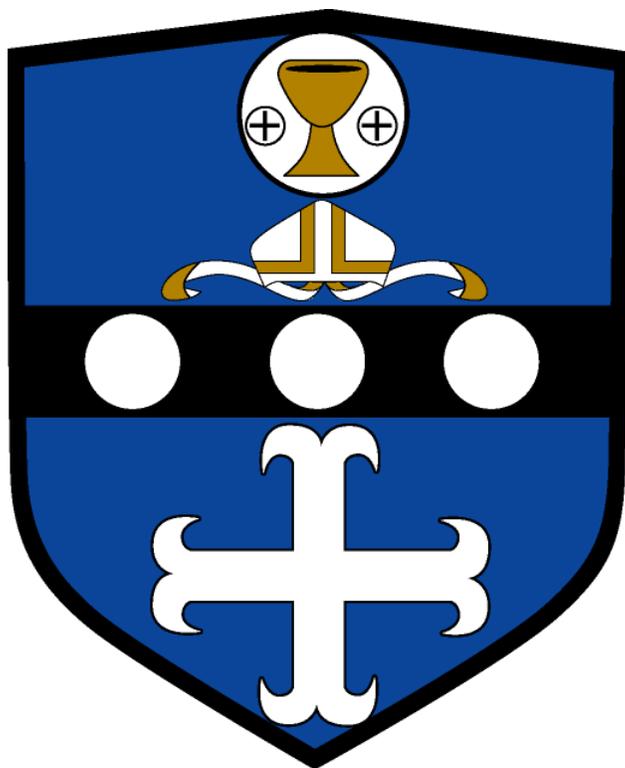


**Diocese of Altoona-  
Johnstown  
Parent/Student  
Handbook**



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## **MISSION STATEMENT**

**The mission of Catholic schools in the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown is to empower students to reach their full spiritual, intellectual, physical, social, and moral potential. In this unique Catholic environment, young people are given the opportunity and guidance to grow in their personal relationship with Jesus Christ and his Church; come to understand the role of faith in daily life; and help others to discover the same truth and joy of his Gospel.**

## **ADMINISTRATION**

**Diocesan and parochial schools of the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown are those which meet all of the following conditions:**

- are recognized as Catholic by the Bishop of Altoona-Johnstown.
- are responsible to the Diocesan Director of Education for such matters as have been determined by the Bishop of Altoona-Johnstown and are subject to the Director's regulations.
- are governed by the Diocesan School Policies and Regulations.
- have written belief and mission statements which identify the school as Catholic.
- have a program of religious education which conforms to the standards determined by the Education Office of Altoona-Johnstown and the Office of Religious Education and Catechesis.
- are recognized by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

## **ADMISSION POLICIES**

### **In accordance with the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown Policy 5020 Admission:**

Since the formation of students in the Catholic faith heritage and its religious traditions is the primary purpose for which our Catholic schools have been founded, both parents/guardians and students must be willing to abide by the values inherent in our Catholic faith and by our philosophy of Catholic education.

Students and parents/guardians who desire an educational experience founded on the Catholic philosophy of education and who fulfill the requirements and conditions for enrollment specified below, are eligible for admission to the Catholic schools in the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown without discrimination with respect to sex, race, ethnic origin or disability, if with reasonable accommodation, they can meet the school's requirements, according to the subsequent provisions of this policy.

The request for the admission of students from a public or private school must be carefully reviewed and the reasons for the request examined.

In accordance with diocesan policy, the diocese encourages participation of all children in a kindergarten program prior to entering first grade.

### **Kindergarten Admission**

Those seeking admission to kindergarten must be 5 years of age on or before August 31 of the year of entry.

Registration is ongoing and continues until class is full.

In Pennsylvania, kindergarten is not a required grade.

When registering a kindergarten student, the parent(s)/guardian(s) shall present proof of age and (for a Catholic child) a baptismal certificate. A Christian, non-Catholic student shall present a baptismal certificate and note the denomination when possible. Incoming students shall be given a school health examination form, which must be completed by the

parent(s)/guardian(s) and the student's physician. This form should be returned to the school prior to the beginning of the school year.

### **Immunizations**

The Pennsylvania Department of Health promulgates immunization regulations that require parents or guardians of students enrolled in grades K-12 to have their children immunized against various communicable diseases. Records will need to be given to the administrative offices of the diocesan school on or before the fifth day of class.

### **Probation Period for all Students**

All newly enrolled students are subject to a 9 week probation period. The school reserves the right to determine that the school is not a good fit for the student and to require withdrawal of the student. In such a case, any tuition paid will be refunded.

## **ACADEMIC POLICIES**

### **Student Progress**

The school uses the diocesan system (PowerSchool) for reporting pupil progress. This may include progress reports and interim reports which will be based on evidence from multiple assessments which demonstrate a student's understanding of the different academic content standards, teacher observations, or similar feedback, when appropriate.

Standardized Testing is also to be utilized to track student progress. Diocesan curriculum can be found on the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown website: [www.dioceseaj.org](http://www.dioceseaj.org) .

Honor Roll, Parent Conferencing, and Report Card information will be in the School Section if applicable.

**Grade scale:**

A = 93-100

B = 85-92

C = 76-84

D = 70-75

F = Below 70

Some Schools of the diocese will use a customized standard-based report card. This will be posted in the school section.

**Grade Retention/Promotion**

Satisfactory completion of each grade is to be expected of every student. Absence itself, for a valid reason, is not a reason for retention of a student if the student has completed the required work.

Retention of students is appropriate where it is intended to enable a student to gain future developmental, emotional and/or educational maturity and success.

**ATTENDANCE**

Full day attendance is expected of all students. Information pertaining to your school attendance policy will be posted in the School Section.

**COMMUNICATIONS**

Open communication between home and school is important for student progress and maintaining a healthy school climate. The proper line of communication in discussing any facet of your child's progress is to first contact the teacher directly. This may be done through a written message, e-mail or by telephone. Teachers are unavailable during class hours but will respond within two school days. If a satisfactory solution cannot be reached, the parent/guardian

and/or teacher will inform the principal. If the problem remains unsolved, then the parents/guardians may have recourse to the pastor and or diocesan education office. Because of the interruptions in the teaching-learning process, spontaneous visits to the classrooms are not permitted.

Weather delays/cancellations will be announced via School Messenger, television, and radio by each individual elementary school.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Administrators, counselors, and teachers will keep confidential information entrusted to them so long as no one's life, health, or safety is at stake. Student progress will only be discussed with parents or legal guardian. Progress cannot be discussed with grandparents, friends, etc. without **written permission** from legal guardian.

### **SUPPORT SERVICES**

Counseling, speech, language, occupational therapy, and other services will be provided through the local Intermediate Units.

### **EMERGENCY OPERATION PLAN**

Diocesan Schools have each developed an Emergency Operation Plan in cooperation with state and local authorities. The plan must be approved by the Education Office of the Altoona-Johnstown Diocese. Parents/Guardians should stay tuned to local media sites for important information.

## CUSTODY

Administrators, counselors and teachers will keep confidential information entrusted to them so long as no one's life, health, or safety is at stake.

The school 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 school will provide the non-custodial parent with access to the academic records and other school-related information regarding the child. A current physical address, e-mail, and phone number must be provided by the non-custodial parent in order to obtain information.

**If there is a court order specifying that there is to be no information given, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the school with an official copy of the court order dealing with the education/visitation of the child. It is also the parent's responsibility to inform the school of the addresses where the student's records should be sent.**

**Divorced parents must provide the school with a court certified copy of the custody section of the divorce decree. If no such copy is on file, school officials will assume that both parents have custodial rights. Parents/guardians must provide the school with the most current court certified copy of the custody decree.**

School officials will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that children are released only to the appropriate parent at the time/days according to the court custody arrangements. However, parents must accept the primary responsibility for such arrangements and should instruct their children as to which parent should have physical custody of them on any given day.

**Please note:** The school, its teachers, and administrators cannot become involved in adjudicating marital disputes. Parents, in such cases, should strive to keep their personal issues out of school. The school's responsibility is with the child and his/her welfare.

## **MANDATED REPORTING**

Everyone working with your child is a mandated report. We are not permitted to contact parents if a child is interviewed by Children and Youth Services and/or police.

## **DISCIPLINE BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT**

Schools will try to develop the art of discovering the good in every person and show respect for one another. In other words, we...

- include everyone.
- are kind in our words and actions.
- stick up for one another.
- support and encourage each other.

Students recite a “Peacekeeper’s Pledge” that helps to remind them what the expectations are at Diocesan Schools. “I am a \_\_\_\_\_ Catholic School Peacekeeper. I promise to be kind in my thoughts, words, and actions. By doing this, I will keep our school a safe place to be as Jesus teaches us, I will do unto others as I would have them do unto me.”

