



Educating hearts and minds in the Holy Cross tradition since 1854

SAINT JOSEPH GRADE SCHOOL PARENT-STUDENT HANDBOOK

MAKING GOD KNOWN, LOVED, AND SERVED

Updated August 15, 2026

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The Saint Joseph Church pastor and the Saint Joseph Grade School principal are the final recourse and reserve the right to amend this handbook.

PARENT-TEACHER PARTNERSHIP

As a Saint Joseph family, we unite our roles as parents and educators to nurture a positive, mission-centered, and faith-filled school community always seeking what helps each child to flourish in heart and mind.

*In addition to supporting and following the school's rules, policies, and discipline protocols outlined in this Parent-Student Handbook, we expect parents and teachers to partner with one another through **clear communication**, **shared commitment**, and **respectful collaboration**.*

CLEAR COMMUNICATION

Maintaining open and timely dialogue that supports each child's academic success and overall well-being.

Role	Responsibilities
Parents	• Share pertinent information about your child – especially factors or changes that may impact their learning or well-being – in a timely manner so teachers are able to respond with care and support.
Teachers	• Communicate academic and behavioral progress, successes, and concerns in a timely and thoughtful manner so that parents can remain active participants in their child's development.
Together	I. Approach conversations with a presumption of goodwill and best intentions. II. Follow appropriate channels when addressing concerns, beginning with direct communication before involving administration. III. Respond to communication in a timely manner, recognizing that at times a phone call or in-person conversation may be most effective.

SHARED COMMITMENT

Participating fully in the life of the school in support of its mission and Catholic identity.

Role	Responsibilities
Parents	• Be present to your child's formative experiences, such as conferences and sacramental preparation, and contribute to the life of the school through volunteering, events, and community activities.
Teachers	• Keep parents informed about learning goals, classroom experiences, and meaningful ways to support growth at home, while inviting participation in the life of the classroom.

Together	IV. Offer our time, gifts, and presence in service of a community where every child can thrive.
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RESPECTFUL COLLABORATION

Honoring the dignity of the distinct, complementary roles we hold in the formation of our students.

Role	Responsibilities
Parents	• Recognize teachers as trained professionals who bring valuable perspective and experience to your child's growth. • Nurture consistent daily habits at home that foster readiness for learning.
Teachers	• Honor parents as the primary educators, and walk alongside them in a spirit of partnership and care.
Together	V. Approach interactions with curiosity and a sincere desire to understand, working in a spirit of partnership, problem-solving, and shared growth.

MISSION STATEMENT & PHILOSOPHY

MISSION STATEMENT

We are a family committed to formation in the Holy Cross Catholic tradition and academic excellence. Through the education of hearts and minds, we make God known, loved, and served.

PHILOSOPHY

Our mission at Saint Joseph Grade School is borne out of the spirituality of the tradition of our founders and faithful stewards: the Congregation of Holy Cross. Five core pillars – **mind, heart, zeal, family, and hope** – define a Holy Cross education and ultimately shape our students.

A Holy Cross education begins with a rigorous and full development of the *mind*. Yet, the essence of our mission is the cultivation of the *heart* as a source of wisdom and direction that guides students towards a life lived in full communion with Christ. *Zeal* is the passion that inspires students to act upon and share what they have learned with the world beyond the classroom. In the words of Blessed Basil Moreau, founder of the Congregation of Holy Cross, “Zeal is the great desire to make God known, loved, and served, and thus bring knowledge of salvation to others.” The theme of *family*, modeled by the Holy Family, is woven throughout the charism of Holy Cross, and recognized as foundational to the educational mission at Saint Joseph Grade School. Embracing Christian community as the context for formation, values such as hospitality, compassion, gentleness, and patience characterize our relationships with one another.

The pillars of *mind, heart, zeal, and family* would have little distinctive Christian purpose apart from *hope* in the cross of Christ – faith in God’s promise of the kingdom. For this reason, all of our learning at Saint Joseph Grade School is a glimpse into something deeper, beyond the here and now. Trusting in God’s power, love, and goodness, we believe there is no failure the Lord’s love cannot reverse. It was Moreau’s hope for his students, and our hope for ours, that they persevere in faith and their journeys back to the Father even long after they graduate.

Our Patron, Saint Joseph, keeps us grounded in the Holy Cross charisms. As a worker, spouse, and Jesus’s earthly father, Saint Joseph was not only one of Christ’s first teachers, but also an active participant in God’s plan to bring Christ into the world for the purpose of human salvation through Jesus’s death and resurrection. To that end, Saint Joseph bears witness to what it means to make God known, loved, and served through our everyday work, relationships, and humble “Yes” to God’s plans for our lives. He is what we ultimately aspire to be as a Saint Joseph family: an earthly link to heavenly hope.

EDUCATING MINDS

The educational community of Saint Joseph Grade School believes in academic excellence for each child within the framework of the child's potential. It is for this reason that heavy emphasis is placed on teaching high-priority standards, with opportunities for enrichment through special classes in art, physical education, music, technology, Spanish in grades K-8, and the opportunity to utilize facilities in the Media Center.

In addition, the school provides learning disabilities diagnosis, as well as speech therapy, through the local public school corporation. Through the efforts of our resource teachers we employ a Multi-Tiered Support System (MTSS) to provide additional support for all children who exhibit the need for instructional and behavioral support beyond the whole group classroom setting. We also have a counselor available to help address students' emotional and social needs.

EDUCATING HEARTS

Religion is the foundation for a healthy school environment. Through our faith we learn to trust and love each other and offer a helping hand when necessary. Adult examples from parents, teachers, and priests are a must for success in preparing our children for a life of scholarship, discipleship, and servant leadership. Students prepare for and participate in a weekly Mass that is designed to promote an understanding and appreciation of our participation in the Eucharist.

The Virtues in Practice program is taught at all grade levels to foster in students the strengths and dispositions that will help them to grow in holiness and fulfill their vocations as saints. We ask that all SJGS families participate in the Virtues in Practice program by engaging in "home projects" that reinforce the practicing of each virtue of the month at home.

Preparation for the Sacraments of First Eucharist and Reconciliation is structured through daily religion classes and parent involvement. Confirmation preparation is at the seventh grade and eighth grade levels through a cooperative effort that involves students, sponsors, parents, classroom teachers, outside speakers, and the parish priests.

Commitment to service-learning activities at all levels is part of the total religious education program. Our practices of Christian service culminate in the eighth grade Summons Project. In this project, each student discerns his/her own unique gifts and talents and explores local ministries and organizations where these gifts can be of service. Students make a commitment to serve each month, then engage in individual reflections and meet with a mentor teacher to further discuss these experiences as encounters with Christ.

ATTENDANCE

While there will always be unexpected interruptions to achieving perfect attendance at school, Saint Joseph Grade School administration and teachers believe that being present in the classroom for in-person instruction is essential to students' success and development. Although many assignments can be made up and completed independently, being present to learn, discuss, and participate in a lesson the way it is designed by a teacher is invaluable, and we thank all families for making it a priority to minimize student absences.

STUDENT DROP OFF AND PICKUP

School begins at 8:00 AM and students are marked tardy as of 8:01 AM. Please do not drop children off any earlier than 7:35 AM. Children dropped off before this time will not be monitored.

Please make sure that students are picked up in a timely manner. Dismissal begins at 3:00 PM; students must be picked up by 3:15 PM.

ABSENCES

Absences from school shall fall into one of the following categories:

EXCUSED ABSENCES

- Illness of the student (with written statement by parent/guardian or doctor).
- Funerals (death in the immediate family or persons outside the immediate family with parental permission).
- Medical, dental, and legal appointments (such appointments should be scheduled outside of school hours when possible).
- Out-of-school suspension (make-up work is not accepted).
- School visits – two per year.

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

- No parent/guardian contact with the school giving an explanation for the absence on the day of the absence.
- No physician's note to excuse an absence once more than five days of absence have occurred.
- Family vacations (see policy statement below for additional information).
- Absences other than those defined as excused (includes absences due to inclement weather when a parent decides not to send the student to school but the school is open).

