student expression
- Help in developing good relations between faculty and students
- Foster the development of leadership qualities
- Provide publicity for school activities
- Sponsors fundraising activities, as well as programs, which benefits the school.

### **Student Withdrawal**

The education of a student is a partnership between the parent and the school. Just as the parent has the right to withdraw a child if desired, the school administration reserves the right to require the withdrawal of a student if the administration determines that the partnership is irretrievably broken. An administrative exit interview is requested from any family leaving St. John the Apostle School.

## **Substance Abuse**

The use or possession of illegal drugs or illegal mood-altering substances, alcoholic beverages, drug-related paraphernalia, or the abuse of prescription or over the counter drugs by any student on school property or while attending or participating in any school sponsored activity or at any time the student is wearing a school uniform is forbidden. Any student selling or distributing drugs on school property or at school functions may be immediately expelled. All Archdiocesan schools are committed to a drug free environment. This Commitment may, under some circumstances prompt a need for testing of students for evidence of substance abuse. If a student exhibits the symptoms, or is suspected of substance abuse, the school may require that the student undergo abuse testing. A student who acknowledges his/her substance abuse may not need to be tested and will be assisted according to school policy. If the results of the test suggest abuse and the substance was not used on or brought to campus, the school will normally use this information to help the student seek assistance. Refusal to participate in such a test may result in dismissal from the school. At times, the school may choose to conduct random drug testing of the student body. While this measure may not often be implemented, the scourge of substance abuse in our society is so serious that the administration may consider it an effective and justifiable way of combating the problem. The school may conduct random searches of backpacks or possessions or cars on the premises.

## **Technology Use**

The school may provide its administrators, faculty and students with access to technological devices (e.g. computers, tablets, etc.) various information technology resources including email and Internet access in order to enhance the teaching and learning environment of the school and to improve the school's operations. Students must use these resources in a responsible, ethical, and legal manner in accordance with the mission of the school and Catholic teachings. Therefore, students must abide by the following general rules of conduct:

1. Respect and protect the privacy of others:
  - a. Use only assigned accounts and passwords;
  - b. Do not share assigned accounts or passwords with others;
  - c. Do not view, use or copy passwords, data or networks to which you are not authorized;
  - d. Do not share or distribute private information about yourself or others.
2. Respect and protect the integrity, availability, and security of all electronic resources:
  - a. Observe all network security practices;
  - b. Report security risks or violations to the school principal;
  - c. Do not vandalize, destroy or damage data, networks, hardware, computer systems or other resources;
  - d. Do not disrupt the operation of the network or create or place a virus on the network;
  - e. Conserve and protect these resources for other students and Internet users.

3. Respect and protect the intellectual property of others:
  - a. Do not infringe on copyright laws including downloading or copying music, games or movies;
  - b. Do not install unlicensed or unapproved software;
  - c. Do not plagiarize.
4. Respect the principles of the Catholic school:
  - a. Use only in ways that are kind and respectful;
  - b. Report threatening or discomforting materials to the school principal;
  - c. Do not access, transmit, copy or create materials that violate the school's code of conduct (such as indecent, threatening, rude, discriminatory or harassing materials or messages);
  - d. Do not access, transmit, copy or create materials that are illegal (such as obscene, stolen, or illegally copied materials or messages);
  - e. Do not use the resources to further any other acts that are criminal or violate the school's code of conduct;
  - f. Do not use the resources for non-educational purposes such as visiting chat rooms, social websites or networks;
  - g. Do not send spam, chain letters or other mass unsolicited mailings;
  - h. Do not buy, sell, advertise, or otherwise conduct business or political campaigning without prior written approval from the school's principal.
  - i. Do not engage in any form of cyberbullying.

### **Supervision and Monitoring**

The school and its authorized personnel may monitor the use of information technology resources to help ensure that users are secure and in conformity with this policy. The school reserves the right to examine, use, and disclose any data found on the school's information networks or on any technological devices used by students on campus in order to further any administrative concern. It may also use this information in disciplinary actions and may furnish evidence of a crime to law enforcement.

### **Unacceptable Use of Outside Technology**

The school expects students to use information technology and social media (including, but not limited to, the Internet, email, instant messaging and text messaging) in a responsible and ethical fashion in compliance with all applicable laws and with Christian moral principles, both in and out of the school setting. Accordingly, students may not post, place, upload, share, or communicate any images, photographs, statements or inferences relating to or including profanity, vulgarity, indecency, illegal use of drugs, illegal use of alcohol or other illegal or illicit activities. Additionally, students may not use information technology for the purpose of defaming,

threatening, teasing or harassing any other student, staff member, parent, faculty member, or other person. This includes, but is not limited to, texting and communications on social networks. In addition, this rule applies to communications both during the school year and while students are on vacation or summer breaks. Students are responsible for all materials and communications made on personal websites and on social media, and the materials and communications should be consistent with Christian moral principles, including any materials or communications posted on their sites by other individuals. Moreover, any unauthorized use of the school's name (or common names associated with the school) or any likeness or image of the school or its employees or agents is strictly prohibited.