When a child makes a poor choice, teachers will talk to the child and decide what action, if any, is to take place. Depending on the severity and/or frequency of the behavior, the teacher will inform the parents/guardians and/or principal to discuss an appropriate action. Ways to handle poor choices can include (but are not limited to) reflection, discussion, writing, temporary isolation (time-out), loss of privileges, etc.

For certain situations, the school pastor will also be included in the disciplinary action.

## General Overview

A variety of behavior management techniques, strategies, and procedures will be used to the extent necessary to ensure that the learning environment provided is not disrupted by inappropriate student behavior. Corporal punishment and verbal abuse are not permitted.

## Authority of the Administration, Faculty, and Staff

Every teacher, staff member, and administrator has the right to exercise authority as to the conduct and behavior of students in the school during the time they are in attendance.

## Classroom-based Expectations and Management

The following chart illustrates categories of student misbehavior/misconduct:

|                               | <b>Example of Infraction Category</b>                   |   |  |  |
|-------------------------------|---|---|--|--|
|                               | <b>Bus-specific</b>                                     | <b>Minor</b>  | <b>Serious</b>   | <b>Major</b>   |
| Includes, but not limited to: | Out of seat, shouting, throwing objects, fighting, etc. | Dress code violation, Classroom misconduct, Profanity, Horseplay, Loitering, Cafeteria misconduct, Repetitive playground offense, unsportsmanlike | Fighting<br>Insubordination,<br>Defiant behavior,<br>Verbal harassment,<br>Sexual harassment,<br>Misuse of | Theft, Vandalism<br>Possession/misuse of lighters, matches,<br>Possession of weapons and/or “look-a-likes”,<br>Assault on staff, Under the influence of or in possession of alcohol, non-prescription drugs, |

|  |  |                          |                           |   |
|--|--|--------------------------|---------------------------|---|
|  |  | conduct (including P.E.) | Technology, Cyberbullying | tobacco products, or abuse of prescription drugs. |
|--|--|--------------------------|---------------------------|---|

This chart is not considered a complete or exhaustive list of infractions, but serves to give illustrative examples and their categorization. The administration has the final say as to the category to which a student’s specific behavior belongs, as well as the consequences thereof.

### **Parent/Guardian Notification**

Depending on the severity of the infraction, if a student commits an infraction, the teacher/administrator may contact the parents/guardians about the situation and meet with the student (and parents/guardians, if applicable) to discuss the consequences. A pattern of continuous infractions will result in a Parent/Guardian Conference.

If a student commits an infraction while riding district-provided transportation (school bus/van), the driver will fill out a referral form and give it to the school office. The administration is responsible for contacting the parents/guardians about the incident and taking any disciplinary action with the student.

### **Student Consequences of Misbehavior/Misconduct**

Each school will maintain a Conduct Record on each student. Each Diocesan Catholic School teacher and/or designated learning support expert maintains his/her own classroom behavior expectations and management procedures. These expectations and procedures are discussed with the students during the first week of classes. Written outlines of classroom expectations and procedures are available upon request. If at any time a student is unwilling or unable to meet the expectations of classroom behavior, he/she may be referred to the administration. Student Conduct Records will be maintained in the school administration office.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

A standard permission form must be signed and returned to the school prior to the scheduled field trip for the student to participate in the trip.

A student who fails to submit a standard permission form prior to the trip will not be permitted to participate. Only the STANDARD PERMISSION FORMS obtained from the school office/published online are acceptable. Notes from parents or legal guardians giving permission are not acceptable.

Field trips must be educational and must be approved by the principal in consultation with Diocesan Education Office

Field trips are a privilege. No student has an absolute right to a field trip. A student may be denied participation if he/she demonstrates inappropriate behavior, or does not meet academic standards including grades, class assignments, and homework. Parents/Guardians have the right to refuse their child's participation in a field trip. However, the child must report to school the day of the field trip or be marked absent.

Participation in field trips is restricted to those students in the class for which the trip is scheduled. Siblings or other children are not permitted to attend field trips. All designated chaperones are required to have completed the diocesan youth protection requirements.

## **EXTRA-CURRICULARS**

Every Student who does participate in a field trip/school sponsored extra-curricular activity is expected to obey all discipline codes as outlined in this handbook.

Students who participate in an extra-curricular activity should behave as if they are representing their Catholic School and should behave accordingly.

Attendance at school is required to participate in school sponsored extra-curricular activities scheduled that day or evening. The Student must be in school for at least half a day to participate. Exceptions may be considered but building principal must be consulted in advance.

## **MEDICATIONS**

A policy implemented by the Pennsylvania Department of Health, regulates the administration of prescription and over the counter medication (OTC) to students throughout the school day. The directives are as follows:

1. **No one except a licensed professional** can dispense prescription or over the counter (OTC) medication in a school. **The office personnel will not dispense Ibuprofen, Acetaminophen, Tums, cough drops, or prescription medications.**
2. In the absence of a licensed professional, neither the secretary nor the principal can administer OTC meds or those prescribed by a doctor **UNLESS** it is an emergency medication (**epinephrine or asthma inhaler**).

A **doctor's order** must accompany **prescription or OTC** medications to be dispensed only by a licensed professional (school nurse). Again, even with a doctor's order, **office personnel are NOT PERMITTED** to dispense any prescription or OTC medications.

For example, if cough medicine is brought to school it cannot be given unless the doctor has signed an order to be administered during school hours and **ONLY IF THE NURSE IS PRESENT** to dispense the ordered dosage.

3. In the event your child is on a maintenance medication, for example Insulin, arrangements can be made with our district school nurse to administer the medication on the contingency that a doctor's order has been issued and is on file with our office.
4. All medications must be delivered to the office by an adult. Students may not transport medications.

**Parents/Guardians are permitted** to administer their child's prescription and OTC meds during school hours. When your child is ill and unable to finish out the school day, you will be notified so that you can make a decision on what you think would be the best plan of action for you.

## **PARENT/GUARDIAN COOPERATION**

The education of a student is a partnership between the parent(s)/guardian(s) and the school. Just as the parent/guardian 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.

### **Parental/Guardian Rights**

- to have your children's safety be a priority;
- to have your children receive an authentic, Catholic education in a Catholic environment;
- to have your child's learning needs met if the program can reasonably accommodate them;
- to have your children taught by competent teachers who respect and care for them;
- to talk with personnel and to have requests for meetings answered in a timely manner;
- to have your children "try out" for all program activities and teams;
- to review records and respond;
- to participate in the life of the school and parish.

### **Parental/Guardian Responsibilities**

- to be a partner with the school in the education and formation of your children;
- to understand and support the Catholic identity of the school;

- to read all communications from the school and to request clarification when necessary;
- to know your children's teachers and to observe parent-teacher conference dates and any special requests for meetings;
- to discuss concerns and problems with the person(s) most directly involved before contacting other authorities;
- to be as actively involved as you can be in the life of the school and to volunteer assistance when possible;
- to promote our parish(es) and school and to speak well of them to others;
- to know and support school rules; and
- to appreciate that Catholic education/formation is a privilege that many persons do not have.

--adapted from Volunteers in Catholic Education: An Administrator's Guide to Legal Considerations (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) by Mary Angela Shaughnessy, SCN (NCEA, 2007.)

### **Family Responsibilities in Cooperation With School**

Parents/Guardians must be the first to foster a loving and disciplined atmosphere at home. The school provides a setting for learning, but can only operate effectively with the cooperation of the family. To achieve a harmonious relationship parents/guardians are expected to:

- Provide for the spiritual, physical and mental development and well-being of the child.
- Be supportive toward the school and education in word and deeds and in social media outlets.
- Help the child develop into a positive, productive member of society and the church, taking seriously their baptismal promises to fulfill the spiritual upbringing of their children including regular mass attendance.
- Cooperate with and respect school policies and school personnel both in word and deed and in social media outlets.
- Be responsible for any financial obligations incurred by the child in school.
- Know and adhere to school philosophy and policy.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act gives parents/guardians the right to inspect their child's educational records, and to have a school official explain the records if requested. Any parent/guardian who wishes to see his/her child's records should contact the school principal for an appointment

### **Parent/Guardian Service Requirements**

**If the Diocesan School requires service and/or fundraising, details are provided in the individual school section.**

### **Retreats and Service Program**

**If the Diocesan School offers retreat and service programs, details are provided in the individual school section.**

## **TECHNOLOGY & INTERNET**

The Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown issues an Internet Usage Policy and a Remote Instruction Policy that requires a parent/guardian and student signature of agreement. Schools also issue a

Hardware Use Policy that details the use of devices, acceptable behaviors and financial responsibilities should devices be lost or damaged. The full policy can be found in the Appendix

## **PERSONAL PROPERTY**

The school is not responsible for any personal property brought into the school by the student including electronic devices.

## **CELL PHONES AND PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

Cell phones, smartwatches, and other personal electronic devices **are not** to be used during school hours. If used, the device will be taken by the student to the administrative office and can be picked up at the end of the day. The location of the device pick up will be determined by each school.