A written note is required, written by the student's parent/guardian, giving an explanation of the absence upon the student's return.

FAMILY TRIPS & VACATIONS

Saint Joseph Grade School publishes an academic calendar and school breaks well in advance to allow parents/guardians to plan for family trips. Use of regular school days to take family trips and/or extend family vacations around scheduled breaks is strongly discouraged.

Parents should remember the state of Indiana does monitor school attendance. A high absenteeism can affect our school's accountability grade. However, school officials do recognize that on rare occasions this may be out of the control of the parents/guardians. In any event, all absences during regular school hours due to family trips will be considered unexcused absences.

In the event that a student is to miss school due to a family trip it is necessary for the parent/guardian to write and inform the school at least two weeks in advance of the scheduled trip. Parents/guardians must then sign in advance a letter entitled "Parent/Guardian Responsibility Form" indicating they are aware that the absences will be unexcused and that they take full responsibility for the child's absence during this time.

Teachers are not required to provide assignments for children of families who take extended vacations other than scheduled days. Make up work may be presented upon the student's return and will not be provided in advance.

TARDINESS

Saint Joseph Grade School believes that promptness in arrival times is essential to fostering present and future good work habits. Parents are encouraged to work with their children to make sure they arrive in a timely fashion for school. All students are to be in the school building no later than 8:00 AM.

If a student is going to be late and arrive later than 8:00 AM, parents/guardians must call the office to advise school officials. In no event shall a student arriving after 10:00 AM be considered tardy but will be considered absent for the morning session.

A note explaining any tardiness should accompany the child to school on the date that the child arrives late. Failure to provide a note may result in an unexcused absence. Teachers are not required to provide students with makeup work if the tardiness is unexcused.

After a child has arrived tardy for a fifth day within a grading period (approximately every 60 days) the school may contact the parents/guardians for a conference at the school with the principal or her/his designee. Failure to resolve the problem at this point may require further intervention by the school to ensure timely attendance, including a possible referral to proper local juvenile officials.

MAKE-UP ASSIGNMENTS

Students are to be given the same number of days they are absent to complete school work.

For example: If a student is absent two days, they have two days to complete the assignments. Work handed in after the two days will be treated as late or missing work.

A student is permitted to make up all work, including tests, with the assistance of the teacher, but it is the responsibility of the student and his/her parent/legal guardian to initiate such a request provided the following exists:

1. Illness or family emergencies.
2. Medical or dental appointments that cannot be scheduled outside of school time.
3. All other excused absences not otherwise covered in (1) and (2).

Makeup work is not required to be provided if the absence is unexcused (ie. family trips/vacations). The decision in those instances will be at the discretion of the individual teacher.

Students in Grades 6-8 will be able to access all homework that can be posted digitally through Google Classroom. Students are responsible for asking individual teachers for any paperwork that is needed in order to complete their assignments. Students are responsible for turning in missing assignments after being ill or absent from school due to personal reasons even if they do not see that teacher on the day the work is due.

TEMPORARY GUARDIANSHIP

If parents or guardians are to be out of town and the student is in the care of a responsible adult, we ask that the parents notify the school office in writing of such an arrangement. Parents are urged to fill out a medical treatment permission form, available from local hospitals, for all children under the age of 18, should the child require medical attention during the parent absence.

ACADEMICS

The primary purpose for the existence of Saint Joseph Grade School is the Christian education of the child according to the student's own needs. Whole class, small group, and as-needed individual instruction is provided for each child. Special considerations and modifications are made depending on the individual child and their curricular strengths. We strive to work with children and parents alike to provide an instructional base that will help each child achieve to their fullest potential.

ASSESSMENTS AND REPORT CARDS

Saint Joseph Grade School believes that a child's emotional and social development is an integral component when looking at a child's academic achievement. For this reason we, as a staff, make every effort to help parents in making academic decisions that take into consideration the "whole" child.

In kindergarten through third grade, the evaluation of each child consists of a standards-based report card that shows your child's progress toward mastery of Indiana standards. No letter grades are given.

Grades four through eight utilize a report card that shows mastery toward standards as well as the application of those standards resulting in letter grades. The grading scale is as follows:

A+	97-100	B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D+	67-69	F	59-50
A	93-96	B	83-86	C	73-76	D	63-66		
A-	90-92	B-	80-82	C-	70-72	D-	60-62		

The administration reserves the right to make adjustments in the above based on the individual needs and assessment of individual students.

Students are assessed with the NWEA test (grades K-2), IREAD-3 (grade 3), ILEARN (grades 3-8), and DIBELs (grades K-2) to monitor progress and assist teachers in determining students' instructional readiness.

HONOR ROLL

All students deserve to be recognized for their academic achievements regardless of their ability. Special efforts are made by all involved in the academic process to recognize successes by students no matter how big or small. Individual classroom teachers have developed their own system for student recognition and make every effort to consider the achievements of all children.

Honor Roll status for junior high students can be attained by achieving the following:

HIGH HONORS

“A” in all subjects, including Specials.

HONORS

Letter grades of “A” and “B” in all graded subjects including Music, Computers, Physical Education, and Art.

CHILDREN WITH EXCEPTIONAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Children with exceptional educational needs requiring Tier 2 or Tier 3 intervention and support are accepted if their needs can be reasonably accommodated in the school. Initial enrollment should be on a tentative basis with the understanding that in the event the exceptional needs of the child cannot be reasonably accommodated by the school, the custodial parents or guardians will agree to enroll their child in another school system that can accommodate the special needs of exceptional children.

Ordinarily when a diocesan school cannot reasonably accommodate the exceptional needs of a child, a recommendation for special class placement should be made to the custodial parent or guardian by the principal, after consultation with the child’s teacher(s). This recommendation will be either for special class placement within Saint Joseph Grade School or referral to a public school for evaluation or placement. If the custodial parent or guardian does not accept the school’s recommendation, it is expected that he/she will place the decision in writing. In some instances, the custodial parent or guardian will be required to withdraw the child if the child’s continued presence, in the opinion of school personnel, would pose an undue hardship on the operation of the school, or poses a threat of harm to the student, other students, or school personnel.

ACADEMIC HONESTY & INTEGRITY

All students are expected to do their own work without assistance from classmates or family members, unless otherwise directed by a teacher. Students found to be copying another child’s work or offering their own work to be copied will receive a zero for the assignment in question but may be told to redo the work. Students in Junior High who are found to copy off one another will receive detention.

Students who plagiarize or use artificial intelligence apps such as Chat GPT to complete an assignment will also receive a zero on the assignment and will be issued a detention. The work in question may be reassigned at the teacher’s discretion. Teachers and school librarians understand the importance of teaching students the research skills necessary to avoid compromising their academic integrity and are committed to collaborating with one another to impart these skills to students.

HOMEWORK

Homework is an essential part of the educational process and an important support system for classroom instruction. At Saint Joseph Grade School, homework assignments are designed to

meet the ages and development of our students. Homework will be given for the purposes of reviewing of information given in class; providing make-up work for students who are absent; completing unfinished work given in class; enriching and/or challenging students to go beyond an in-class lesson.

Homework may be given over the weekend at the intermediate and junior high levels. If a student has been absent and has makeup work it also may be given as a weekend assignment. Teachers will communicate their homework policies at Parent Night.

It is important that parents help their children structure their time and avoid distractions so they can complete homework well and on time. We recommend the following to all parents:

- Establish a study time without interference from TV, technology, or other distractions.
- Assist the child, if memory drills or reviews are involved.
- Help the child find resource materials.
- Suggest ideas for projects.
- Set a regular schedule without interruptions.
- Encourage the child's creativity and initiative instead of giving answers.
- Sincerely praise the things done well. Use constructive criticism only when necessary.
- Provide resource material including a dictionary.
- Encourage the use of libraries and credible online sources to find additional information.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

CLUBS, ACTIVITIES, AND ATHLETICS

Saint Joseph Grade School strives to provide myriad opportunities for students to develop and nurture skills and talents beyond academics through clubs, activities, and athletics. We encourage all students to take the opportunity to participate in these offerings and are grateful to the volunteer coaches, coordinators, and mentors who make them possible. These adult volunteers are authorized to establish the procedures and expected behaviors for students to follow in these settings and have the right to expel a student from participating if he/she consistently disrupts or interferes with the purpose or objective of club/sport activities.