### **Consent**

Many technological devices used at school have the capacity to generate audio recordings, video recordings, photographs, and other similar reproductions of images, likenesses, and/or sounds. The use of any such recordings and reproductions is governed by school policy. Parental/guardian execution of this Handbook constitutes an express consent and waiver as to any such recordings and reproductions incidental to the use of any technological devices on school property or at school events.

### **Consequences for Violations**

A violation of these rules may result in disciplinary action, including the loss of a student's privilege to use the school's information technology resources and any additional consequences at the principal's discretion including administrative withdrawal.

### **Telephone Calls**

Telephone lines are to be left open for school business. Students are not allowed to use the telephone without permission. In the event of an emergency or illness, the student may come to the office and the call will be made for him/her. Forgotten items such assignments do not constitute an emergency. It is the student's responsibility to be organized and to come to school prepared.

### **Testifying in Divorce or Custody Proceedings**

The Catholic Church recognizes marriage as a Sacrament. In the Union of Christian spouses, the sacrament of Matrimony celebrates the relationship of Christ to the Church. Therefore, the school strongly supports the sacrament of matrimony as the foundation of family life and of the domestic Church. In recognition of the importance of the matrimonial sacrament to the Catholic faith, parents agree not to compel the attendance, testimony, or deposition of any school or church employee in any divorce, custody, or other legal proceedings which may in any way involve the dissolution of marriage or the determination of parental/custody rights. A violation of this policy will constitute a breach of the parental cooperation requirement.

In the event that a parent or legal guardian breaches this policy, any school or church personnel who are required to attend legal proceedings may be represented by an attorney. In addition, any

and all legal fees and costs incurred by the school will be charged and become the responsibility of the parent or legal guardian.

## **Testing**

Under the direction of the Archdiocese of Miami Department of Schools, the Terra Nova is administered annually to students in Grades 2-8. The purpose of this testing includes evaluation of the instructional program, as well as accumulation of data for instructional use. The results of this test are only one measure of a student's performance and potential and are utilized to help determine the best course of action to identify the student's needs.

## **Text Messaging/Telephone Calls**

The school may use text messages and automated telephone calls to alert parents/guardians of important information related to the school's mission, operations, and activities. Parents/guardians acknowledge and consent to the receipt of these messages when providing their telephone numbers.

## **Threats of Violence**

The disciplinary consequences for a student whose verbal or written comments, including email messages, that threaten serious bodily harm to another student or member of the faculty or staff or destruction of property, may include, but not be limited to:

1. Immediate suspension from the school;
2. Reporting to law enforcement;
3. Treatment or consultation by a psychologist or psychiatrist at the parents' expense and/or by the school counselor, both of whom may be asked to submit a written evaluation. If it is determined that the child was serious about the threat and has the capacity to carry it out, the child may be administratively withdrawn from the school. If it is determined that the child did not seriously intend to do harm to others, the child may be allowed to return to the school, at the discretion of the school principal.
4. If allowed to return to school, the child may be placed on probation with an indication that, should a similar threat occur, the child will be administratively withdrawn from school;
5. The school should inform the Office of Catholic Schools of these cases. The school may submit an informational report to the police.

## **Transportation Arrangements**

Parents hereby acknowledge and agree that the school does not provide or arrange for student transportation to or from school, except as specifically set forth in writing by the school. Student transportation to and from school each day is a parental responsibility. The school does not authorize or endorse any private transportation arrangements. In limited and documented circumstances, a parent may engage a commercial transportation company to transport a student from school; however, any such engagement requires the written authorization of the school and the execution of school documents allowing for such an arrangement. Except upon the written consent of the school, parents should not utilize internet-based transportation services (such as Uber or Lyft) to transport students to/from school and school-sponsored activities.

## **Tuition**

Tuition will be collected through FACTS Tuition and management services. Families are encouraged to make their payments online; however, payments will still be accepted at the school office.

If tuition payments fall two months behind, a child may not be able to return to school until the debt is paid, or an interview with the administrator takes place. All checks returned to St. John the Apostle School will have a penalty charge added. The charges vary by bank. St. John the Apostle School may request that if you present us with a check that is returned, future payments must be by cash, charge or Money Order.

## **Undocumented Students**

A student's enrollment and/or graduation from school does not confer a legal status nor does it serve to regularize an undocumented student. Although the Archdiocese of Miami may assist with the completion of an I-20 form, the school does not guarantee or confer any privileges or rights available to documented legal residents. Parents should consult with immigration legal counsel if they have any questions as to immigration status.

## **Uniforms**

A proper uniform helps to provide an atmosphere conducive to learning. The uniform code must be adhered to every day of the school year, unless otherwise specified. Risse is the official supplier of uniforms for St John the Apostle School. They have the official required list of uniforms and uniform options.

The only acceptable outerwear is St. John the Apostle jackets and sweaters from Risse. If it becomes so cold that additional overcoats need to be worn, communication from the school office will be made.

School uniform shoes are solid black shoes, with no other colors on them. Athletic shoes for PE are black. Cuffed socks must come above the ankle when folded over once.

