

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

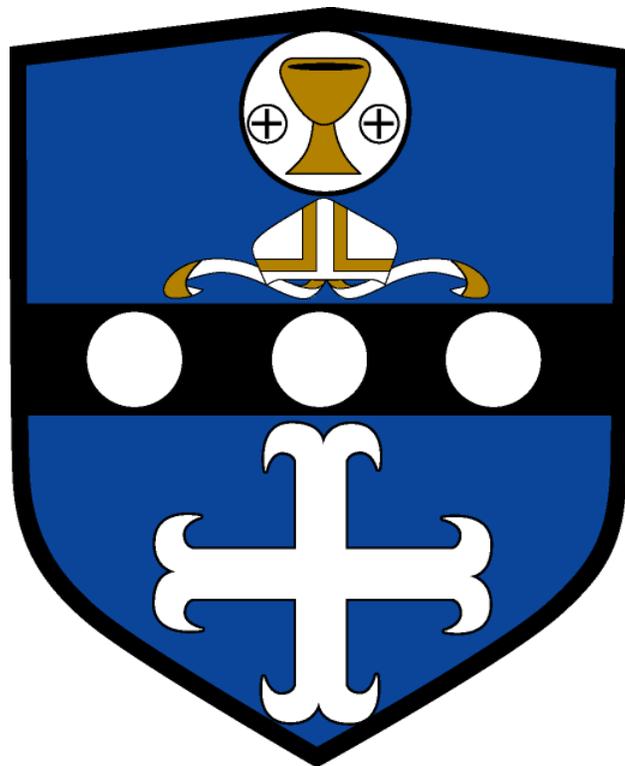


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MISSION STATEMENT

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 .

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:

	Example of Infraction Category			
	Bus-specific	Minor	Serious	Major
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 Insubordination, Defiant behavior, Verbal harassment, Sexual harassment, Misuse of	Theft, Vandalism Possession/misuse of lighters, matches, Possession of weapons and/or “look-a-likes”, 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.
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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 (2nd 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 21st 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

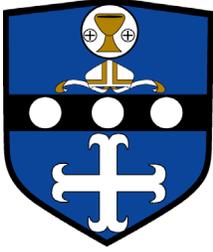
I hereby request the loan of textbooks, instructional materials and equipment in accordance with the Pennsylvania Public School Code of 1949 for my child(ren) attending

_____ 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

(Diocesan Office, Department, Parish, School)

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

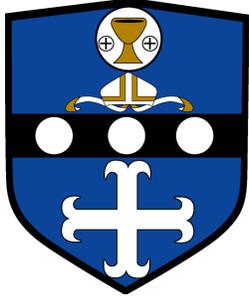
(Above portion must be completed – DO NOT sign if blank.)

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.

Name of Child (Please Print) _____ Date of Birth _____

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

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.

Child's Name Printed

Parent's Name Printed

Parent's Signature

Date

WELCOME

Dear Parents,

We are very pleased that you have chosen our school for your children's education. Our commitment is to provide them a quality Catholic Education. We look forward to working with you and your children in presenting an atmosphere where Catholic Christian values are lived and encouraged.

Our goal in publishing this handbook is to inform you about our policies so that we may operate smoothly and successfully during the school year. Please review these policies with your children. The Administration of Saint Matthew Catholic School reserves the right to update our policies as necessary. Parents and students will be informed of these new revisions or additions.

On the last page is a form that you are requested to sign, stating that you have read the handbook and reviewed the policies with your children. Please sign and return to school no later than September 14th.

We are extremely thankful for and anticipate your continued support and cooperation.

The Administration and Faculty of Saint Matthew Catholic School

INTRODUCTION

Saint Matthew Catholic School is a Catholic elementary school which was established in 1869. Classes are offered for grades Kindergarten through Sixth Grade. In 1995 a three-year old and a four-year old preschool was established. The school is one of approximately 15 elementary schools in the Altoona- Johnstown Diocese. Children from all denominations are welcome at Saint Matthew Catholic School. The faculty at Saint Matthew Catholic School consists of teachers who are certified by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The School Council, consisting of members of the school and parish communities, is an advisory committee dedicated to promoting the philosophy of the school. The Council, established to assist in the operation of the school, meets once per month during the school year.