## **USE OF SCHOOL GROUNDS**

Schools are responsible for students only during posted school hours. Hours should be posted in the Individual School Section. Children are not to be on school grounds unattended at any other times.

## **AMENDMENTS TO HANDBOOK**

**The school reserves the right to amend this handbook. Parents/Guardians will be given prompt notice of any amendments.**

**Prior to the first day of school, parents/guardians must sign and return this agreement either in person or submit electronically:**

In consideration of \_\_\_\_\_ School's provision of a Catholic education for my/our children, I/we, \_\_\_\_\_ the parent(s)/guardian(s) of \_\_\_\_\_, have read and agree to be governed by this handbook and to pay all required tuition and fees.

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature

Date

# Appendix

## Student Use of the Internet in School

The Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown (DAJ) is fortunate to have a connection to the Internet to supplement the other educational resources already available to staff and students. Through the Internet, your child will have the entire world at his or her fingertips and be able to explore it.

This wonderful resource brings with it additional responsibility. As Internet users, we must be aware of the many issues that surround the Internet. There are many valuable resources available on the Internet that may not be found elsewhere. There are also many sites that can be considered inappropriate for students and serve no educational value. It is the responsibility of all users, staff and students alike, to ensure that, at all times while in a Diocesan School, the Internet is being used only for educational purposes. When using the Internet, students will be supervised by Diocesan School Staff. However, due to the nature of the Internet and evolving technology, even with supervision, students may get to an inappropriate site. It is the student's responsibility to report any inappropriate site to the teacher and return to the educational topic assigned.

***As part of our internet safety policy, schools will educate minors about appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking websites and in chat rooms, and cyberbullying awareness and response. This is required by the Protecting Children in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Act.***

The following Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) should be read carefully and understood by all Internet users. As parents/guardians, you should review it in detail with your children before they begin using the Internet in their school. The Acceptable Use Policy was developed to ensure the safety of all users.

The DAJ uses a filtering system designed to prevent access to educationally inappropriate sites. However, it is important to understand that no solution is perfect, and we cannot guarantee that students will not have access to inappropriate sites.

Parents should be aware that DAJ educators can request that a specific site be blocked or un-blocked. Such decisions will be made by those responsible for monitoring the filtering service within the DAJ.

It is important that you and your children understand that any violation of the AUP may result in the loss of Internet and e-mail privileges or other disciplinary action. We ask that you work with your children in reinforcing the behaviors associated with the AUP and the attached student contract. Please also note that our filtering system allows us to track and monitor all computer use on the network.

## Acceptable Use Policy for Networks, Including the Internet

It is the policy of the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown that all technology used to access the network will be used in a responsible, legal, and ethical manner. Failure to do so will result in the termination of network and e-mail privileges for the user.

Individual users of the network—students and adults—are responsible for their use of the network. The use of the network must be in support of education and research and must be consistent with academic actions of the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown School System and will be under the supervision of Diocesan Staff. Use of other organizations' networks or computing resources must comply with the rules appropriate for that network. Use of the network for any illegal or commercial activities is prohibited.

- ❖ A responsible network user will:
- ❖ Use language that is considered appropriate.
- ❖ Be polite.
- ❖ Send information that other users will not find offensive.
- ❖ Conform with copyright laws and always give credit to the author of the material used.
- ❖ Never reveal personal information about any user such as address, telephone number, credit card numbers, social security number, etc.
- ❖ Neither tamper with the system nor alter, delete or destroy any files or data that are not yours.

A responsible network user must be aware that:

- ❖ Use of the network and e-mail is a PRIVILEGE, not a RIGHT.
- ❖ The DAJ network is to be used only for educational purposes.
- ❖ E-mail is not guaranteed to be private.
- ❖ Identifying photos of students with their first and last names may not be used on a web site.
- ❖ It is important to log off the computer at the end of every session, so another user can not use your password.
- ❖ Violation of this policy will result in the possible loss of Internet privileges and/or disciplinary action pursuant to the Code of Ethics for Catholic Schools and/or prosecution under state and federal law.
- ❖ Persons issued an account are responsible for its use at all times.

**Acceptable Use Policy for Networks, Including the Internet**  
**Student and Parent/Guardian Signature Page**

It is the policy of the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown School System that students and staff will use all technology to access electronic (“computer”) networks, including the Internet and email, in a responsible, legal, and ethical manner. Failure to do so may result in the loss of network privileges for the user, disciplinary action under the Code of Ethics for Catholic Schools, or prosecution under federal or state law.

I have read and understand the Acceptable Use Policy for Diocesan Schools Internet use (Attachment 1). I understand that use of the Internet and e-mail in school is a privilege, not a right. Use of the Internet in school is designed strictly for educational purposes. I also understand that the DAJ is taking measures so that my child does not have access to any material deemed inappropriate, but because no filtering system is perfect, my child might gain access to an inappropriate site. I agree that I will not hold the DAJ responsible for any access by my child of any inappropriate materials acquired on the Internet.

By signing below, I give my child permission to work on the Internet and use e-mail for educational purposes.

**By not signing, I understand that my child will not be permitted to work on the Internet and use e-mail in school.**

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name (print): \_\_\_\_\_

**STUDENTS MUST SIGN THE STATEMENT BELOW REGARDING INTERNET USE:**

I understand and agree to adhere to the behaviors outlined in the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown Acceptable Use Policy. I understand that any violation of this policy may result in the loss of Internet and e-mail privileges, disciplinary action, or prosecution under federal or state law.

**I understand that if I do not sign this agreement, I will not be permitted to use the Internet and e-mail in school.**

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

Name (print): \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Parent/Guardian:

The Secretary of Education, pursuant to Section 9-923-A of the Public School Code, is authorized to purchase textbooks, instructional materials, and equipment, which may be loaned to all children residing in the Commonwealth who are enrolled in kindergarten through grade 12 in nonpublic and private schools. Our school is now in the process of requesting specific textbooks, materials and equipment to be loaned to your child(ren).

In order to participate in the program, a parent/guardian of each child attending the nonpublic or private school must individually request a loan of textbooks, instructional materials and equipment. The enclosed individual request form fulfills that requirement. Please sign the form, date it, and return it to the school immediately.

Thank you for your continued assistance and cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

Principal

---

### **Certificate of Individual Request**

#### **For Loan of Textbooks, Instructional Materials and Equipment**

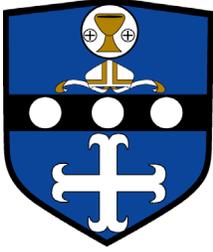
I hereby request the loan of textbooks, instructional materials and equipment in accordance with the Pennsylvania Public School Code of 1949 for my child(ren) attending

\_\_\_\_\_ School.

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

Signature of Parent or Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

This program is available only to Pennsylvania residents.



## Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown

### Guidelines for Use of Photographic

#### Images of Children and Youth

**The following guidelines will be adhered to and authorization form obtained when required, for use of photographic images of children and youth by diocesan Departments, Parishes, Schools, and Agencies.**

#### **For children/youth under 13 years of age:**

Parent permission (release form) **Must** be obtained for any photographic images of children **under 13 years of age** that are used for publicity, brochures, newsletter, web sites, etc.

#### **For children/youth between 13 and 18 years of age**

If photographic images being used are covering “news” or a specific event, the use of identifiable photographic images is allowed. Examples of this would include sports games/championships, Boy or Girl Scout Jamborees, award services, Youth Ministry Rallies/events, etc.

If identifiable photographic images are being used as a marketing or development item, permission (release form) must be obtained from the parents to use an identifiable picture. Examples of this would be flyers, brochures, web sites, etc., that would be advertising services, schools, programs, etc. In other words, if the project is “planned,” the youth are being used as “models” and the Photographic images are identifiable, then permission (release form) is needed.

If photographic images on a web site are merely to enhance it and are not being used to report news or specific events, then permission (release form) is needed to use identifiable photographic images.

Parental permission (release form) is needed to include any type of video (VHS or streaming) which shows children in a classroom doing “work” or answering questions – this video is considered an “educational record” and cannot be included without permission of parents.

The safest photographic images to use of youth over 13 for enhancement/marketing are “unidentifiable” photographic images – photographic images taken at a distance, from the side, from the “top”, large group activities, etc.

**NOTE: Duplicate this letter on Parish, Diocesan Office Department, or School Letterhead**

Authorization Form  
For Use of Child/Youth Name, Likeness, and/or Photographic Image

**This authorization form shall serve as parental permission for the use of name, likeness, and/or photographic image of a child/youth where such permission is required.**

I grant permission to

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*(Diocesan Office, Department, Parish, School)*

to use my child’s/youth’s name, likeness, and/or photographic image in the production of following:

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***(Above portion must be completed – DO NOT sign if blank.)***

I understand that if, for whatever reason, at any point in time, I decide to revoke this agreement, and I so notify the Diocesan Office, Department, Parish, or School in writing, all references to my child/youth (i.e., name, likeness, and/to photographic image) will no longer be used. I understand that web page references and web page photographic images will be removed within thirty (30) days of the written notification. [I understand that the Diocesan Office, Department, Parish, or School is not responsible for access to the internet information or downloads made by users using the web prior to this removal of web references (i.e., name, likeness, and/or photographic image).] I further understand that my child's/youth's name, likeness, and/or photographic image may continue to be used in any publication already printed or published prior to my revocation of the consent provided herein.