Junior High students who join choir or clubs or who play on our ICCL athletic teams must be in good academic standing to maintain their participation; if at any point a student has an F average in a core class or special class for more than two weeks, he/she will be placed on academic probation from clubs and sports and will not be permitted to practice or compete until he/she is passing all classes.

Likewise, if a student earns more than two detentions in a trimester, he/she will be placed on probation and will not be allowed to compete for the next two contests. Administration will work with the athletic director to determine the final terms of the probation and when a student athlete may return to full participation and play.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are privileges afforded to students, not absolute rights. Students can and will be denied participation if they fail to meet academic or behavior requirements.

Students must have written permission from their parents in order to go on a field trip. A form is provided for that purpose and will be kept on file along with a medical release for each student. Telephone calls to parents are not acceptable as permission. Students without written permission must remain at school. A written note other than the form designated by Diocesan Policy is not acceptable.

According to state guidelines, field trips must be educational in nature. All field trip permission slips will include some form of communication from the teacher with an explanation of the educational purpose of the field trip. Please remember that what is educational in nature for one grade level may not be acceptable for another. Every effort is made on the part of the staff to provide a variety of experiences from year to year that are not repetitive in nature.

Per diocesan policy, siblings cannot accompany adult helpers on field trips. All helpers' time and attention must be given to the children assigned to them. Please remember, helpers on field trips are not merely drivers; they need to watch and supervise the children in their group.

UNIFORM POLICY

The mission of Saint Joseph Grade School is to educate the hearts and minds of our students. We believe that being in uniform helps to unify us as a community and creates a learning environment free of as many distractions as possible so students can remain focused on learning. The wearing of uniforms allows everyone to be seen for who they are, not by what they have or do not have.

The administration and staff reserve the right to evaluate each uniform, grooming, or accessory situation and choose the appropriate action for students not complying with the stated policy.

Some items below indicate that they must be purchased from an “approved uniform provider.” Please see the school website for a list of current vendors.

SHIRTS

- ❖ Light blue, navy, or white short-sleeve or long-sleeve polo shirts.
- ❖ Must have the SJGS logo.
- ❖ **Must be tucked in at all times.**
- ❖ If an undershirt is worn, it must be plain white and short sleeved.

PANTS & SHORTS

- ❖ Navy blue or khaki, cotton or cotton-blend.
- ❖ Pants and shorts must be classic cut style and worn at the natural waist. No form-fitting or cargo style pants or shorts.
- ❖ Pants must be full length; shorts must be no more than two inches above the knee.
- ❖ Pants and shorts of students in grades 6-8 must have belt loops.
- ❖ Shorts may be worn until Thanksgiving and again beginning on the Feast of St. Joseph (March 19).

SWEATERS & SWEATSHIRTS

- ❖ Navy blue cardigan, crew neck, or v-neck waist-length cotton or cotton-blend sweaters.
- ❖ Navy crew neck or quarter zip cotton sweatshirt with the SJGS logo purchased from an approved uniform provider.
- ❖ Hooded sweatshirts are not allowed except on out of uniform days.
- ❖ Must wear an appropriate collared shirt underneath.

GIRLS SKIRTS, JUMPERS, SKORTS

- ❖ Beginning December 1, 2025, girls who choose to wear skirts may only wear The Lands' End evergreen plaid ***"top of the knee" skirt***, as shown on the Lands' End website.
- ❖ Beginning December 1, 2025, girls who choose to wear skorts may only wear The Lands' End navy or khaki ***"top of the knee" skorts***, as shown on the Lands' End website.
- ❖ No other plaid, navy, or khaki skirts or skorts will be allowed after December 1, 2025.
- ❖ Girls in grades K-4 may also choose to wear the evergreen plaid "top of the knee" jumper from the updated Lands' End website. No other jumpers will be allowed for K-4 students.
- ❖ No jumpers, skirts, or skorts should be rolled or worn shorter than two inches above the knee.

BELTS

- ❖ Required for students in grades 6-8 when wearing pants or shorts (optional for younger grades).
- ❖ Must be solid color black or brown.

SOCKS

- ❖ Colors must be solid white, navy blue, or black and must be matching.
- ❖ May have a visible emblem no bigger than one inch by one inch. Emblems must be black, white, navy, or gray.
- ❖ Girls may wear solid black, white, or navy tights (leggings and footless tights are not permitted).
- ❖ Socks or tights must be worn with all shoe wear and must be clearly visible (i.e. no-show socks may not be worn).

SHOES

- ❖ Girls may wear closed-toe Mary Janes, loafers, athletic shoes, or ballet flat dress shoes in any color. No backless shoes or sandals are permitted.
- ❖ Boys may wear closed-toe loafers, deck shoes, athletic shoes, or dress shoe styles in any color. No backless shoes or sandals are permitted.
- ❖ Moccasins, slippers and slipper-style backless shoes, sandals, boots, combat boots, heels exceeding one inch, flip flops, and Crocs-style shoes are not to be worn.

GYM UNIFORMS

- ❖ Worn in grades 4-8; purchased from approved uniform providers. Students change into P.E. uniforms for P.E. class. Students in homerooms that have P.E. before 10:00am on

any given day may arrive at school wearing P.E. uniforms, but must bring regular uniforms with them to school.

- ❖ Athletic shoes and socks are required when wearing the gym uniform.

SJGS SPIRIT WEAR

- ❖ School spirit wear (e.g. t-shirts, sweatshirts, jackets, athletic attire) may be worn on Friday Spirit Days with uniform bottoms.

HAIR

- ❖ Must be clean, combed, and out of the eyes.
- ❖ Boys' hair must not fall below the eyebrows.
- ❖ Boys may not wear ponytails or buns.
- ❖ Must be a natural color unless supporting an approved SJGS event.
- ❖ Headbands must not be wider than two inches. No decorations should protrude from the headband and no emblems should be visible.
- ❖ No bandanas may be worn.

JEWELRY

- ❖ No more than two ear piercings per ear.
- ❖ Jewelry must be appropriate for school and may not be distracting.
- ❖ Jewelry must be limited to a maximum of two bracelets/anklets, two rings, and one necklace.
- ❖ Boys may not wear earrings.

OUT-OF-UNIFORM DAY GUIDELINES

Special Out-of-Uniform Days are announced in advance throughout the year. As with regular uniform days, the administration and staff reserve the right, in their sole discretion, to evaluate each uniform/grooming/accessory situation and choose the appropriate action for students not complying with the stated policy.

- ❖ No leggings, jeggings, form-fitting, or yoga pants **for students in grades 6-8**.
- ❖ T-shirts must be appropriate for school.
- ❖ No tank, midriff, strapless, cold-shoulder, off-the-shoulder tops, or shirts with spaghetti straps.
- ❖ No pajama pants or pants with holes.
- ❖ Shorts, dresses, and skirts should be no shorter than two inches above the knee
- ❖ Regular dress code for shoes.

COMMUNICATION & PARTNERSHIP

SCHOOL/FAMILY PARTNERSHIP

Enrollment in Saint Joseph Grade School is subject to the approval of the Diocese and the Saint Joseph Grade School administration. Achieving the holistic educational development of our students outlined in our school philosophy demands a cooperative relationship between parents and school staff as a shared endeavor. Every parent/guardian of each student is expected to act as a cooperative partner with the Diocese and School and comply with all policies and rules which are established by the Diocese or School.

All families are asked to review and sign our SJGS Parent Partnership when enrolling their children to clarify expectations for a fruitful, successful partnership with our school. Saint Joseph Grade School retains the right to rescind approval for the enrollment of any student if it determines that there is a lack of cooperation on the part of the student's parent/guardian regarding individualized academic, behavioral, or spiritual supports deemed necessary for a child's success in the classroom. Without proper parent investment and participation in these supports, it may be determined that the withdrawal of the student would be in the best interest of the student, the school, other students attending the school, or the fulfillment of the School's mission.