MISSION STATEMENT

St. Matthew Catholic School serves its students and their families by providing a safe and positive learning environment in which to focus on academic excellence and convey the truths and beliefs of the Catholic Church. We recognize that each child is unique and strive to empower them to develop their God-given talents and abilities.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

We believe that:

- All children have access to love, learning, and safety
- Individual attention is an essential component to a student's academic and spiritual success
- Academic excellence is achieved through creative lessons and current technology
- Religion and Faith are something to be lived every day, not just on Sunday
- Prayer and Liturgical Celebration are the cornerstones of our students' faith-journey
- Communication and cooperation between home and school are the hallmarks of our small school community
- Understanding and appreciation of diversity are central to peace and harmony
- Guiding our students to become active and productive members of our parish and society is essential

POLICIES

Attendance Policy – approved July 2015

1. Pennsylvania school law requires a written excuse on the day a student returns from an absence. If this does not *occur within three days of the absence, the absence will be recorded as unexcused. After three accumulated unexcused absences from school, the matter will be referred to the principal.*
2. Students absent for more than three consecutive days are required to submit a physician's excuse upon their return to school. Failure to do so will result in those days being recorded as unexcused and the matter will be referred to the principal.
3. A letter of notification will be sent to the parents/guardians of all students who have accumulated five (5) days of absences (excused or unexcused). Phone calls will be made after ten (10) days of absences.
4. Upon accumulation of 15 days of absences without a physician's excuse during a school year, parents will be required to submit a physician's excuse for each subsequent absence. Failure to do so will result in those days being recorded as unexcused and the matter will be referred to the principal. Parents will be sent a letter notifying them when student absences have reached this level.

Absences from School

Parents are asked to call the school office by 9:00 a.m. to report that a child will be absent that day. A message may be left on our voice mail. Our attempt to receive information on the child is to ensure their safety. For extended illnesses, please call each day your child is absent from school unless you have already informed us about the extended illness.

Homework requests for students must be made by 11:00 a.m. of the day you request the work. This allows time for the teacher to prepare materials, which may be picked up in the office.

It is our belief that there is no substitute for a student being present in the classroom to learn and process the information being taught. Parents are asked to make every effort to have their children in school and on time as much as possible. Not only do absences and tardiness affect the progress and performance of the individual student, it also disrupts the classroom routine.

It is the student's and parent's responsibility to obtain and complete missed work when absent or tardy. After school help from the teacher to cover missed work is to be requested by the parent or student as soon as possible after the return of the student. For extended absences, there may be additional work that the teacher could not foresee, for which the student will be responsible for upon return to school. Assignments are to be completed as soon as possible after the student has returned to school.

Family Vacations

Family vacations are not encouraged during the school year unless there is no alternative. If it is known that a child will be absent from school for a period of time that extends three school days or longer, the parents must complete and submit vacation request form and turn in written notification to the teacher/s one week in advance of the anticipated absence. It is the child's responsibility to obtain advanced homework assignments, complete the

work for the period of absence, and submit upon their return to school. **If you families travels outside the state, please refer to the PA Department of health guideline, regarding quarantine and the returning to school.**

Tardiness

Students arriving after **8:00 a.m.** are tardy. Parents must sign in at the office if arriving late. We will not mark your child tardy if he/she comes to school late due to a doctor/dentist appointment. We do ask, however, that upon returning to school, you provide an excuse from the doctor's office indicating that you are returning from that appointment. You must come to the office to sign your child in.

Also, it is helpful to our cook for you to let us know your child's lunch plans. When signing your child in, please let the secretary know their lunch plans.

Tardiness issues will be addressed by the principal.

Bell Schedule

7:50 am	Students may enter building and report to their classroom
7:50-8:00	First bell - Morning preparation - Students arriving after this bell are Tardy.
8:00-8:10	Second bell – Prayer, Pledge of Allegiance, Announcements
8:10 am	Classes Begin
11:30 am	Lunch
12:15 pm	Recess ends
12:30 pm	Afternoon classes begin
2:30 pm	Dismissal preparation bell
2:42 pm	Dismissal

Walkers are dismissed first and are to immediately leave the premises. Bus riders are dismissed second, followed by car riders. Car riders will remain inside the building until their ride is here. Parents picking up their children after school should park in the church parking lot and enter the gathering space to pick up their child. This is for the safety of your children.

For the safety of your children, please inform the teacher in writing if your child will be leaving school other than their usual way, listed below under "Changes in Transportation."

Bus Transportation

Transportation is provided by the school district in which you reside. Parents should contact the Transportation Office of their school district to determine bus stops and pick up and drop off times. Our students must adhere to the rules of conduct each school district sets for student behavior on the bus. If a student is reported by the bus driver three times for disregarding the rules, the student is subject to losing busing privileges. **Please refer to the St. Matthew Health Plan for bus transportation guideline.**

Bus riders always go home by bus unless the school receives a **written note informing the school otherwise.** Riders are not permitted to ride any bus but the one they are assigned.