Please make sure your child is dressed properly every morning. Any student not in proper uniform may be sent to the office to call home to have the proper uniform to be brought to school. In the case of not being able to reach a parent to correct this, further disciplinary action may be taken.

Wearing jewelry to school, for students, is discouraged, however, the following will be allowed: one simple chain with a cross or religious medal and one watch. Apple Watches are not permitted. Girls may wear one pair of simple stud earrings (one earring in each lobe). Boys may not wear earrings. Multiple piercings and tattoos are not permitted. Disregard for this policy may result in expulsion.

There is to be no make-up, no long false or acrylic nails and only clear, un tinted nail polish may be worn (No white French manicures.) If colored nail polish is worn to school, the student will be referred to the office to remove it.

All students, boys and girls, should wear their hair neat and conventional in appearance and natural in color (No dying or highlights of any color.) Hair should not be distracting, i.e.: spikes, carvings, Mohawks, etc. Hair for boys should be off the collar, and for both boys and girls, out of the eyes. No facial hair (mustaches, beards, excessive sideburns) allowed. Any question about hair appearance will be decided upon by the principal.

### **Use of Photos**

The school reserves the right to use student or parent photos in any school or Archdiocesan publication including but not limited to print publications, videos, or websites including Facebook, Instagram and other social media websites. Any parent who does not want his or her child's picture or video to be used accordingly must notify the school's principal in writing prior to the beginning of the school year. **By executing this acknowledgement of receipt of this Handbook, Parents HEREBY CONSENT, authorize and grant permission to the school, the Archdiocese of Miami, and their agents, employees or duly authorized representatives to photograph or videotape students and parents and CONSENT to their publication for any purpose deemed proper by the school, including but not limited to, use on the internet.**

**Additionally, Parents, by executing this acknowledgement of receipt of this Handbook, HEREBY RELEASE the school, the Archdiocese of Miami, and their corporate members, officers, employees, and agents, from any claims or liabilities that allegedly arise from or are related to the use of student or parent photos.**

## **Visitors**

For the safety and protection of all our students, ALL visitors – including parents – must report to the school office. No one may go directly to classrooms without the knowledge or permission of the administration. This is for the safety and security of all.

## **Volunteer File**

By directive from the Archdiocese of Miami, everyone who works (volunteers) with children must have a complete Volunteer File. This consists of a completed application, cleared fingerprints, and having completed the VIRTUS course and keep it up-to date. They are available in the office. This must be completed if you wish to be a room parent, chaperone on field trips, help in the classroom or cafeteria, or coach one of our teams. Let's keep St. John the Apostle a safe environment for all our children.

If you already have a completed volunteer file, please keep up with the Virtus readings. Fingerprinting needs to be updated every five (5) years. You may be asked to submit an updated training report.

## **Volunteer Hours**

St. John the Apostle School parents are expected to attend all Home and School meetings, Open Houses, parent/ teacher meetings, etc. This is our main means of communication between the home and the school. All families are expected to participate in school-wide fund-raising activities, including but not limited to, participating in the Fall.

## **Weapons**

Weapons are not permitted anywhere on school grounds or at any school activity. Any student who brings a weapon to any school activity, who is in possession of a weapon, or who threatens others with a weapon may be administratively withdrawn from the school. Any item used to threaten or cause bodily harm may be considered a weapon. In particular, the possession of any instruments or objects that can be used to inflict serious harm on another person or that can place a person in reasonable fear of serious harm will be considered weapons. Included in this category are BB guns, Airsoft guns, and toy or replica guns represented as real guns. Also included in this category is the possession or storage of items which are prohibited at school, including but not limited to ammunition clips, bullets or cartridges, flammable liquids, combustible materials, poisonous substances, mace, pepper spray, and any other items which may result in injury.

**APPENDIX: Parent-Student Handbook Acknowledgment Form**

**St. John the Apostle Catholic School**  
**Parent-Student Handbook Acknowledgment Form**

I, as Parent or Legal Guardian, acknowledge that I have read the entire contents of the Parent-Student Handbook and understand the consequences of any violations of the rules and policies of the school.

I agree to cooperate with the school in the interpretation and enforcement of the policies outlined in the Parent-Student Handbook. I also understand that the school has the ultimate authority over the administration of the school and the interpretation of the school's rules and policies. Moreover, I further understand that all of the school's policies whether written or verbal are only guidelines and are subject to change at the sole discretion of the school with or without notice.

I also hereby acknowledge that I have read and agree to the terms of the **RELEASES** outlined in the School-Sponsored Events Policy, the Participation in School Athletics or Organizations Policy, and the Use of Photos Policy.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Print Parent/Legal Guardian Name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature Parent/Legal Guardian)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Print Student Name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Grade)

Safe Environment Program: Teaching children to protect themselves is part of the mandate of the Charter for Protection of Children and Young People adopted the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in June, 2022. During the school year, we will teach two lessons for all grades. These sessions are merely to reinforce what you teach at home. Materials for parents are available in the Main Office and at <https://www.Virtusonline.org/virtus/ParentHandbook.pdf>



\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, my child may attend the Safe Environment lessons  
\_\_\_\_\_ No, my child may not attend the Safe Environment lessons