Parents who fail to engage in respectful, civil dialogue over policies, rules, or the professional determinations of faculty, administration, or staff, or who resort to verbal abuse or harassment of faculty or staff in protest of school policies will be asked to withdraw their child(ren) from the school. Such dialogue applies to but is not limited to email, text messaging, and social media postings and messaging.

PARENT/TEACHER DIALOGUE & COMMUNICATION

The academic calendar at Saint Joseph Grade School includes two opportunities for parent-teacher conferences: one in the fall and one in the winter. The purpose of these conferences is to discuss students' strengths and areas for growth, and to set meaningful goals for growth in heart and mind.

Parents who wish to discuss their child's progress at other times throughout the year are encouraged to reach out to the child's classroom teacher via email or phone to schedule a meeting. Together, parents and the teacher should decide whether it would be appropriate and beneficial for other staff to be involved (i.e. the school counselor, a resource teacher, or an administrator).

SCHOOLWIDE COMMUNICATION

The principal will publish and distribute weekly communication via email newsletter. Communication will include such items as important dates for meetings, special happenings, and ongoing information relevant to students and families. There will at times be signups,

questionnaires, surveys, etc. that may require response and/or feedback from parents. It is important and parents are encouraged to read the communication to keep abreast of school happenings.

Our school communication system, ParentSquare, will also be used to share information from teachers, administrators, and activity/club/athletics coordinators. ParentSquare is also used for urgent communications such as weather delays, school cancellations, and other timely parent information. Parents are highly encouraged to activate their ParentSquare account, verify contact information, and set communication preferences (text/email/app).

The school website (www.stjosephgradeschool.com) will be updated on a regular basis with resources, such as updated calendars, for parents and prospective families.

CLASSROOM COMMUNICATION

Classroom teachers will also communicate with parents on a regular basis via their own published newsletter or communications sent through email and/or ParentSquare and/or a communication folder sent home with students. Frequency will depend on the grade level. Parents are strongly encouraged to ask children for communication from school and/or check backpacks regularly.

Junior High teachers will send a Junior High Newsletter to families on a weekly basis. Parents of Junior High students are also strongly encouraged to attend the Parent Night that is always held within the first few weeks of the academic year.

EMERGENCY NOTIFICATIONS

In case of an emergency closing or delay due to hazardous or inclement weather conditions, the school will send a text/email/app notification via ParentSquare, and place notification on the school website and WSBT and WNDU TV websites. Please be alert for these communications beginning at 6:00am. Even with good weather conditions, it would be advisable to check for communications each morning in case we have issues that prevent us from opening school (e.g. difficulties with heating or electricity).

STUDENT BEHAVIOR & DISCIPLINE

Saint Joseph Grade School uses a Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS) to foster a disciplined student community where every child can clearly understand behavioral expectations and procedures and has the support necessary to carry them out. We hold each other accountable for showing respect, contributing to our school family and environment, and striving for excellence in all that we do so that we can live out with joy God's plan for us.

As in any well-executed PBIS, students are recognized, celebrated, and earn positive consequences for meeting our school-wide behavior expectations: Diligence, Obedience, Offering Time & Talents to Serve Others, and Respect/Reverence. It is our philosophy that every child is good, is made in the image and likeness of God, and is capable of growing in heart and mind. Every child deserves grace and mercy. Therefore, when students struggle to meet schoolwide or classroom behavior expectations, teachers, administrators, and parents should collaborate to discuss and put in place appropriate supports that make these expectations more achievable for them. Disciplinary action must be paired with increased support.

If students pose a significant disruption to or persistently interfere with the learning environment, school adults will take disciplinary action to enact fitting consequences. The following behaviors and situations, being the most egregious violations of behavior expectations, will result in immediate disciplinary actions:

The administration and staff reserve the right to evaluate each situation and choose the appropriate disciplinary action according to the severity of the behavior.

OFFENSES WHICH WARRANT IMMEDIATE EXPULSION*

- Possession and/or use of tobacco, alcohol, drugs at school or a school related function
- Possession and/or use of weapons or explosives at school or a school related function
- Arson

OFFENSES WHICH WARRANT IMMEDIATE SUSPENSION*

A 1/2 day to a 3 day suspension will be determined by the administration to be served at school or home.

- Causing false fire alarms
- Fighting or causing injury to another by failing to adhere to the school or classroom discipline policy.
- Harassment** of a student or adult
- Stealing or taking items off a teacher's desk
- Vandalism (students will be responsible for restitution)
- Plagiarism or Cheating

See the appendix for the following policies:

* *Disciplinary Review for Students (Suspension or Expulsion) (P4530)*

** *Diocesan Harassment Prohibition (P4580)*

BULLYING

Bullying, as defined in Indiana Code 20-33-8-0.2, will not be tolerated. This includes overt, unwanted, repeated acts or gestures, including verbal or written communications or images transmitted in any manner (including digitally or electronically), physical acts committed, aggression, or any other behaviors committed by a student or group of students against another student with the intent to harass, ridicule, humiliate, intimidate, or harm the other student.

Offenses will result in disciplinary action up to and including suspension or expulsion.

Any student who believes he has been or is currently the victim of bullying should immediately report the situation to a teacher, school counselor, or the building administration. The teacher or counselor are then responsible for notifying the building administration.

TECHNOLOGY USE

STUDENT-OWNED DEVICES

Cell phones, smart watches, and other personal technology devices must be turned off and remain in backpacks during the school day and school-related activities such as field trips. They will be confiscated if used in class and must be picked up in the office by a parent.

INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

The school shall follow the Diocesan Internet Acceptable Use Policy (P4620). A full copy is available in the school office. Parents/guardians are required to sign an annual Permission Form and Acceptable Use Policy with their child, and students may not access networked computer services without this permission.

STUDENT USE OF THE INTERNET/TECHNOLOGY OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL

Saint Joseph Grade School reserves the right to impose consequences for inappropriate behavior that takes place off campus and outside school hours. Thus, inappropriate use of technology (for example, on a home computer), may subject the student to consequences. Inappropriate use includes harassment, use of school name, remarks directed to or about teachers, offensive communications, and safety threats.

Saint Joseph Grade School does not, however, actively monitor student use of technology texting, group chats, etc. While our filtering system establishes some parameters for appropriate use within our building, students and parents/guardians are primarily responsible for the appropriate and ethical use of technology, especially in the home.

STUDENT USE OF THE INTERNET/TECHNOLOGY INSIDE OF SCHOOL

Computer Use

In using a computer supplied by the Diocese of Fort Wayne – South Bend or one of its entities, students must:

1. Respect the privacy of other users.
2. Respect and honor copyright and license agreements.
3. Safeguard their user identification (user ID) and private passwords.
4. Protect information from unauthorized use or disclosure.
5. Never use the computer for illegal purposes or in any way that violates any international, federal, state or local laws.
6. Never use the computer to harass, threaten, or transmit inappropriate material.
7. Never use diocesan computers for personal communication.
8. Never use diocesan computers for personal purchases.
9. Never send, trade, or store personal photos, videos, music, or other items on the network.

10. Use computers and the networks to which they are linked conscientiously so as not to drain or monopolize the system such that the work of others is impeded.
11. Never delete any computer files or download diocesan information without appropriate authorization.
12. The use of USB Devices and Portable Storage devices present a security risk because they might carry viruses or expose sensitive data if they are lost or stolen. All USB devices and portable storage media including cell phones, IPOD's, memory sticks, and CD's may not be connected to any Diocesan laptop, desktop, or any other computer without the express written approval of the supervisor. School purchased devices must be used.
13. Not use programs obtained from bulletin boards, home, friends, or other unauthorized sources on any diocesan equipment.