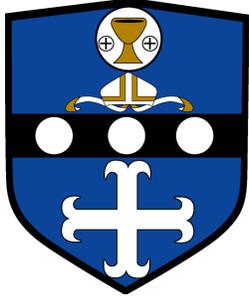
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Name of Child (Please Print) \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature of Parent or Legal Guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

*This Authorization Form to be kept on file until the student graduates from High School.*



# Diocese of Altoona- Johnstown *Education Office*

2713 W Chestnut Avenue  
Altoona, PA 16601  
Phone: 814-695-5579  
[www.dioceseaj.org](http://www.dioceseaj.org)

I give my consent for my child's Diocesan Elementary School to share the following information with a Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown Catholic High Schools:

- student name,
- parent/guardian name(s),
- address, telephone number(s),
- email address(es), and
- grade level

This information will be shared for the purposes of enhancing programming. I understand that this information will be treated as confidential and not be released to any other parties except those stated. I understand that participation in sharing this information is voluntary.

I am the parent or legal guardian of the student named and hereby fully release and discharge all Diocesan Schools, and their administrators, employees, and agents, from all liabilities arising out of or in connection with the above described demographic data sharing relative to the above stated organizations. I reserve the right to withdraw my consent at any time by submitting written notification to school administration.

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Child's Name Printed

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Parent's Name Printed

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Parent's Signature

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Date



# Saint Michael Catholic School

## ADMINISTRATION/FACULTY/STAFF

2021-2022

Pastor..... Very Rev. John D. Byrnes, JV, JCL

Principal .....Mrs. Rhonda Seymour

### HOMEROOM TEACHERS/FACULTY

Kindergarten .....Mrs. Amy Dietrich

Grade 1.....Mrs. Marjorie Frank

Grade 2.....Mrs. Emily George

Grade 3 .....Mrs. Susan Stevens

Grade 4 .....Mrs. Leigh Ann Terndrup

Grade 5.....Miss Ashley Schreyer

Grade 6 .....Miss Sarah Steinbugl

Grade 7 .....Mr. Cody Ebersole

Grade 8 .....Mrs. Gabrielle Lechak

Art ..... Mrs. Nadine Toth

Physical Education (K-8) .....SFU Exercise Physiology Students

School Secretary .....Mrs. Viki Krug

Librarian.....Mrs. Autumn Weakland/Parent Volunteers

Custodian .....Mr. Logan Dietrich

Head Cafeteria Worker ..... Mrs. Hannah Snyder

Assistant Cafeteria Worker ..... Mrs. Becky Seymour

**SUPPORT STAFF**

Guidance Counselor.....Mrs. Brandy Harpster  
Speech Therapist .....Mrs. Melanie Mergen  
Title 1 Reading.....Miss Abby Bono  
Act 89 Reading Specialist.....Mrs. Kate Statler  
Act 89 Math Specialist.....Mrs. Heather Hrivnak  
School Nurse .....Mrs. Jenny Damin

**TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

School .....(814)-472-9117  
Rectory.....(814) -472-8551  
School Website .....<http://www.st-michael-school.org>  
Basilica Website .....<https://www.basilicasm-loretto.org>

## **FOREWORD**

More than any other program of education sponsored by the church, the Catholic school has the opportunity and obligation to be unique, contemporary, and oriented to Christian service:

UNIQUE because it is distinguished by its commitment to the threefold purpose of Christian education (message, community, service) and by its total design and operation which foster the integration of religion with the rest of learning and living

CONTEMPORARY because it enables students to address with Christian insight the multiple problems which face individuals and society today

ORIENTED TO CHRISTIAN SERVICE because it helps students acquire skills, virtues, and habits of heart and mind required for effective service to others

All those involved in a Catholic school – parents, pastors, teachers, administrators, and students – must earnestly desire to make it a community of faith which is indeed “living, conscious, and active.”

TO TEACH AS JESUS DID (#106)

## **PARENTS’ PRAYER FOR CHILDREN**

O Jesus, lover of children, bestow your most precious graces on those whom you have confided to our care. Increase in them faith, hope, and charity. May your love form them in solid piety inspiring them with horror for sin, love of work, and an ardent desire of worthily receiving the sacraments. Preserve in them innocence and purity of heart, and if they should offend you, grant them the grace of prompt and sincere repentance.

Please watch over them day and night; protect them in all their ways. Grant that they may acquire the knowledge they need and that they may embrace the state of life to which You call them. Amen.

## **SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY/BELIEF STATEMENTS**

Saint Michael School is an integral part of a Catholic, Christian community that was instituted to promote and nurture the spiritual, intellectual, physical, and social development of each of its students. Attesting to the fundamental belief that each student, although unique, is created in the image and likeness of God, we accept the challenge to proclaim the Good News, exemplifying the teachings of Jesus Christ while providing an educational environment that meets the demands of society today.

We, at Saint Michael School, believe that a family atmosphere of respect, love, encouragement, reverence, and support is essential in fostering a confident, responsible, trustworthy, and secure student.

We believe that family support, interaction, and involvement are essential in holistically developing each student and are invaluable tools in a school environment.

We believe that each student's ideas, attitudes, and gifts must be revered to form a person who is aware of his/her dignity and responsibility as a Christian.

We believe that each student must be encouraged to live out his/her life in service to one another, to those in need, and to his/her community by participating in various service activities.

We believe that commitment to prayer, values, and the development of a Catholic identity are of primary importance allowing our students to exemplify the life of Christ.

We believe that all children need to feel safe, self-worth, loved, and valued above all other things.

We believe that our role as teachers is to guide each student to achieve his/her highest potential by employing a variety of teaching strategies, including the use of technology.

## **TUITION**

In order that Saint Michael School may continue to offer quality education, parents of school children are expected to assume their share of the responsibility for offsetting the total educational costs. (The Diocesan recommendation is that parents should be paying at least 60% of the total per pupil cost.) The parish at large, in addition to our fundraisers, assumes responsibility for the remainder.

The tuition scale is as follows:

One (1) Child – Gr. K-8 \$1,675.00 yearly

Two (2) Children – Gr. K-8 \$2,575.00 yearly

Three (3) Children – Gr. K-8 \$2,975 yearly

Payment for tuition may be made on a weekly, monthly, or quarterly basis, with quarters being determined by marking periods. If payments are made on a quarterly basis, the first payment is due by the first day of school. The second payment will be due in November, the third in January, and the fourth in March.

In addition to tuition, all families are expected to participate in all fundraising activities.

### **SIMPLE TUITION SOLUTIONS**

Simple Tuition Solutions (STS) has partnered with the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown and its affiliated schools to determine eligibility for tuition assistance. To complete the STS Financial Aid Application, go to: <https://app.simpletuitionsolutions.org/register>. Completion of an application through Simple Tuition Solutions is required to be considered for any diocesan or second century grants.

If you would like more information about the company, visit their website at [www.simpletuitionsolutions.org](http://www.simpletuitionsolutions.org).

Simple Tuition Solutions offers families who meet set qualifications the opportunity to apply for tuition assistance. ALL families are strongly encouraged to apply.

All tuition and fees are to be paid in full before final report cards are given, records transferred, or any eighth-grade student participates in graduation activities.

### **FEES**

Registration/Re-registration Fee – There is a \$40.00 non-refundable fee required for the first child and an additional \$10.00 per sibling for enrollment/re-enrollment of their child(ren) at Saint Michael School. Your child(ren) are not considered registered until this fee is paid.

Art Fee – A \$30.00 Art Fee per child is required to cover, in part, the cost of supplies necessary for art projects.

Technology Fee – A \$125.00 Technology Fee per child is required to cover, in part, the cost of providing technology updates, programs, software, and equipment.

Homework Book – Each student in Grades 1-8 is expected to purchase an official Homework Book from the school office. The cost of the book is \$5.00.

Supplies – Each grade level will receive a supply list at the end of the school year.  
Additional fees may be incurred in specific grades for composition books, journals, etc

## **FUNDRAISING**

Parents and students will be asked to participate in projects that help raise funds to support charitable projects and the school itself. Involvement in these projects is the students' financial contribution towards their education. Therefore, each family is to participate in ALL fundraisers throughout the school year. The principal must approve all fundraisers/collections.

There are 3 mandatory fundraisers that all families must participate. Below are the mandatory fundraisers...