Kindergarten and 1st Graders **must** be met by an adult at the stop or the child will not be permitted to leave the bus.

Pupils must obey the bus driver at all times while riding the bus.

Pupils should not attempt to enter or exit the bus before it makes a complete stop.

Pupils must always be seated while the bus is in motion and must not leave their seat until the bus has made a complete stop.

Bus riders may not take non-bus riders home due to lack of space.

Changes in Transportation

Please **notify us in writing** if your child is leaving school in a way that is **different** from what is listed on your transportation form. For example, if your child is riding home in a car with another student, we would need a **written permission note** allowing us to dismiss your child with another parent. If your child is riding with "Aunt Sally," who does not normally provide transportation, but is listed on the transportation form, we do **not** need a note.

Classroom Diagnostic Tool (CDT) Testing

The purpose of the CDT is to provide information that will help guide instruction by providing to teachers a snapshot of students' stages of learning in Math and Reading, allowing them to plan targeted instruction. The online test will be completed by students in grades three through six.

The CDT is an untimed test which consists of 48-60 multiple-choice questions with no preparation needed. It will provide teachers with immediate access to detailed diagnostic reports that are designed to help the teachers better understand the strengths and needs of each student. The individual student report will set differentiated learning goals. Student scores will not be shared with the state or anyone other than the parent/guardian.

Conferences

General conferences are held twice a year, in November and March. Additional conferences may be requested by either parents or teachers. Parents are encouraged to contact their child's teacher or principal if they have a question or concern regarding academic achievement or behavior. Phone messages may be left for the teachers between 7:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. All teachers are available for conferences from 2:45 - 3:00 p.m. daily. Other

times need to be scheduled with the teacher. **Due to Covid-19 circumstances procedures for conferences may be adjusted if needed.**

Discipline Policy

The Discipline Policy of Saint Matthew Catholic School is intended to develop the student's sense of self-discipline and personal responsibility. We intend to emphasize the positive rather than the negative, by encouraging the child to replace unacceptable behavior with acceptable behavior.

The following rules and actions that will be taken should be discussed with your child so that they are aware of the possible consequences of their actions. The principal and teachers will familiarize the students with the Discipline Policy at the beginning of each year.

Classroom/School Rules (Minor Infractions)

1. Be respectful of others.
2. Obey safety rules.
3. Be respectful of school property and property of others.
4. Walk quietly through the school. No running, pushing shoving or shouting.
5. No gum chewing in school, on buses, or on field trips.
6. No food is to be consumed in the classroom except when directed by the teacher.
7. No toys or electronic items should be brought to school unless directed by the principal or teacher
8. **All Students must follow mask guidelines set forth by the Altoona/Johnstown Diocese, PDE, and DOH.**
9. All other rules set by classroom teacher and/or principal and made known to the student.

Cafeteria Rules

10. Follow direction of cafeteria personnel and volunteers.
11. Speak quietly while getting milk and at lunch table.
12. Keep eating areas clean.

Recess Rules

13. Remain in designated playground boundaries.
14. Display good sportsmanship.
15. Use playground equipment for the purpose that was intended.

Assembly Rules

16. Enter/exit quietly.
17. Applaud appropriately
18. No talking during performance.
19. Be respectful of guest speakers/performers.

Behavior Modification Action Plan for Minor Infractions

If a student has difficulty complying with the expected behavior listed above the principal and/or teacher will initiate the Behavior Modification Action Plan for Minor Infractions. The steps of this plan are listed below.

- First Offense - Teacher and/or principal will discuss behavior with student. Student will be made aware that the behavior is unacceptable and acceptable behavior will be discussed.

- Second Offense - Student will be requested to complete a Behavior Modification Form with the guidance of their parents. This form must be returned on the following school day.
- Third offense. - Parents will be contacted and student's behavior will be discussed.
- Fourth Offense - Behavior Modification Action Plan for Serious Infractions, as listed below, will be initiated.

Serious Infractions

20. Fighting or other conduct that imposes danger to the well-being of others.
21. Swearing or the use of obscene language or gestures.
22. Defacing or damaging school property. Parents will be asked to pay for damages done to school property by their children.
23. Open defiance or disrespect of the authority of any teacher or person having authority over the student.
24. Making threats to do harm to other students, teachers, or anyone within the school community.
25. Any other infraction deemed serious by the principal.

Behavior Modification Action Plan for Serious Infractions

- First Offense - Parents notified. One day After School Detention (2:30 - 3:30 p.m. Parents will arrange transportation home.)
- Second Offense - Parents notified. One day In School Suspension
- Third Offense - Parents notified. One day Out of School Suspension
- Fourth Offense - If the unacceptable behavior has not been corrected at this point, a conference with the principal, teacher and parents will be held to discuss the future of the student.