Websites/Internet Access

In accessing and using the internet, all students must adhere to the above-mentioned items. Also, they must:

1. Never access, post or send immoral, obscene, illegal, threatening, abusive, defamatory, or profane material or pornography of any kind.
2. Never attempt to block, bypass, or remove filtering software.
3. Never use the internet for personal communication.
4. Never use the internet for personal purchases.
5. Use great care, and only with permission, when downloading files from the internet to the diocesan system.

Electronic Communication

In using electronic devices to communicate, including but not limited to email messages, text messages, tweets, websites, blogs, and social networking sites, students will:

1. Always use respectful language.
2. Maintain appropriate relational boundaries in all forms of communication.
3. Never access, post or send immoral, obscene, illegal, threatening, abusive, defamatory, or profane material or pornography of any kind to any person.
4. Never send anonymous messages.
5. All communications may be monitored. Students may not use his or her own personal communication device.
6. Treat all communication as if it were public. Communication via these forms of technology does not always remain private. It is like sending a postcard. Many people can and will read it. Some might even change it. Always use language and communicate as if you were face to face with the person.

SOCIAL MEDIA

In order to maintain the integrity of our parish/school accounts, no student or parent may create a Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), or other social media account under the name of the parish/school or any sponsored organization of the parish/school without written approval of

the parish/school administration. Disciplinary action may be necessary if unauthorized creations occur.

Additionally, defamatory or derogatory engagement in any social media regarding Saint Joseph Parish, its school, any of the parish/school administration, the faculty, other students, or other students' parents may also result in disciplinary action.

CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

The following policy has the unanimous support of the Diocesan Review Board and the Catholic Schools Office. In no way is it intended to be punitive. Rather, it is intended to protect the well-being of our children and, as contemplated by *Create in Me a Clean Heart*, serve as a reminder to our students, their parents, school administrators, school faculty, and our clergy that there is certain conduct so egregious, so palpably harmful, so potentially hurtful, and even life threatening, that it has no place in our schools, our homes, or anywhere in a world in which we all are to strive to be more Christ like in our treatment of each other.

1. Knowingly or intentionally sending, displaying, possessing, accessing, uploading, downloading, or distributing immoral, pornographic, obscene, or sexually explicit materials, messages, or pictures of individuals under the age of 18 through the use of written material, the internet, digital or "PDA" device, cellular telephone, or through the use of an artificial intelligence medium will be deemed a violation of the Diocesan Educational Policies.
2. A violation in # 1 above shall be deemed to occur whether the impermissible conduct occurs on school grounds or is found to have occurred off campus.
3. A principal having belief that a violation of #1 has occurred shall immediately report such violation to the Indiana Department of Childhood Services and/or local law enforcement.
4. A principal having belief that a violation of # 1 has occurred shall immediately report such violation, together with any findings, to the Superintendent of Schools who, in turn, shall report such incident to the Vicar General who will relay the information to the Bishop.
5. The Bishop may then choose to seek the advice of the Diocesan Review Board, a consultative board which assists the Bishop regarding claims of sexual abuse. If a determination and finding is made that a knowing or intentional violation of #1 has occurred, the student shall be expelled from school with no right of re-entry. If a determination is made that the facts do not support a knowing or intentional violation of #1, the Bishop, in consultation with the school principal and pastor (as applicable), shall determine the consequence, if any, as provided in the Diocesan Education Policies.
6. The determination of expulsion or other discipline pursuant to #5 above shall be final and not subject to any appeal.

SCHOOL SAFETY

Because we are concerned with the safety and well-being of our students, Saint Joseph Grade School and the diocese have prepared a Safe and Secure School Plan which addresses events which may threaten our students. During the school year, we will conduct drills for fire and severe weather as well as all Standard Response Protocol drills. In addition, the plan provides for responding to crisis situations, such as identifying evacuation sites and providing support for students, parents and staff, including counseling services provided through school counselors or counselors on the staff at Catholic Charities.

The Saint Joseph Grade School forms a safety committee that advises and supports the school administration in following the mandated diocesan safety checklist.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT

The Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend requires that all clergy, seminarians, and employees complete the Safe Environment Training Program regardless of their level of contact with children. All diocesan volunteers who will have regular contact with children or young people must complete the Safe Environment Training Program also. The program teaches adults how to create and maintain a safe environment in which all persons, especially children, can grow in faith. This training is meant to help protect children and also those adults who minister to them. Training updates are required regularly. Adults may complete training in English, Spanish, or American Sign Language (ASL).

The Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend partners with Catholic Mutual Group to offer an online safe environment training curriculum for all adults who are required to complete it. Our local Safe Environment Coordinator is Mrs. Peggy Gizzi (pgizzi@stjosephgradeschool.com). All parents and adults who wish to volunteer regularly with students should contact Mrs. Gizzi for information as to how to register at the CMG site and begin your training.

SCHOOL VISITORS

For purposes of safety and accountability, ***all parents and visitors must report to the school office upon entering the school building.***

Upon entering a district building, visitors will be asked to present an ID such as a Driver's License, which can either be scanned or manually entered into the system. If a parent or guardian for any reason does not have a US government-issued ID, any form of identification can be used to manually enter the visitor's name into the Raptor system. The Raptor system will check to ensure that registered sexual offenders are not entering our school campuses without our knowledge. The system checks the visitor's name and date of birth for comparison with a national database of registered sex offenders. The registered sex offender database is the only official database checked by the Raptor system. No other data from the ID is gathered or recorded and the information is not shared with any outside agency.

Once entry is approved, Raptor will issue a badge that identifies the visitor, the date, and the purpose of his/her visit. A visitor's badge will not be necessary for those who visit our schools simply to drop off an item in the office or pick up paperwork.

LUNCH DELIVERY SAFETY

Parents who would like to treat their children to fast food or other outside lunch providers must deliver the food items to the school themselves. We do not accept delivery services such as DoorDash or UberEats, as it is imprudent and unsafe for us to welcome multiple unfamiliar adults onto our campus or into our building throughout the day.

We coordinate with the downtown South Bend Jimmy John's (138 S. Michigan St., South Bend) to allow a one-time delivery of sandwich orders at 11 AM each school day. Parents who wish to use this delivery service with Jimmy John's must place online orders by 10:45 in order to have their child(ren)'s order included in the one-time delivery.

SJGS will keep a limited pantry of nutritious food items (including allergen-free options) to provide for students who forget their lunches and are unable to have something dropped off or delivered in time for their scheduled lunch hour.

STUDENT LOCKER AND VEHICLE SEARCHES

In accordance with Diocesan policy P4590, all students who enroll at Saint Joseph Grade School must consent to the search of their person and personal belongings, lockers, school desks, vehicles, etc., at any time and for any reason consistent with this policy.

Persons and Personal Belongings

The school reserves the right to examine the contents of the student's pockets, purses, backpacks, book bags, or other personal belongings when an administrator has reason to suspect they may contain inappropriate or illegal materials or items. This right of inspection is effective at all times while the student is on school premises or at a school-sponsored event.

Student Lockers

All lockers, school desks, cloak rooms, etc., ("lockers") made available for student use on the school premises, including but not limited to, lockers located in the hallways, physical education and athletic dressing rooms, industrial education classrooms, and art classrooms, are the property of the school. These lockers are made available for student use in storing personal effects such as clothing, coats, etc., school supplies, and personal items, necessary for use at school, but the lockers are not to be used to store items which cause or could cause an injury, an interference with school purposes or an educational function, or which are inappropriate or forbidden by federal or state law or diocesan or school policy or rules. The student's use of the locker does not diminish the school's ownership or control of the locker. A student may not

expect to have privacy in a locker or its contents. The school retains the right to inspect the locker and its content to ensure that the locker is being used solely in accordance with its intended purposes.

Vehicles

Parking facilities may be made available to students upon approval of the school administrators. The school, however, reserves the right to establish rules for the use of such parking facilities including the right to examine the contents of any vehicles while parked on school premises when an administrator has reason to suspect that the contents of such vehicle may include items or elements which are in violation of school or diocesan policy, inappropriate, illegal to possess, have been stolen or lost, or present a threat to the health, safety, or welfare of students or staff.