- SCRIP – Each family must sell \$750.00 throughout the school year. If the family does not want to participate in SCRIP, there is an option of a \$100.00 buyout.
- Recreational Vehicle – Each family is required to sell tickets.
- Calendar – Each family is expected to sale 12 calendars.

## **ATHLETICS**

Any student participating in the sports program must have proof of personal insurance coverage. The school does not cover injuries sustained in sporting events or practice.

**Saint Michael School offers participation in the following athletic programs:**

Instructional Boys' and Girls' Basketball (Grades 1-4)

Pee Wee Boys' and Girls' Basketball (Grades 4-6)

Varsity Boys' and Girls' Basketball (Grades 6-8)

Cheerleading (Grades 1-8)

Sports Offerings through Bishop Carroll Catholic High School include participation in the following.

Girls' Volleyball

Boys' Football

Baseball

Girls' and Boys' Cross Country

Girls' and Boys' Track and Field

A student involved in an athletic program is expected to:

- Work in school to the best of his/her ability.
- Complete all homework assignments. Sports practice or games are NOT valid excuses for incomplete homework assignments.
- Follow the rules of good conduct at practices, games, as well as in school. Students are always expected to show respect and concern to teachers, staff members, coaches, referees, and other team members.
- Each student who participates in the Bishop Carroll Junior High Athletic Program MUST play on a Saint Michael School team if the same sport is available and recognize that his/her priority is with Saint Michael School including participation in practices and game attendance.
- If a student is absent from school or goes home early because of illness, he/she may not attend practice or a game that day. If a student is absent on Friday, he/she may not play in Saturday's game, but could play on Sunday.
- There will be a weekly process to determine whether the students participating in all sports are achieving the standards mentioned above. Students not achieving the standards mentioned above will be suspended from the team for a one-week period. This includes games and practices. At the end of the week the student will be reevaluated, and if the deficiency is corrected will be reinstated to the team.

**NOTE:** The suspension is designed so that the student will spend the time away from practice/games studying to improve his/her grades. Any student found participating in athletics during a suspension is permanently removed from the team.

The sports program is one of the many ways of building school and community spirit. By participating in the program, students have the privilege of representing Saint Michael School and the responsibility of showing good example and sportsmanship at all times.

**NOTE:** School related activities take precedence over extracurricular activities (ex. softball, baseball, dance class, etc.).

### **ATTENDANCE/ABSENCE**

We trust that you, as parents, are interested in the success of your child in school and are, therefore, aware that regular attendance is absolutely essential to successful schoolwork. Most subjects are taught in sequence, requiring the understanding of each concept in the order of its presentation. Habitual absenteeism creates a genuine hardship for students and teachers. Retention may be considered when a student's absence exceeds (20) days on the basis of excessive absenteeism. If a student is absent (35) days, it will be recommended that the student repeat the same grade the following year.

Parents are requested to call the school (472-9117) before 8:30 AM when their child is absent. This is done as a safety precaution. Failure to do so necessitates the school calling home to verify the absence.

A child's absence is excused in cases of illness, death of a family member, factors related to an accident, or other grave reasons only.

Whenever a child has been absent, he/she must present a dated excuse, which explains the reasons for the absence, the date(s) absent, and the signature of the parent/guardian. These notes must be kept on file at the school for one year. Failure to present the said excuse constitutes an illegal absence.

Prolonged absenteeism (more than three school days) due to illness requires a doctor's excuse.

Students are required to make up assignments missed through absences. A reasonable amount of time will be allowed to make up the work.

A student who is ill must report to the school office. No student can be dismissed without the permission of the principal or other designated personnel. In an emergency, every effort will be made to contact parents or persons listed on the emergency card. However, emergency personnel will be called if a child's physical well-being is deemed to be in danger.

Absences from school are discouraged, so every effort should be made to schedule a child's appointments after school hours.

If a student must be dismissed early, a note from the parent/guardian must be written and sent to the office for approval. The date, time and REASON for the dismissal must be included on it, as well as the name of the person picking up the student. After the Sign-Out Sheet in the school office is signed, the student is called to the office for dismissal.

If a student is tardy or is returning to school from an appointment, he/she must check in at the office upon arrival. After 15 tardies, a doctor excuse is required.

If your child is absent, missed assignments and homework may be sent home with a sibling or can be picked up in the office between 2:00 to 3:00 pm only. (Please call ahead and let us know if you intend to pick up the child's work so it can be in the office when you arrive.)

If at all possible, vacations should be taken during the summer months. However, if it is necessary to schedule a vacation during the school year, please be aware of the following:

No homework will be sent home before or during a vacation. Work is to be completed after the student returns to school.

If a student is on vacation during standardized testing, the tests will not be made up.

## **CALENDAR**

At the beginning of each month, parents will receive a listing of important events, meetings, days off, etc. This information is sent home with the youngest child in the family or can be downloaded from the school website <http://www.st-michael-school.org> or from the basilica website <https://www.basilicasm-loretto.org>. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to check online or with the student for communications from the school.

Scheduled vacation periods will be announced at the beginning of each school year. Saint Michael School follows the same calendar as other schools within the Penn Cambria School District as closely as possible. It follows the requirement for 180 school days according to Pennsylvania School Law.

Only the phone numbers that parents list on emergency procedure cards in September will be entered into our SCHOOLREACH data base. This communication system will be used to inform parents of cancellations, delays, early dismissals, general announcements, etc.

If school is cancelled or delayed because of inclement weather, there will also be an announcement on the local (Altoona/Johnstown) TV stations. Unless otherwise stated, Saint Michael School follows the same schedule as Penn Cambria. If Penn Cambria cancels or delays, we are also canceled or delayed.

## **CARE OF PROPERTY**

Each student is expected to share in the task of keeping our school property and grounds clean. Each one must assume responsibility for the facilities, books, and equipment he/she uses, and for any damage that occurs while using these.

Gum is not permitted because of the damage it has caused in books, furniture, clothes, floors, etc.

Deliberate destruction of any school property is considered a serious matter and may lead to suspension/expulsion. Families will be held financially responsible for any deliberate damage.

## **CHAIN OF COMMAND**

Any questions, concerns, problems, or suggestions regarding Saint Michael School or school activities should be addressed to the principal.

Any questions or problems regarding a student's work should first be addressed to the child's teacher. If satisfaction is not received, an appointment may be made with the principal. Only in extreme cases should a situation be taken to the pastor or the Diocesan Education Office.

## **CHANGE OF ADDRESS/TELEPHONE NUMBER**

If parents change their addresses or telephone number, they are asked to notify the school immediately. This is important in case the administration has to contact you in an emergency and to keep our records accurate.

## **SAFE2SAY SOMETHING**

Our students often are aware of the problems their peers are facing, so we must empower them to know the danger signs and give them the tools to help each other with the assistance of trained and caring adults. As you know, most conversations are taking place on social media, therefore it is critical that we teach our students to be looking out for one another as these digital conversations are taking place. S2SS teaches them what to look for in text, video, and photos while empowering them to act quickly to help a fellow student.

S2SS is a lifesaving and changing school safety program that teaches students, educators, and administrators how to:

- recognize the signs and signals of individuals who may be at risk of hurting themselves or others
- anonymously report this information through the S2SS app, website, or 24/7 Crisis Center Hotline

For more information on S2SS please visit: <https://www.safe2saypa.org/>

## **DRESS CODE**

Saint Michael School is a private, Catholic school and as such, maintains the right to establish a policy of dress for its students. The dress code is intended to promote a sense of belonging and to foster an environment conducive to learning. Students learn the importance of following established policies and coming appropriately attired for specific places and occasions. It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to see that their child adheres to the dress code.