Severe Infractions

Students guilty of the following infractions may be subject to expulsion

26. Possession and/or drinking of alcoholic beverages on parish property, at school related activities, or enroute to or from school.
27. The unauthorized possession, using, taking, selling or giving of any drug or medication on parish grounds, at school related activities or enroute to or from school.
28. Possession of a dangerous object on parish property, at school related activities or enroute to or from school.
“Dangerous objects: instruments include but are not limited to guns, explosives, knives, or other instruments capable of doing bodily harm. Persons violating this policy also risk the possibility of prosecution under the Pennsylvania Criminal Code.”
29. Possession of cigarettes or tobacco products and/or smoking on parish property, at school related activities or enroute to or from school.
30. Any other infraction deemed severe enough by the principal to consider expulsion.

Dress Code

Dress Code (revised July 2018)

Students in Kindergarten through Grade 6 are required to wear the school uniform at all times, including field trips, except when informed otherwise.

*Students are required to wear mask of their choice as long as the mask does not display inappropriate language or graphics.

**All Dress Code items are available for purchase through Land's End or Schoolbelles (Please Note: there may be other companies out there, but those uniforms are not approved as part of the dress code.)*

St. Matthew T-shirts, sweatshirts, and gym uniforms are available through Exposed Grafix in Tyrone.

Boys:

Slacks - Navy blue dress slacks. No jeans, skinny pants, cargo pants, or faded slacks are permitted.

Shorts – (Aug.- Oct. 15 & Apr. 15 - June only) Navy blue walking shorts. No cargo shorts are permitted.

Shirts - White long or short sleeved button down dress shirt, polo shirt, or turtleneck (no logos). Shirts must be tucked in. If undershirts are worn, they must be white and tucked in.

St. Matthew T-shirts or polo shirts, red or navy, may no longer be worn to school.

Ties – Solid navy blue or black neckties are required for Mass days. They may be worn on other days.

Socks – Solid navy, black, or white ankle or crew socks. No low cut or no show socks.

Shoes-Leather-like loafers, docksiders, boat shoes, dress shoe, or leather tie shoes (No sneaker (only on gym days) flip flops, sandals or boots – Must be leather like. NO canvas material shoes are permitted.

Girls:

Jumper – Plaid uniform jumper available only from Schoolbelles or Land's End.

Skirt – Plaid uniform skirt available only from Schoolbelles or Land's End (grades 4-6 only).

Shorts - (Aug.- Oct. 15 & Apr. 15 - June only) Navy blue walking shorts. No cargo shorts are permitted.

Blouses - White long or short sleeved blouse with Peter Pan collar, polo shirt, or turtleneck (no logos). Shirts and blouses must be tucked in. If undershirts are worn, they must be white and tucked in.

St. Matthew T-shirts or polo shirts, red or navy, may no longer be worn to school.

Slacks - Navy blue dress slacks. No jeans, skinny pants, or faded slacks are permitted.

Socks – Solid navy or white ankle or knee socks. No low cut or no show socks. Girls may also wear navy or white tights.

Hair Accessories – must coordinate with uniform colors: uniform plaid, navy, red, white, or black only. Accessories must be plain with no attachments.

Make-up, excessive jewelry, dangling earrings, fake nails, and nail polish are not permitted.

Shoes- Leather-like loafers, docksiders, boat shoes or leather flats with strap. Open heeled or opened toe shoes are NOT permitted. No sneakers (only on gym day) flip flops, sandals, or boots are permitted. Must be leather like. No canvas material shoes are permitted.

In the winter months, students may wear boots to school, but must change into uniform shoes upon arrival.

Sweaters - Saint Matthew School ¾ zip sweatshirts or sweaters (solid navy, red, or white) may be worn (Gym sweatshirt is only to be worn on gym days). No logos, pictures, fancy trim, stripes, etc. are permitted on sweatshirts and sweaters. No hoodies are to be worn during the day, but may be worn to and from school.

Haircuts: All hair, boys and girls, must be neat and clean. No part of the head may be shaved. Hair may not be dyed an unusual color. The boys' hair length must not exceed the neckline, hang over the shirt collar, or over the eyes. Please encourage your child to maintain conservative haircuts.

Required Uniform for Mass - When students attend Mass they are required to be dressed as follows:

Girls: Jumper or skirt (No shorts or slacks) and any style uniform blouse, mask any color

Boys: Slacks (No shorts) and button-down shirt with solid navy or black tie, mask any color

A Uniform Exchange where clothing items can be traded is available to all families. Call the school for more details.