GUN-FREE SCHOOL

Saint Joseph Grade School follows diocesan policy P4560 (see appendix) on Gun-Free Schools. Students are prohibited from facilitation in any way the delivery of a firearm, destructive device, or deadly weapon to school or school functions. Further, students are prohibited from possessing a firearm, destructive device, or deadly weapon while en route to or from school or school activities, or while on school property or at school activities. A violation of this policy carries an automatic expulsion from school.

ENVIRONMENTAL TOBACCO SMOKE

In accordance with Diocesan policy P5430, all facilities (buildings which are enclosed) where kindergarten, elementary, and/or secondary education or library services are being provided to children shall be smoke free. No one, whether an administrator, an employee, a student, or a visitor is allowed to smoke in these buildings while such services are being provided to children.

CHILD ABUSE REPORTING

It is the policy of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend that all diocesan priests, deacons and other personnel, lay and religious, paid and volunteer, must adhere to the diocese's various policies, procedures and guidelines designed to provide a safe environment for children and young persons. All must report any suspected incident of the physical, mental, or sexual abuse or neglect of a child or young person to appropriate civil and diocesan authorities consistent with the diocesan Guidelines on Reporting Incidents of Child Abuse or Neglect. All priests, deacons and other personnel, employee and volunteer, are subject to and obligated by this policy.

FINANCIAL POLICIES

APPLICATION FEE

All families are required to pay a per-child Application Fee. Payment is required at the time of official application to Saint Joseph Grade School unless other arrangements have been made with the parish Business Office.

INSURANCE

The Diocese requires mandatory insurance for students in grades K-8. The cost is included in tuition.

FINANCIAL AID

Saint Joseph Grade School makes every attempt to provide financial aid for families that need help with tuition. Requests for financial assistance are reviewed and granted by the pastor. The Director of Business Operations will notify all applicants if aid has been granted. Please note: all funds for tuition aid are acquired through fundraising events and the annual fund; all parents are encouraged to support these school/parish fundraisers.

INDIANA CHOICE SCHOLARSHIP

Saint Joseph Grade School is a participating school in the Indiana School Choice program. Scholarship information and eligibility guidelines are available on the [Indiana Department of Education website](#). All families are encouraged to check eligibility.

TUITION

Tuition and fees are billed through a tuition management system called FACTS. Families are sent information about setting up an account in May, with the option to pay tuition annually, semi-annually, or monthly. FACTS will also bill for any incidental charges (e.g. athletic fees, extracurricular fees, etc.).

Enrollment commitments are considered to be for the full academic year. The principal and director of admissions and enrollment must be notified of any withdrawals that occur prior to the end of the school year. Tuition will be prorated by trimester – families will be charged in full for any trimester in which students partially attend. If tuition and fees become overdue, the Director of Business operations will reach out to the responsible party and in consultation with the pastor determine next steps.

HEALTH & MEDICAL POLICIES

SCHOOL LUNCH

Saint Joseph Grade School does not have a hot lunch program, thus students must bring their own lunch. We encourage children to eat all that their parents provide and encourage parents to send a nutritionally balanced lunch that does not include candy. Soda and sports drinks should not be brought for lunch. Please see the Lunch Delivery Safety policy in the School Safety section of this handbook.

Snacks

All students are allowed to bring a morning snack to school each day. Students are allowed a 5-10 minute mid-morning snack each day. Morning snacks should consist of items that are healthy in nature. Cookies, chips, candy, etc. are not preferred items.

HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

(Please check the ISDH website for current information)

The health of the child has much to do with his/her progress in school. Our school system requires that each school child have two physical examinations during his/her school years, one before entering kindergarten and another before entering high school. Physical examinations should ordinarily be made in the office of the private physician. Students should also make twice a year visits to a family dentist; good dental hygiene is important in maintaining good dental health. Hearing and vision exams are administered at different grade levels throughout their grade school years. Please remember that these exams are preliminary exams that are utilized as a means of warning parents of potential problems.

Forms for the pre-kindergarten examination are available in the school office. The information from these forms is required by all schools in St. Joseph County and become part of the child's permanent school records.

State Health laws state that no child will be permitted to attend school beyond the first day of school without furnishing immunization records. The immunization law has been amended with changes becoming effective July 1, 1999. Immunization requirements are listed below.

Minimum Immunization Requirements for All Children Newly Enrolled in Kindergarten or Grade 1 and less than 7 Years of Age:

- 5 doses of diphtheria-tetanus-acellular pertussis (DTaP), diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis (DTP), or pediatric diphtheria-tetanus vaccine (DT) or 4 doses are acceptable if the fourth dose was administered on or after the fourth birthday;
- 4 doses of either oral polio vaccine (OPV) or inactivated polio vaccine (IPV), in any combination or 3 doses of all OPV or all IPV are acceptable if the third dose was administered on or after the fourth birthday;

- 2 doses of measles (rubeola) vaccine, on or after the first birthday;
- 2 doses of rubella (German measles) vaccine, on or after the first birthday;
- 2 doses of mumps vaccine, on or after the first birthday;
- 3 doses hepatitis B vaccine /1 dose Chicken Pox/ages 3-5 or 2 doses K/1
- 2 doses hepatitis A

Minimum Immunization Requirements for All Children Enrolled in Grade Two or Above or 7 Years of Age and Older:

Grades 2-5

- 5 doses of diphtheria-tetanus-acellular pertussis (DTaP), diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis (DTP), or tetanus-diphtheria (Td) vaccine, or pediatric diphtheria-tetanus (DT) vaccine;
- 3 doses of either all oral polio vaccine (OPV) or all inactivated polio vaccine (IPV). If a combination of OPV and IPV is used, 4 doses are required.
- 2 measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR);
- 3 Hep B
- 2 varicella

Grades 6-8

- 3 Hep B
- 4 Polio
- 2 varicella
- 1 MCV (meningococcal)
- 5 DTaP
- 2 MMR1 Tdap (tetanus & pertussis)

MEDICATION

The purpose of administering medication in school is to help each student maintain an optimal state of health to enhance his/her educational development. Only those medications which are prescribed as necessary by a physician, or for over-the-counter medications, as determined by the custodial parent or guardian as necessary to be administered during school hours will be administered on the school premises and only in accordance with the following procedures.

1. Written instructions, such as a medication authorization form is signed and completed by the physician of the student who is to receive prescription medication.
2. Medications prescribed for a student (legend drugs) are kept in the original container/package with pharmacy label and student's name affixed. The pharmacy label may serve as the written order of a physician.
3. All prescription medications shall be kept in a locked area in the school office.
4. When a medication is to be administered at school, the student's parents shall be requested to advise the principal of the purpose of the medication, side effects, dosage, administration route and time of administration. This information shall be discussed with the student and the other staff who may be assigned to administer medication. Parents may come to school and medicate their children if they choose. Please follow procedures for school visitors in locating your child to administer medication.

5. All permission for long-term medication shall be renewed at least annually. Changes in medication shall be documented by written authorization from a licensed prescriber.
6. In specific cases, the school (at the discretion of the principal) may require the custodial parent(s) or guardian to come to the school to administer the medication for the student. The school may also work with the licensed prescriber and the custodial parent(s)/guardian to adjust administration time, if possible, to avoid the need for medications during the school hours.
7. For all medications administered, the school shall keep on file the written order of a practitioner for legend drugs.
8. A student may self-administer an inhaler if necessary. The physician's written order or prescription for the student's inhaler must be attached to an Inhaler Self-Administration form which is kept on file with the school. This form can be obtained in the office.

Over-the-Counter Medications

Non-prescription medication may be given at school with the permission of a custodial parent/guardian.

1. The principal and nurse must be aware of the purpose for which a student is to receive the medication.
2. Over-the-counter medication shall be brought to the principal's office with the manufacturer's original label with the ingredients listed and the student's name affixed to the original package. It will be stored in the nurse's office and secured.
3. The custodial parent/guardian must provide the school with a written note giving authority to the school to administer the over-the-counter medication.
4. For all medications administered, the school shall keep on file the written permission of the student's custodial parent/guardian on file.