### **GIRLS**

The uniform consists of a skirt or jumper, navy or khaki dress slacks, vest, navy, or khaki knee length shorts, knit shirt, blouse, sweater, socks, and shoes as described below:

- Green plaid jumper/blouse
- Green plaid skirt/navy vest/blouse
- Navy or khaki slacks/blouse/navy vest

- Navy or khaki knee length shorts/knit shirt or blouse
- The length of uniform skirts and jumpers is to be modest, touching the top of the knee (no shorter than one inch above the knee).
- Dark colored (navy or black) shorts are to be worn under their skirts and jumpers
- Navy/Khaki dress slacks are not permitted to have rivets, external patches, oversized or zippered pockets. No cargo pants are to be worn. This includes Dickies brand pants. The dress pants should not have bell bottoms or ragged edges. Faded slacks, corduroys, stretch pants and jeans are not permitted. Excessive bagginess or form-fitting pants are unacceptable. The above stipulations also apply to shorts.
- Blouses are to be solid white, oxford, or broadcloth with a pointed, button down or Peter Pan collar. Knit shirt (long or short sleeved) must have a collar and no emblem other than the Saint Michael School logo (provided by the uniform supplier). Knit shirts and blouses are light blue, navy, or white ONLY. Blouses and knit shirts must be completely tucked in and the waistband visible at all times. Turtlenecks are not permitted.
- Cardigan sweaters (without hoods) and uniform vests are to be solid navy blue. Sweatshirts/hoodies are not part of the school uniform. Official sweatshirts are acceptable.
- Dress crew type or knee socks are to be solid navy blue or white. Low cut/no-show or Argyle socks are not permitted. Socks must be at least two inches above the shoes. (Girls may wear NAVY or WHITE tights during the cooler months).
- Solid colored (navy, brown, black, or beige) dress shoes including boat shoes loafers free of design or bling, which are practical and safe for the school environment, are to be worn. They may not be opened backed or open toed or have a measurement of more than 2 inches in combined height of sole and heel (no skinny heels are permitted). Students who wear boots to school in the winter must bring sneakers (gym days) or dress shoes to wear during the day.
- Body glitter is not permitted. Make up (grades 6-8) must be natural in appearance and not deemed excessive by school personnel. Only clear nail polish is acceptable.
- No body piercings (with the exception of ear lobes) or visible tattoos are permitted.
- Earrings should be small, non-dangling, and no more than two pairs may be worn. Hoops and ear clips/cartilage piercings are not permitted. No more than one necklace, one ring, or one bracelet may be worn at a time. Chokers are not permitted.
- Hair style is expected to be reasonable. If a style is deemed inappropriate for a Catholic school student, parents will be notified with the expectation that it will be changed. Hair coloring which distracts from a uniform appearance is not appropriate. Students are to keep their hair its natural color. Hair accessories should be simple and match the school uniform. Lavish, over-sized bows, and novelty hair bands are NOT permitted.
- An extra pair of sneakers must be brought to school for gym class. Students must wear gym uniforms. No aerosol cans or bottles of deodorant or cologne are permitted.

## BOYS

The uniform consists of slacks, knee length shorts, dress shirt or knit shirt, sweater, socks, and shoes as described:

- Navy/Khaki dress slacks are not permitted to have rivets, external patches, oversized or zippered pockets. No cargo pants are to be worn. This includes Dickies brand pants. The dress pants should not have bell bottoms or ragged edges. Faded slacks, corduroys, stretch pants and jeans are not permitted. Pants should properly fit the student and not be worn hanging below the waistline or sitting on hips. Excessive bagginess or form-fitting pants are unacceptable. A belt is required for Grades 4-8. The above stipulations also apply to shorts.
- Dress shirts or knit shirts must be white, navy, or light blue and made of oxford or broadcloth material. Shirts are to be completely tucked in with the waistband or belt visible. Turtlenecks are not permitted.
- Solid color navy blue sweaters or vests may be worn. Sweaters may be cardigan or pullover style (without hoods). Sweatshirts/hoodies are not part of the school uniform, with the exception of the official crewneck sweatshirt.
- Socks are to be dress, crew, or ankle style in white, black, or navy blue and must be at least 2 inches above the shoes. Low cut/no-show or Argyle socks are not permitted.
- Solid colored (navy, brown, black, or beige) dress shoes including boat shoes/loafers free of design, which are practical and safe for the school environment are to be worn. Army type
- boots or work boots are not permitted. Students who wear boots to school in the winter must bring shoes to wear during the school day.
- Earrings and chokers are not permitted. No more than one necklace, one ring, or one bracelet may be worn at a time.
- An extra pair of sneakers must be brought to school for gym class. Students must wear gym uniforms. No aerosol cans or bottles of deodorant or cologne are permitted.
- Hair style is expected to be reasonable and should not cover the eyes or shirt collar. If a style is deemed inappropriate for a Catholic school student, parents will be notified with the expectation that it be changed. Hair coloring which distracts from a uniform appearance is not appropriate. Students are to keep their hair its natural color.
- No body piercings or visible tattoos are permitted.

## **ALL STUDENTS**

**NO JEANS (DENIMS OF ANY KIND OR COLOR), JEAN JACKETS, HOODIES, T-SHIRTS, SWEATSHIRTS, OR OUTDOOR CLOTHING MAY BE WORN IN SCHOOL. HATS/BANDANAS ARE NOT PERMITTED.**

If an emergency arises whereby the child will not be in uniform, a parent is asked to send a note to the school office stating the reason for this. JEANS (denims) may NOT be worn in place of the uniform. Dress clothes are to be worn.

## **UNIFORM COMPLIANCE**

Parents are expected and encouraged to assist in the student's full compliance and cooperation with the dress code.

Parents will be notified of dress code infractions. Repeated violations of the dress regulations will result in detention.

In all cases, the principal reserves the right to determine and curtail unacceptable articles of dress and hairstyle. Any violation of the dress code will result in a call to parents to correct the situation. Repeated infractions of the dress code will result in detention for the student.

## **KINDERGARTEN DRESS POLICY**

Kindergarten students are not required to wear uniforms; however, they are required to adhere to ALL other dress code policies. Comfortable, size-appropriate play clothes and sneakers are acceptable.

## **UNIFORM PURCHASES**

School uniforms are supplied through Schoolbelles. Order forms are available in the school office.

**Schoolbelles Headquarters 4747 West 160th Street Cleveland, OH 44135**

**Toll Free Phone Orders 1-888-637-3037 Online Orders: [schoolbelles.com](http://schoolbelles.com)**

Gym uniforms are supplied by Janet Farabaugh. Place your order by contacting her directly at (814)674-5327 or (814)931-2247.

## **GYM CLASSES**

Students in Grades 1 – 8 must wear gym uniforms to school on their designated physical education class day. All physical education uniform components must be purchased from Janet Farabaugh located at 402 Beck Road, Loretto.

## **DRESS DOWN DAYS**

On designated Dress Down days, students are permitted to wear appropriate clothing in lieu of their uniform. School appropriate means that students may wear shorts (first day of school – October 1st) that are below their fingertips when standing straight and tall. Basketball length shorts are preferred. No short shorts, cut offs, spandex, leggings, or yoga pants may be worn. Capris, jeans, loose-fitting athletic pants may be worn; however, they cannot have any frayed edges, rips, or holes.

Shirts should be neat and appropriate for school. Bare midriffs, spaghetti straps, tank tops, and fishnet shirts are not permitted.

Sneakers may be worn. Flip Flops, clogs, Crocs, sandals, shoes with wheels and/or lights, open-toed or open-backed shoes, or shoes with holes are not permitted. Socks must be worn with all footwear. If wearing slip on shoes, no show socks or footies must be worn with them.

## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

An emergency form completed by a parent is kept on file in the school office for each student. Please notify the office immediately with address and telephone changes. Failure to reach a parent is considered child endangerment. Children and Youth Services (CYS) will be notified.

Parents will be notified of emergencies as soon as possible. A parent must provide transportation of students who are declared sufficiently ill or injured after he/she receives notification. The principal, school secretary, or authorized teacher will make notification. We do not have health room facilities; therefore, we cannot keep a child all day if he/she is ill.

Positive identification must be made of any adult coming to the school for a student. The parent should report directly to the office in order to remove a student from the school.

Parents should keep the principal and school nurse informed concerning any problem relating to the child's physical well-being. Communicable diseases must be reported to the principal.

## **FIRE DRILL/EVACUATION**

Fire drills are held monthly so that students are prepared to act quickly in case of a real fire. Students in classrooms at the front end of the building leave the building via the front door, proceed down the steps, turn right and continue to the “STOP” sign at St. Mary’s Street. Students at the other end leave the building via the back door and walk along the right side of Our Lady of Loretto Community Hall. The students in the classrooms downstairs evacuate the building using the exit closest to the recess equipment bins, cross the playground, and continue to the right side of Our Lady of Loretto Community Hall. Occasionally, entrances are blocked to train children to think quickly and change their route of evacuation. If a fire drill occurs during the lunch period, students leave by the nearest exit and proceed to the end of the blacktop area to await further instructions.

During a fire drill, students are expected to move quickly and with concern for the safety of all and to REMAIN SILENT AT ALL TIMES.

## **HOME-SCHOOL ASSOCIATION**

The Saint Michael Home-School Association is in existence to help parents and teachers better understand their role and responsibilities in the education process and to work together cooperatively for the benefit of the students. The Association provides moral and financial support to the school. All parents/guardians of Saint Michael School students are members of the association and are encouraged to take part in the meetings and activities. The association provides a wonderful way to get to know the parents of your child’s classmates.

Quarterly meetings – September, November, January, and March - are held the second Thursday of the designated month at 6:30 pm in the school cafeteria. If, at any time, you have a concern about some aspect of the school program or you wish to present a new idea, contact a member of the Executive Committee (see [www.st-michael-school.org](http://www.st-michael-school.org) or [www.basilicasm-loretto.org](http://www.basilicasm-loretto.org) for names and telephone numbers) or attend the quarterly meetings.

## **HOMEWORK AND MAKEUP WORK**

Homework is the extension of the learning that takes place in school. All the learning that the children need or want cannot take place in the few hours they spend in school.