Gym Uniform – Available only through Exposed Grafix– Students are to come to school dressed in gym uniform every Friday. The uniform consists of a navy T-shirt, navy nylon shorts and navy sweatpants, with school logo in white. The nylon shorts can be worn Aug.- Oct.15 and Apr. 15 - June. An optional sweatshirt may also be worn (St. Matthew School navy, red, or white). Any sturdy sneaker may be worn on gym day with the exception of light-up sneakers.

Dress Down Days – Students will have a dress down day once per month. Shorts are permitted from August through October 15 and April 15 through June. Jeans, skirts, pants are considered acceptable attire. Shorts and skirts must be knee-length. Students should not wear frayed clothes or clothes with holes in them. Designs and writing on clothes should be appropriate to school. Students are not permitted to wear anything that sends an inappropriate message or conflicts with what we are teaching (for example, shirts that advertise beer or cigarettes are NOT permitted). Tank tops, sleeveless shirts and spaghetti straps are also not permitted. Students must wear socks or tights and all shoes have to be closed – no crocs, sandals, flip flops, or other open or unsafe footwear.

Occasionally special theme days will be celebrated. On those days, students are to wear the requested attire. Of course, uniforms are always appropriate.

Uniform Violation - In the case of a student not complying with the dress code, a uniform violation notice will be sent home by the teacher or principal. If the student continues to make the same violation, parents will need to bring the uniform items to school so the student can comply with the dress code. Other consequences will be determined by teacher or principal.

Emergency Closings

Saint Matthew Catholic School follows the Tyrone Area School District regarding cancellations, delays or early dismissals due to inclement weather. In the case of a delay, closing or early dismissal, Power School notifications will be sent out through phone call, text message, and/or email. Also please listen to radio station WTRN when these decisions are suspected. Please develop a plan for your child to follow when an early dismissal occurs. When school is cancelled, school activities are also cancelled. There is no preschool in the event of a two hour delay, however, preschool children who normally attend that day may come at 9:50 am for After School Care.

Emergency Contacts

In September, parents complete an Emergency Form which includes phone numbers of additional emergency contacts if parents cannot be reached. It is imperative that the information is kept accurate and up to date. When information changes, particularly cell phone numbers, please contact the school office immediately.

Family Communication Folder

Each student will be given a St. Matthew Catholic School Communication folder at the beginning of the year. This is only to be used to carry information to and from the school office. Check with your child each day about any communications that may be in the folder. Most communications will be sent home on Thursday of each week. Please read the information carefully and return any forms or payments to the school via this folder. Each student will also have a second St. Matthew School folder to be used separately for transporting homework, class work, and graded papers.

Grading

The following Diocesan Grading Guide is used throughout grades 1 through 6.

A --- 93 - 100 Excellent grade level work. Contributes generously to class discussion. Does more work than is required for the class. Assignments are always completed on time and well done.

B --- 85 - 92. Good grade level work. Contributes to class discussions. Does more work than is required for the average student. Assignments are always completed on time.

C --- 76 - 84. Does satisfactory work for the grade level. Assignments are completed on time or made up with a minimum of pressure on the part of the teacher.

D --- 70 - 75. Does work below grade level standards. Assignments sometimes are neglected. A great deal of pressure is needed to get the child to produce.

F --- Below 70. Does unsatisfactory work. Assignments are often neglected and carelessly done. Does not respond even under pressure.

O (Outstanding), V (Very Good), S (Satisfactory), I (Improving), N (Needs improvement) – Computer, Music, Physical Education, Art, and Penmanship, Spanish.

Students in grades 4-6 are placed on the Honor Roll each marking period according to the following criteria:

High Honor Roll - Student must attain an average of 95-100% in each major subject area and at least a Satisfactory grade in Computer, Music, Physical Education, and Art.

Honor Roll – Students must attain an average of 90-94% in each major subject area and at least a Satisfactory grade in Computer, Music, Physical Education, and Art.

Penmanship will not be considered when determining High Honor Roll or Honor Roll status.

Honor Roll certificates are awarded each quarter.

Health Services

Nursing services are provided by the Tyrone Area School District. Screenings of all students are performed periodically and parents are notified if a more thorough exam is necessary.

If a student becomes ill or injured, he/she should make this known to the teacher. The school nurse will be contacted if necessary. If it is necessary to send the student home, the parents or an emergency contact will be called. Transportation home must be arranged by the parents.

Immunizations and Physicals

PreK 3 and 4, Kindergarten, and Sixth Graders need to have a physical. PreK 3 and 4 and Kindergarten must provide immunization records to the school on or before the first day of school in order to attend. Kindergarten and 3rd Grade Students must have dental exams. Physical and dental forms are available in the school office.