QUALIFIED IMMUNITY

A school may not require a teacher or other school employee who is not employed as a school nurse or physician to administer medications, drugs, or tests such as injectable insulin, breathing treatment or a fingerstick for glucose. If a school employee is not a practitioner or a person licensed under IC~25-23 and the school employee is responsible for administering injectable insulin or a glucose test by finger prick, the employee must obtain from a practitioner the training that the practitioner determines is appropriate for providing the service. Before the school employee provides the service, the school must have on file a written statement from the practitioner that indicates the school employee has received the required training.

DISCARDING MEDICATIONS

The parent/guardian is responsible at the end of the treatment regime for removing from the school any unused medication which was prescribed for his/her child. If the parent does not pick up the medication by the end of the school year, the principal will dispose of the medication in an appropriate manner and document that the medication was discarded.

APPENDIX

This appendix contains select policies of the Diocese of Fort Wayne – South Bend.

STUDENT TRANSFERS

Students transferring from another school, public or private, must make arrangements with the other school to forward records to Saint Joseph Grade School. State law dictates that parents must sign a release form for a student's records at the school from which the student is transferring. When registering from another public or private school, a copy of the latest report card is required before application is accepted in this school.

Any student transferring from another Catholic school in this Diocese must have fulfilled all financial duties owed to that school and/or parish before the transfer can be completed. Families owing tuition at another Catholic school will be refused admission to this school until those obligations are met.

P1510 – CRISIS RESPONSE PROCEDURES

Each school shall meet State guidelines for school safety (plans and procedures).

I. Annually, each school shall establish, update, and implement an individual School Crisis Plan, an individual School Reunification Plan, an individual School Indoor Air Quality Plan, and an individual Seclusion and Restraint Plan.

II. Evacuation and Reunification Procedures: It is the responsibility of the principal to see that all school personnel know what to do in an emergency. In case of a crisis, emergency procedures for evacuating the school building and reunifying students with parents/guardians should be clearly written and available to all personnel.

III. Communication Management: In times of emergency or crisis, the school principal shall immediately notify the Catholic Schools Office as soon as possible. Emergency or crisis includes, but is not limited to, life-threatening situations, matters of health and safety of students and/or staff, and matters of potential lawsuit. The principal, in consultation with the Catholic Schools Office, shall communicate the situation to the Diocesan Office of Communications. Additionally, all plans relating to school safety shall contain responsibilities and procedures for communicating, in time of crisis, to all additional stakeholders as needed (parents, media, etc.)

See School Crisis Response Handbook.

P2310 – PARENT/LEGAL GUARDIAN CONCERNS PROCEDURE

To facilitate and promote the orderly and efficient resolution of concerns, parents/legal guardians wishing to address and/or question an academic area or situation regarding a specific teacher or classroom procedure must follow the grievance procedure below:

Step 1: Address the issues with the classroom teacher (or the person with whom he/she has the issue).

- Step 2: Address the issue with the Principal.
- Step 3: Address the issue with the Pastor (elementary schools only).
- Step 4: If the issue is not satisfactorily resolved, then the parent/guardian should place his/her concerns in writing to the person involved and his/her supervisors (e.g., pastor and principal).
- Step 5: Contact the Catholic Schools Office.

Parents/legal guardians should follow the steps set forth in this policy, except where a situation is specifically covered under another school or Diocesan policy which provides for a different reporting procedure (e.g. harassment).

P4010 – ENROLLMENT

I. School Admission Policy

Diocesan schools shall comply with State laws and regulations regarding school enrollment and attendance to the extent possible, as consistent with the teachings of the Catholic Church and diocesan policy.

II. Nondiscrimination Policy

Diocesan schools shall follow and promote an open enrollment policy accepting students without regard to religion, color, race, sex, or national origin, and reasonably accommodate students with disabilities in its educational programs. By way of example, and not exclusion, reasonable accommodation may include allowing access by a service animal as required by law.

A. High School Admissions

In the event enrollment appears to be reaching capacity, the school is to give preference in admissions to students with Active Registered Parishioner status from feeder schools. The school may also give preference to siblings of current students or alumni and children of faculty and staff.

When a school class has reached capacity, the names of children not able to be accepted (or on a waiting list) should be given to the other Catholic high school in the area no later than the end of May. At the request and expense of the other Catholic high school in the area, the school which has reached capacity will address and then mail marketing materials provided by the other Catholic high school to the parents of the children not able to be accepted or on that school's waiting list.

III. All prospective students are required to complete a battery of academic assessment tests prior to admission to any diocesan school. Students applying for admission are required to be tested on Language Arts, English proficiency, and Math. The principal or designee is responsible for the administration of all placement tests and reporting test result data to teachers and parents. The principal must select placement tests for English proficiency, Language Arts, and Mathematics from an approved list provided by the Catholic Schools Office.

Requests for waivers or exceptions to placement testing must be submitted to the superintendent of schools in writing prior to admission of students.

Upon review of test data and other relevant information, the principal will make a determination regarding the schools' ability to meet the needs of the student tested.

IV. School Entrance Requirements

A child can be enrolled only by a person having the legal custody of the child. A certified copy of the student's birth certificate or a baptismal certificate shall be required for original entrance at all grade levels. Proof of legal custody must also be required in cases where a child does not reside with both natural parents.

If these required documents are not provided to the school within thirty (30 days) of the student's enrollment or appear to be inaccurate or fraudulent, the school shall notify the Indiana ClearingHouse for Information of Missing Children (See P4030) and will cooperate with local authorities if the child has been reported missing.

The custodian parent or legal guardian shall provide the name and address of the school the student last attended, if any. The school shall request records from the last school the student attended within fourteen (14) days.

Written proof that the child meets State and county health requirements (immunization record) for enrollment shall be required.

V. Kindergarten Age Requirement

Schools shall follow state law guidelines in enrolling Kindergarten students. A child entering kindergarten must be five years old prior to August 1, or date set by the State. A school should administer a developmental assessment for determining proper placement in kindergarten.

VI. First Grade Entrance Requirements

Indiana compulsory education begins when a child is officially enrolled in school or the school year of the child's 7th birthday, whichever is earlier.

Students enrolling in a diocesan school after successfully completing kindergarten in another accredited school that has different age requirements shall be allowed to continue in school without interruption because of chronological age.

VII. Children with Exceptional Educational Needs

Children with exceptional educational needs requiring special class placement are accepted if their needs can be reasonably accommodated in the school. Initial enrollment should be on a tentative basis with the understanding that in the event the exceptional needs of the child cannot be reasonably accommodated by the school, the custodial parents or guardians will agree to enroll their child in another school setting which can accommodate the special needs of exceptional children.

Ordinarily when a diocesan school cannot reasonably accommodate the exceptional needs of a child, a recommendation for special class placement should be made to the custodial parent or guardian by the principal, after consultation with the special education teacher and the child's teacher(s). This recommendation can be for either special class placement within the Catholic school or referral to a public school for evaluation or placement. If the custodial parent or guardian does not accept the school's recommendation, it is expected that he/she will refute the decision in writing. In some instances the custodial parent or guardian will be required to withdraw the child if the child's continued presence, in the opinion of school personnel, would be detrimental to the child's educational or emotional needs, poses an undue hardship on the operation of the school or poses a threat of harm to the student, other students or school personnel.

VIII. Students or Prospective Students with Diseases

Catholic schools shall comply with all applicable State law and all Board of Health policies regarding school enrollment and attendance in relation to a student or prospective student having a communicable disease.

Prospective students who otherwise meet all entrance requirements may not be denied admission solely on the basis of a diagnosis of a disease unless required by applicable State law or board of health policy; similarly, students may not be excluded merely on the basis of a diagnosis of a disease.

However, as with any prospective student who is diagnosed as having or is suspected of having a communicable disease, a child with a communicable disease may be excluded, if after an individualized assessment of the child's condition, in accordance with the school's communicable disease policy/procedure, it is determined that the child's presence in the classroom would expose others to significant health and safety risks.