Parents can encourage home study in these ways:

- Provide the child with a quiet place to study.
- Insist on regular homework time each day free from distraction but be equally careful to provide for playtime after school.
- Make sure he/she brings home assignments clearly written.

- Remember that homework is ASSIGNED TO THE CHILD, NOT TO YOU. Check to see that work assigned to the child is complete. SIGN THE HOMEWORK BOOK NIGHTLY (Grades 1-8).
- Check with the teacher when assignments or school policies are not clear.
- Encourage your child to do his/her best as far as accuracy, neatness, and arrangement are concerned.
- All assignments in grades 4-8 are to be completed in their best cursive writing with proper heading, and in pencil (NO PENS).
- Encourage your child to read books at home and to collect materials that will help him/her in school.

The approximate time allotted for homework for an average child is as follows:

|            |       |                  |
|------------|-------|------------------|
| Grades 1-3 | ..... | 15 to 30 minutes |
| Grades 4-6 | ..... | 30 to 60 minutes |
| Grades 7-8 | ..... | 60 to 90 minutes |

Homework is not usually given over a long weekend or holiday. Make-up work and incomplete assignments are the exception. Upper grades occasionally have projects and assignments to be completed over the weekend.

Long-range assignments should be planned out, eliminating the necessity of last-minute rushing or completion of the assignment.

**A STUDENT WHO IS ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR ANY REASON IS RESPONSIBLE FOR MAKING UP ANY ASSIGNMENTS THAT ARE MISSED.**

### **INCLEMENT WEATHER**

When school is cancelled or delayed because of inclement weather, an announcement will be made on local radio/TV stations (both Altoona and Johnstown). If Penn Cambria School District cancels or delays, we are automatically cancelled or delayed. The decision to cancel or delay is made by the Penn Cambria School District.

If the school day begins and it is necessary to cancel classes during the day because of the weather, buses will be provided, and an announcement will be made on the same local stations regarding the exact time of dismissal.

In addition, the SCHOOLREACH communication system will be used to inform parents of cancellations, delays, early dismissals, general announcements, etc. Phone numbers that

parents listed on the back of the emergency procedure cards in September will be entered into our SCHOOLREACH data base and will be used to contact parents/guardians/sitters, etc.

Please listen to messages. When you call the school, you are defeating the purpose of the notification system

## **BREAKFAST PROGRAM**

There is a Grab n' Go Breakfast program offered daily for the students. Students will go directly to the cafeteria when they arrive at the school. Breakfast will include milk, juice, fruit, and a healthy grain option daily. The cost is \$1.25 per child per day, reduced price of .30 and free to those who qualify. In addition to the main entrée, a breakfast cereal option will also be offered.

## **PLAYGROUND REGULATIONS**

Areas of play on the blacktop are designated for the students. The children are allowed time before or after lunch for play. Play is a good time for socialization; therefore, attitudes of cooperation, concern, and fairness are expected. ROUGH PLAY has no place in a Christian environment. Children are not permitted over the bank near the black top.

Recess for Grades K-4 ends at 11:55 and for Grades 5-8 at 11:35. When the teacher announces the end of recess, students are to line up in silence. They are expected to enter the building in an orderly manner without talking.

## **PROGRESS REPORTS**

The philosophy of the school is reflected in a special manner through its grading system. Grading is a method of evaluating progress which is based on the Christian concept of the dignity of the child. This also includes the philosophy that children, not subjects, are being taught. In order that each child might realize the fullness of his/her ability, the teachers employ varying methods of instruction to assist each child in achieving his/her fullest potential.

Teachers in Grades 4-8 send home formal deficiency notices midway through each marking period to those students not working to their ability. If a student is in danger of failure in any subject, the parent/guardian is informed immediately.

Parents can also access the PowerSchool Portal to view their children's schedules, grades, and attendance records at any time. Parents can receive email updates daily, weekly, or monthly.

The percentage equivalents are based on an "average" child's ability. An individualized grading system may be implemented to meet the academic needs of a student at the discretion of parents, teacher, and principal.

In addition to the letter grade, teachers will provide comments, as needed, especially in the subject areas of math and reading.

Kindergarten: Kindergarteners receive a specialized report card designed to reflect the attainment and progress of specific skills.

## **CONDUCT GRADING SYSTEM**

Each student will be given a conduct grade each marking period. Conduct grades are defined as follows:

### **A... Excellent**

- Excellent self-control
- Rarely needs correction; accepts correction graciously; improves after correction  
Displays respectful attitude toward teachers, fellow students, and property of others
- Stays on task and is attentive during class

### **B... Good**

- Usually displays self-control
- Occasionally needs correction; accepts correction graciously; noticeable improvement after correction; usually displays a respectful attitude toward teacher, fellow students, and property of others
- Usually on task and is attentive during class

### **C... Fair**

- Self-control needs improvement
- Needs correction often and fails to accept correction graciously Attitude toward teachers, fellow students, and property of others needs improvement
- Often inattentive during class

### **D... Unsatisfactory**

- Frequently displays a lack of self-control; therefore, a disturbing influence during class
- Frequently needs correction; fails to accept correction graciously; little or no improvement after correction
- Frequently displays disrespectful attitude toward teachers, fellow students, and property of others
- Frequently inattentive during class

+’s signifies an improvement in that particular level

- ‘s signifies a need to improve in that particular area

High Honors are given to students attaining all “A’s” and an “A” in Conduct. Students who achieve all “A’s” and “B’s” and an “A” or “B” in conduct receive Honor Roll status.

## **RELIGION PROGRAM**

A very important aspect of Catholic education is to assist parents with instilling in children a love, appreciation, and understanding of their religion.

Teachers of religion and the parish priest attempt to lead the children in the Catholic faith through example, the Scriptures, and basic teachings of the Church, with the help of visual aids and modern teaching techniques. Parents are expected to reinforce what is taught in school through family prayer, faith-sharing, and discussion of lessons in the students’ religion books.

At the beginning of each school day, the entire school community joins together in prayer to ask God’s blessing on the day. The spirit of prayer continues throughout the day during designated times.

The entire student body attends Mass at least once a week.

Classroom celebrations/prayer services are held periodically, in conjunction with the religion lessons.

Opportunities for the reception of the sacrament of Reconciliation are provided during Advent and Lent. We encourage families to take advantage of the regularly scheduled times for the sacrament of Reconciliation (see parish bulletin) so that children form the habit of receiving this sacrament on their own time.

Students attend Stations of the Cross, devotions in honor of our Blessed Mother, and Adoration.

## **R.I.C.H. PROGRAM/FAITH FAMILIES**

The R.I.C.H. (Respect, Integrity, Courage, Humility) Program is a diocesan initiative to promote, enrich, and nurture the faith formation of our students throughout our Catholic elementary schools. Attesting to the fundamental belief that although unique, every student is created in the image and likeness of God, to be Respected, treated with Integrity, have the Courage to make the right decision, and demonstrate Humility with each act of kindness.

A calendar of events including lessons that coincide with Respect, Integrity, Courage, and Humility that will be implemented into our religion curriculum and our monthly “Faith Family” gatherings. The curriculum has been written by each quadrant in the Altoona-Johnstown Diocese and shared with each respective school. Aspects of our no bullying curriculum are also integrated throughout each lesson.

On monthly Faith Family Gathering Days ALL STUDENTS MUST WEAR THEIR “CHRIST IS RICH IN ME” T-SHIRTS AND FOLLOW POLICY FOR DRESS DOWN DAYS (see page 27).

## **HOURS/SCHEDULE**

**SMS School Hours 7:30-3:00**

**Bus students arrive at school between 7:50 and 8:25 AM.**

Walkers should arrive **NO EARLIER than 8:10 AM** unless previous arrangements have been made with the principal.

For safety purposes, the front and back doors will always be locked. All students are expected to enter the building via the bus doors located at the right-hand corner, back entrance of the building. Walkers will leave the building via the upstairs, rear exit and dismiss to parents along Saint Elizabeth Street.

## **TRANSFER PROCEDURE**

When a student is transferring to another school, parents are asked to notify the principal in advance of the transfer date. The following information should be given:

- Name and grade of child
- Reason of transfer
- New address if transfer is due to change of residence
- Name and address, including zip code, of the school your child will attend
- Last date your child will attend this school

Written permission to transfer academic records is needed in order to transfer records. Health records are only transferable within the confines of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. No records will be transferred if a family has an unreconciled tuition balance.

Parents must sign a “Record Release Form” giving St. Michael School permission to forward academic, health, or psychological records to the new school.

## **USE OF TELEPHONE**

Students will be permitted to use the school telephone during the day only in cases of emergency. Students may not use the phone to call home for items that they are responsible for on a regular basis (i.e. gym clothes, books, homework, lunch).

When a student's lunch is forgotten at home, he/she will need to purchase a school lunch on credit.