Homework

Homework is an essential part of the learning process and must be completed regularly. It reinforces what has been taught and develops independent study habits. All students receive homework. The length of time spent on homework depends on students' grade level and ability. In general, the following time limits should apply:

Grades 1 and 2 --- 10 to 20 minutes

Grades 3 and 4 --- 30 to 40 minutes

Grades 5 and 6 --- 50 to 60 minutes

Students in Grades 1-6 will receive an assignment book from the school. Please refer to this book to check daily assignments. Parents are encouraged to initial each day's assignment page upon completion.

If your child consistently has no homework, the parent should contact the teacher. The same is true if the child is experiencing undue difficulty in completing the assignments. At times, homework consists of studying with no written work required. If a child is absent, notify the office by 9:00 a.m. and make arrangements to pick up their work.

Leaving School Property

If there is a need for a student to leave, i.e. a doctor's appointment, a note from the parent is required and arrangements must be made to pick up the student. If a child becomes sick during the school day, parents must arrange to have the child picked up at school. We will not permit a student to walk home during the middle of the day. Parents or guardians must sign students in and out of school at the office.

Library/Media Center

Students will visit the library once a week to borrow books. Books circulate for one week. Reference books may be checked out during the school day for use in the classroom, but must be returned at 2:30 p.m.

Students are responsible for returning books in good condition and paying to replace any book that is lost or damaged. Students with overdue books will not be permitted to borrow books until the book is returned or replaced.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions library modifications will be implemented following state guideline.

Accelerated Reader

The Accelerated Reader (AR) program is used to motivate students to read and check their comprehension. The program recommends students read at their own individual reading levels. Parents are also encouraged to read books to their children as part of the AR program. Students take quizzes on the books they have read and earn points. Classroom teachers may require students to earn a specific number of points towards their grade.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions modifications of classroom books will be implemented and instructed by classroom teachers.

Liturgies/Prayer Services

Throughout the school year, K-6 students participate either in a Prayer Service or Children's Liturgy on a weekly basis. Each grade level takes turns preparing these services. Parents are welcome to attend.

Lunch Program

Effect August 2020 Saint Matthew will not offer a Hot Lunch Program however milk will be available for purchase on a daily basis. Milk slips will be sent home in Thursdays communication folder, please include the completed slip and money in an envelope and return it to the school office by Monday morning. There will no longer be milk credits given. Please refer to the 2021-2022 Milk/Lunch guidelines.

Milk \$.40 (white—2 %, 1% or fat free, chocolate—1 %)

We discourage parents from bringing "fast food" to their child at lunch time.

As anticipated we intend to offer students special Friday lunches. Lunches will be offered at a reasonable cost to the parents. We plan to offer these lunches through local food establishments within the community.

Calendars, Menus, and School Memo

Calendars and Weekly Memos are sent home to keep parents and students informed of upcoming events and other information relative to the school schedule. Please read this information carefully and review with your child those topics that pertain to him/her.

Medications

For their safety, students requiring rescue inhalers for asthma or Epipens for severe allergic reactions (usually for bee stings or certain foods) are to keep those items in the school office. Written documentation is required from the parent or physician. Forms are available from the office. Please call St. Matthew Catholic School Office with any specific questions.

Parties

Individual classrooms may hold parties for special events approved by the principal. Birthday Parties will be limited to a snack and a drink and will be held at lunch time or 2:15 p.m. Please confirm a date with your child's teacher if you would like to send in items for a party. If parents are having a private party for their child's birthday outside of school, students are not permitted to distribute invitations at school unless all of your child's classmates are invited.

Problems...Concerns?

Parents are encouraged to report any problems or concerns to the principal and/or teacher immediately. We cannot solve a problem if we are not aware of it. Please address your concerns with your child's teacher first. If you are not satisfied, contact the principal.

Report Cards

Report cards are issued four times a year. Parents are asked to discuss the grades with the children. If there is any question about the grades, please contact the teacher. Please sign the report cards and return them promptly. Mid-quarter reports can be found through your account on PowerSchool.

School Calendar

Saint Matthew Catholic School maintains a school year of 180 days. A calendar for the school year will be published and distributed during the summer. The school follows the Tyrone Area School District calendar as closely as possible with a few exceptions to meet obligations with the Altoona - Johnstown Diocesan Calendar.

School Office Hours

The School Office can be reached at 684-3510 from 8:00 a.m. to approximately 3:30 p.m. After hours or when the office is unattended, please leave a message on our voice mail and your call will be returned as soon as possible. If there is an emergency, you may call the Church Office at 684-1480.

School Supplies

It is essential for the efficient running of a classroom for all children to be supplied with the appropriate materials. The school office sells most of the required items, i.e., tablets, pencils, pens, erasers, loose-leaf paper, composition books, etc. Teachers will supply parents with a list of supplies. Please supply your child with these items before school or purchase them during the first week of school from the office.

The office will not extend "credit" to students for school supplies. If it is essential for a student to have a particular item, the classroom teacher will provide the student with temporary supplies until the student can make a purchase.

Special Services

Guidance Counselor

The services of a Guidance Counselor are available to our school one day per week. All students are scheduled to meet with the counselor as a class. Individuals may be referred by the principal, parents, or teachers.

Reading - Title I

Reading instruction for students experiencing difficulties is provided by the Tyrone Area School District. Students are serviced at St. Matthew Catholic School. Parental permission is required for participation in this program.

School Psychologist

The School Psychologist is provided by the Tyrone Area School District on an as needed basis. Students may be recommended for testing by the principal, teachers, or parents. Parental permission is required for evaluation.

Speech

A Speech Therapist is available on an as needed basis. Students are evaluated and if they qualify, will be serviced at St. Matthew Catholic School. Parental permission is required for evaluation.

Tuition

The Tuition Plan for the 2021-2022 School Year is a fair and confidential program. The fee will be \$10,000 per child with many ways of reducing that amount. Balance sheets will be sent home monthly. Parents **must** be registered in an area Catholic Parish to receive a subsidy. Diocesan scholarships and Parish grants are available to reduce the cost of tuition. A contract for tuition will be negotiated yearly. If these scholarships and grants are not sufficient for a family, there is tuition assistance available from the parish. However, you must meet with Father Jozef to set up a tuition contract before the start of school or you will be responsible for the full amount of tuitions of \$10,000.

Fundraising

Each Kindergarten through 6th Grade school family is required to raise \$400 profit from the fundraisers or pay the balance by May 31st of each year. Each Preschool family is required to raise \$150 profit or pay the balance by May 31st. Families who have children enrolled in preschool and K-6 are required to raise just \$400. Purchasing Scrip all year round is fundraising while you shop. Family and friends can designate their Scrip purchases towards your family goal! Please refer to the Fundraising Handbook for more information regarding ways to easily meet this goal. **Any deficiency in your fundraising goal after May 31st will be added to your tuition balance.**

Delinquent Accounts:

The obligation of tuition payment is a very serious one for parents. It is essential for the financial vitality and stability of Saint Matthew Catholic School that these payments are made on time and remain current. Convenient payment options are available to best meet the needs of parents.

Families should contact the pastor or the school principal as soon as possible if circumstances have caused an overdue in payment so that the situation may be properly addressed. Any extended delinquency in payment without explanation will seriously jeopardize the continuing enrollment of the student at Saint Matthew Catholic School. Please avoid legal proceedings, remit your payment ON TIME.

Tuition Statements

- Tuition Statements will be sent through email by STS dependent on the payment schedule agreed to by the family and school pastor.
 - Parents are to be assured that each family's Saint Matthew Catholic School tuition statement is kept confidential, and the School in turn expects parents to keep their agreed upon terms confidential.
 - Payments will be deducted from the account provided based on the STS agreement. If you choose to send your payment to the school office, you must do so 5 days prior to the STS agreement date.

Delinquent Account – Current Year

- A family tuition payment is delinquent when it is more than thirty (30) calendar days behind its payment schedule.
- The following steps will be taken by the appropriate school administrative personnel in dealing with delinquencies:
 - The responsible person(s) for tuition payments shall be contacted by the STS Management Company via telephone and/or e-mail notifying them of the delinquency.
 - If there is a reason causing repeated delays or non-payment of tuition, the family should consult with the pastor or principal to make arrangements ***in writing*** for a payment plan. ***St. Matthew School and Parish are willing to work with anyone who is experiencing difficulty making payments.***
 - If the above does not result in payment, legal proceedings will be considered.

- Unless other arrangements are made, no child will be admitted to St. Matthew Catholic School if any of the preceding year's tuition or/and other fees have not been paid. Forwarding transcripts to another school may be delayed if there is delinquent tuition or/and any other fees on an account due.

Volunteers

Volunteers are needed to assist with fundraising in the cafeteria, on field trips, and at times, in the school. All volunteers must complete the following requirements issued by the state of Pennsylvania prior to volunteering in any capacity: Youth Protection Program, PA Child Abuse Clearance (Act 151), PA Criminal History Check (Act 34), Arrest/Conviction Report Form (Act 24 – available in the office), Volunteer Application Form – available in the office, and FBI Fingerprinting (Act 114) only if you have not been a Pennsylvania resident for the past 10 years. Information packets with directions for completing these requirements are currently in the school office but will be available online later this year.