## **PARENTS AND VISITORS**

Parents are welcomed and encouraged to visit the school. However, to ensure the safety of the students, parents and visitors are required to stop in the school office and sign in before going anywhere in the building. Parents and visitors are to use the front door. Press the buzzer for admittance to the building.

When picking up a student during school hours, you, or the person you have designated are required to stop in the school office to sign out the student. Office personnel will send for the student. Parents and other adults who regularly pick up a student at dismissal time are requested to wait outside the building for a student. Parents may not take another student home without the written permission of that child's parent/guardian.

## **VOLUNTEERS**

The 2020-2021 school year will be a little different. We will limit the number of volunteers who enter the building. Volunteers will be based on necessity.

Parent VOLUNTEERS are vital to our school program! Each year we need help in the following areas:

- Cafeteria workers/Recess monitors
- Library aides
- Fundraising activities
- Field trip chaperones

## **VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS**

All parent volunteers are required to complete the Diocesan online “Youth Protection Program” and acquire appropriate clearances. The youth protection program is a one-hour self-guided training course provided by the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown. This mandatory training is required for all employees and volunteers who have ongoing contact with minors. If you intend to volunteer in any capacity or chaperone field trips, you must complete the training.

To access the site, go to [www.dioceseaj.org](http://www.dioceseaj.org). Scroll down approximately half page, click on the “Youth Protection” button. Then click on the “Register and Begin Training” button located in the box titled “Youth Protection Training Information.” Before the training begins, you will have to complete and pay (\$10) for a National Background Check that is required by the diocese. This site will guide you through the training. Once you have successfully completed the training, print the Certificate of Completion, and turn it into the school office. Be sure to keep your password in a safe place so that you may access the site in the future.

In addition, you must print off, complete, and return all necessary documentation to the school office to comply. We will then forward ALL your paperwork to the diocesan office as one complete packet. This includes your personal reference form. You will find the paperwork you need to complete the diocesan website under the heading “Report Child Abuse.” Click on “Youth Protection Paperwork.” Please see the enclosed informational page as it provides a “snapshot” of the screen that details all the required paperwork.

Also, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania requires all employees and volunteers to complete and provide results for the following:

- PA Child Abuse Clearance (Act 151) [www.dhs.state.pa.us](http://www.dhs.state.pa.us)
- PA Criminal History Check (Act 34) <https://epatch.state.pa.us>
- Arrest/Conviction Report Form (Act 24)
- Mandated Reporter Training (3 Hour Training). Can be completed Incrementally. Training can be accessed from the diocesan website on the “Youth Protection” button.
- Clearances are FREE for volunteers, except for the National Background Check (\$10) as required by the diocese. When applying for your clearances, choose “Volunteer.”

## **WELLNESS POLICY**

Saint Michael School recognizes the gospel value of the sanctity of life. We attempt to foster in all our students a respect for the gift of health. We also realize that it is our task as educators to educate our students in body, mind, and spirit. This impels us to recognize the value of proper nutrition and physical activity in the development of each child entrusted to our care. Student wellness is related to well-being, growth, development, and the ability to learn. Saint Michael School is committed to providing an environment that promotes student wellness, nutrition education, and physical activity.

The healthy school environment will assist the students to learn and make good choices regarding proper nutrition and physical activity. Good health fosters student attendance and educational achievement.

## **BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS**

Students are permitted to bring a simple, healthy birthday treat to school. These treats are for the students in the child's homeroom only and distributed at lunchtime. Additional treats are not necessary for faculty and staff members. All birthday treats must come to the school individually wrapped.

Party invitations may be submitted to the teacher and then distributed at school if one of the following is true:

- 1) Every child in the homeroom/grade receives an invitation
- 2) All the boys/girls in a child's homeroom/grade receive an invitation

## **DISCIPLINE POLICY**

Discipline is an important aspect of the Catholic school philosophy. Saint Michael Catholic School students (and parents) have the responsibility to know and follow all school regulations. It is not enough that the children merely conform externally to the rules; we expect them to gradually become self-disciplined. We maintain that the child is responsible for his/her actions.

### **Disciplinary measures should:**

- Be used to indicate a difference between serious and less serious violations.
- Be applied as fairly as possible.
- Avoid preferential treatment.
- And be determined if individual or group discipline is warranted by the teacher.

We intend to be firm, consistent, caring and fair. In some cases, class punishments are warranted. Students are encouraged to develop responsibility as a member of a group. Each classroom teacher establishes their individual discipline guidelines and consequences according to the age of the children in their classroom. General rules of respect for each other and school property remain the same across every grade level.

## **Saint Michael Catholic School will deal with said discipline code infractions as follows:**

- **In the event of any discipline issue the teacher and/or principal may:**
  - Discuss the matter with the student and permit another chance.
  - Impose a written punishment or assign a service to be completed.
  - Issue a formal warning for inappropriate behavior.
  - Take away specific privileges.
  - Issue an after-school detention.
  - Impose an in-school or out-of-school suspension.

### **DETENTION –**

Students and parents will be informed of the commitment to serve their detention through a letter. Detentions will be scheduled as needed and will be held after school. Students and their parents must make necessary arrangements to be picked up after detention. Any serious infraction could result in an automatic detention at the discretion of any faculty member or by the principal. Detentions may be issued for (but not limited to) the following:

- Showing disrespect for teachers or other adults by word or by action.
- Showing disrespect for the rights of other students or their property.
- Showing a lack of respect for school or church property.
- Leaving the school premises without written permission of parents.
- Foul language.
- No homework, incomplete assignments, unprepared for class
- Cheating (copying or giving answers on a test, copying another's homework or class assignment).
- Disobeying of classroom or school rules.

### **SUSPENSIONS**

These procedures apply to infractions of a serious nature, as determined by the school. Parents/Guardians of the student will be notified in writing of the suspension as soon as possible. Suspensions will be implemented in -school and/or out-of-school at the discretion of the school administration. Student will be given a full day of assignments to be completed in the office or a place apart from class or at home. **The principal determines length of suspension.**

Following suspension, the school principal will conference with parents or guardians. **Students removed from the school community will not be readmitted before a parent conference has been conducted and all other conditions for re-admittance have been satisfied.** Suspended students will understand and agree to assume responsibility for future

behavior. Where appropriate, a student will be referred to the school counselor and an outside counselor if appropriate. Signed agreement of parents and a written report of the suspension will be filed in the student's record. Suspensions may be issued for (but not limited to) the following: Student is given full day of assignments to be completed in office or place apart from class. Student eats alone and is deprived of recess.

## **EXPULSION**

These may be issued for (but not limited to) the following: Arson, bomb threat, possession of a weapon, numerous suspensions Weapons: Weapons and replicas of weapons are forbidden on the school premises. For the purpose of this policy, premise means the school, church, grounds, school buses or any premise, grounds or vehicles used for official school purposes. Weapons shall include, but not be limited to, any knife, cutting tool or instrument, firearm, shotgun or any instrument represented as such, which is capable of inflicting bodily harm. Possession or handling of any object/instrument potentially dangerous or harmful to persons represents a serious misunderstanding of the concept of a faith community. Such possessions or handling is strictly forbidden.

Persons violating this policy will be liable to severe disciplinary procedures, including the possibility of prosecution under the Pennsylvania Criminal Code. The incident will be investigated, and the parents will be notified. In accordance with the Pennsylvania Crime Code, sec. 912, the local police will be notified, and the student will be immediately suspended into the custody of a parent or guardian. The Diocesan Director of Education will be notified. As a result of the investigation, the student is liable to further disciplinary action and/or expulsion. Act 26 Section 1304-A (PA) requires all schools to provide future schools with notification of suspension or expulsion from any public or private school of this Commonwealth or any other state for an act or offense involving weapons, alcohol or drugs, or for the willful infliction of injury to another person or for any act of violence committed on school property.

**Any incident which even remotely is considered a threat, will result in the immediate suspension of the student.** A formal evaluation of the student will be required. The specific elements of the evaluation will be determined by the school. In all cases, the written evaluation provided to the school must state that the student does not pose a threat to him or herself or any member of the school community. Exceptional cases are handled on an individual basis at the discretion of the Pastor, Principal, and Director of Education.

**The following List are some examples of infractions that can result in suspension or expulsion depending on the severity of the infraction:**

- Fighting
- Forgery of parent/guardians signature
- Stealing
- Causing bodily harm
- Obscenity
- False fire alarm
- Smoking or any possession/use of tobacco, alcohol, or drugs
- Inappropriate use of the internet
- Any behavior considered seriously unacceptable by the building administrator
- Bullying
- Destruction of property

### **RIGHT TO AMEND HANDBOOK**

This school or the principal retains the right to amend this handbook for just cause. Parents will be notified if changes are made.

### **THANK YOU**

**Thank you for taking the time to read this handbook and for familiarizing yourself with and abiding by the policies and procedures of Saint Michael School.**