In order to track your volunteer hours, please use the “Volunteer Commitment Worksheet” provided by the office. Complete the date, activity, and time and have the supervisor of that activity sign the form. Completed worksheets should be turned in to the school office. If you do not submit forms your hours cannot be recorded.

Field Trips

When a field trip takes place during normal school hours and transportation is provided, the following is in effect:

- A field trip is any designated activity where students will be leaving school property. Field trips always have a purpose that is related to your child's education.
- Students must have a field trip permission forms signed by parent/guardian to attend the field trip.
- Students must ride the bus to and from the field trip location. Students are not permitted to be transported by parents, relatives, school employees, etc. No permission will be given for any transportation other than that provided for the field trip. Students should arrive at school in the morning as usual and will be dismissed at regular dismissal time.
- If there is room on the bus, parents who are chaperoning the trip should ride the bus. In situations where the bus is full, parents may want to carpool to the field trip site. Students may not ride with parents.
- Please read and keep a record of any special information we give you regarding a specific trip. (For example, if a student needs to bring lunches or other special items on the trip or if they need to wear certain types of clothing or shoes.
- Students are not permitted to bring cell phones or other electronic devices. An adequate means of communication will be available if needed.

These policies are in place to insure a safe, well-organized trip. The safety of the students is our first priority.

In a situation where a trip may be scheduled that goes beyond school hours, we will make sure you receive information at the time regarding transportation.

The school will determine the number of chaperones needed for the trip. Only adults who have complied with all volunteer requirements (See page 12) will be permitted to chaperone.

During any field trip, you can be assured that the teachers and/or staff members have a plan in place to account for the children. They plan ahead to make sure everyone will have a great time. Thank you for entrusting your children to us.

Parents, please sign below, detach and return to school by August 30th. Thank you.

We (I) _____ have read the Saint Matthew Catholic School
Parent's Name(s)

Parent-Student Handbook and understand the policies presented. These policies were reviewed with our children.

Parents signature _____ Date _____

Saint Matthew Catholic School 814-684-3510

A Tyrone Tradition Since 1869

1105 Cameron Avenue

Tyrone, PA 16686

August 22, 2021

Dear Parents of New Registrants:

Thank you for enrolling your child(ren) at St. Matthew Catholic School for the 2021-2022 school year. We are pleased that you will be an important part of the life of our parish and school community throughout the school year.

As we prepare for the new school year, I am writing to remind you of the primary reason for our very existence as a Catholic school in the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown. As a Catholic school our primary purpose is to form students in the values of Jesus Christ and the teaching of the Catholic Church. While we maintain an outstanding academic program, we have the responsibility to make certain that Catholic values and moral integrity permeate every facet of our school's programs. In full partnership with you and your family, we are committed to upholding these principles which underlie our presence in the community as a Catholic school.

This Memorandum of Understanding will be included in the handbook and it will be necessary for you to complete it for your child(ren) enrolled in our school. You are required to complete and sign one form for all of your enrolled children at this time and return it to my office as soon as possible. This is necessary for the registration process to be completed.

Again, thank you for enrolling your child(ren) at St. Matthew Catholic School and for giving us the opportunity to help you educate your child(ren) spiritually, academically, emotionally and physically.

Sincerely,

Father Jozef Kovacic

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

As a parent/guardian of a student in a Catholic school, I understand, affirm, and support the following:

1. The primary purpose of a Catholic school education is to form students in the values of Jesus Christ and the teachings of the Catholic Church.
2. Catholic schools are distinctive religious education institutions operated as programs of the Catholic Church; they are not private schools but are administered and supported by the sponsoring parish(es) or the diocese.
3. Attending a Catholic school is a privilege, not a right.
4. While academic excellence and involvement in extracurricular activity (i.e. sports, clubs, etc.) are important, fidelity to the Catholic identity of the school is the fundamental priority.
5. The school and its administration have the responsibility to ensure that Catholic values and moral integrity permeate every facet of the school's life and activity.
6. In all questions involving faith, morals, faith teaching, and Church law, the final determination rests with the diocesan bishop.

As a parent/guardian desiring to enroll my child in a Catholic school, I accept this Memorandum of Understanding. I pledge support for the Catholic identity and mission of this school and by enrolling my child I commit myself to uphold all the principles and policies that govern a Catholic school.

Father

Mother

Guardian

Printed

Printed

Printed

Signature

Signature

Signature

Student(s) Names (Please print)

School

Date _____

Each registration must be accompanied by a signed and dated Memorandum of Understanding.