Upon being informed that a child is diagnosed as having or is suspected as having a communicable disease, a review team consisting of the student; his/her parent/guardian; his/her physician; a physician representing the school, parish, or diocese; and school or parish administrators will be established to determine whether the child's admission or continued presence in school would expose others to significant health and safety risks. In making its determination the review team will conduct an assessment of the child's individual condition. The review team's inquiry will include findings of fact, based on reasonable medical judgments given the state of medical knowledge about:

- A. the nature of the risk – how the disease is transmitted;
- B. the duration of the risk – how long the carrier is infectious;
- C. the severity of the risk – the potential harm to third parties;
- D. the probabilities the disease will be transmitted and will cause varying degrees of harm; and
- E. whether a reasonable accommodation exists and/or is required.

The review must also take into consideration the scope of the problem, education related issues, and the student's right to confidentiality. The recommendation of the review team and the decision of the parish and school administrators shall be considered confidential and will be

submitted for review only to the Superintendent of Schools, Secretary for Catholic Education, and diocesan attorney.

In the event it is determined that a child is unable to regularly attend a Catholic school, the parish, school, and diocese will assist the parent or guardian in locating alternative educational service and obtaining religious and catechetical instruction.

P4040 – ATTENDANCE

The Diocesan schools consider the development of good attendance habits as a vital and desirable undertaking for two essential reasons. First, it is difficult for young people to learn if they are not in class; the teaching-learning process builds upon itself. Secondly, research shows that educational achievement is directly related to attendance. A student who misses a day of school misses a day of education that cannot be retrieved in its entirety.

I. Parents/Legal Guardian Responsibility

Parent(s)/legal guardians are responsible for having their children in school. Indiana law prescribes that parents must have their children in public or private school from the age of seven (7) until the date on which the child:

- A. Graduates; or
- B. Reaches at least sixteen (16) years of age or less than eighteen (18) years of age and:
 - 1. the student and the student's parent or guardian and the principal agree to the withdrawal;
 - 2. the student provides written acknowledgment of the withdrawal which must include a statement that the student and the student's parent/guardian understand that withdrawing from the school is likely to reduce the student's future earnings and increase the likelihood of the student being unemployed in the future, and the student's parent or guardian and the school principal each provide written consent of the student to withdraw from school; and
 - 3. the withdrawal is due to financial hardships requiring a student to be employed to support the student's family or dependent, illness or an order of a court that has jurisdiction over the student, or
- C. Reaches the age of eighteen (18) years. whichever occurs first.

II. Absences from School

Absences from school shall fall into one of the three following categories:

- A. Absences which are counted as present.
 - 1. Serving as a page for or honoree of the Indiana General Assembly;

2. For students in Grades 7 through 12, serving on a precinct election board or as a helper to a political candidate or political party on Election Day with prior approval of the principal;
3. Court appearances pursuant to a subpoena;
4. Active duty with the Indiana National Guard for not more than ten (10) days in a school year, or participation in civil air patrol as a member of the Indiana wing of the civil air patrol for not more than five (5) days in a school year;
5. Placement in a short-term inpatient treatment program which provides an instructional program;
6. Homebound instruction;
7. Religious observances.
8. Approved, educationally related non classroom activity per I.C. 20-33-2-17.5.
9. Participation or exhibition in the Indiana state fair by the student or a member of the student's household if the student is in good academic standing but not to exceed five (5) instructional days in a school year.

B. Excused Absences

1. Illness of the student (with written statement by parent/ guardian or doctor)
2. Funerals
 - a. for death in the immediate family
 - b. for persons outside of the immediate family with parental permission
3. Out-of-school suspension
4. Medical and legal appointments – Such appointments should be scheduled after school hours when possible.
5. School/college visits (2 days) – Parents/guardians need to check with the individual school's policy when arranging such visits.

C. Unexcused Absences

1. No parent/guardian contact with the school giving an explanation for the absence on the day of the absence.
2. No physician's note to excuse an absence once more than 5 days of absence have occurred (see Frequent or Prolonged Illness below).
3. Family vacations.
4. Absences other than those defined as excused or absences counted as present.

III. Truancy

A student is truant when he/she is absent from school or class without the permission of his/her parent/guardian and the school. Students who are habitually truant shall be reported to the juvenile authorities in accordance with applicable state law and following diocesan procedures:

The following may be evidence of habitual truancy:

- A. Refusal to attend school in defiance of parental authority.
- B. Accumulating a number of absences without justification over a period of time, such as a grading period. Habitual truancy is students who have ten (10) unexcused absences in a school year.

C. Three (3) or more judicial findings of truancy.

IV. Reporting an Absence

A parent/guardian shall contact the school to report a student's absence. Each school has established procedures for reporting absences. Absences will not be excused and the student may be considered truant if the procedure for reporting an absence is not followed.

A written explanation for any absence signed by a parent/guardian is required upon the return of the student to school. The school is not required to provide credit for makeup of assigned work missed because the student's absence is unexcused or the student is truant.

V. Frequent or Prolonged Illness

If a student is absent for five consecutive days due to illness, or has contracted a contagious disease, a physician's statement may be required in order for the student to return to school.

VI. Response to Irregular Attendance

If an irregular attendance pattern begins to develop, the school may use the following procedure to encourage the student's return to a pattern of regular school attendance.

A. Call daily from school (secretary, principal, or attendance clerk), to the parent/guardian to verify absence and to determine reason.

B. After a student is absent for six (6) days per school year, a school administrator, attendance clerk, or counselor will make contact with the student's parent/guardian. The date and content of this contact shall be documented.

C. After a student is absent over twelve (12) days per school year, a conference shall be held with the parent/guardian and the student. An attendance contract may be established at this time and documentation shall be kept.

D. After a student is absent over fifteen (15) days per school year, a referral shall be made to the principal. If the principal is unable to successfully resolve the attendance problem, a referral may be made to the intake officer of the local Juvenile Probation Department.

VII. Habitual Truancy Report to BMV

If the student is at least 13 years of age but less than 15 years of age and is truant more than 10 times in one (1) school year, the student shall be designated as a habitual truant and reported to the bureau of motor vehicles as provided by State law.

P4170 – ACCESS TO OFFICIAL STUDENT RECORDS

General Statement

In accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (“FERPA”) of 1975, any natural parent, guardian, or individual acting as a parent in the absence of a parent or guardian of a student has the right “to inspect and review” his/her minor student’s educational records, unless the school has been provided with a court order, State statute, or legally-binding documents that specifically precludes such inspection and review. In addition, a student who has reached 18 years of age or is attending an institution of post-secondary education will have all access rights that his/her parent or guardian would have had prior to that time. Absent such court order or legally-binding document, a non-custodial parent has the same right to inspect and review as a custodial parent. Educational records are available for review in the school office during regular business hours.

Such natural parent, guardian, individual acting as a parent in the absence of a parent or a guardian of a student, or eligible student may request the amendment of his/her student’s (or his/her own) educational records if he/she believes that such records are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student’s privacy or other rights. If the principal decides not to amend the record as requested, such natural parent/guardian/acting parent/eligible student is entitled to a hearing on his/her request. 20 U.S.C. 1232(g); 34C.F.R. Part 99.

P4410 – RELIGIOUS ISSUES

The teachings and traditions of the Catholic Church are the guiding principles of behavior for all students while enrolled in a diocesan school.

I. Pregnancy - Elementary Student

Every human being is created in the image and likeness of God and his or her life must be respected and protected from the moment of conception until natural death. When a student(s) becomes involved in a pregnancy, the Catholic school must act to provide assistance and support for the student and his or her family.

While the first responsibility for the pastoral, spiritual, and psychological care of the students involved in a pregnancy belongs to the parents/guardians of the student(s), the Church and the school also bear serious responsibility.

When a pastor/principal is made aware that a student(s) is involved in a pregnancy, the following action shall be taken:

- A. The pastor and principal should meet with both parties, the male and female, and their parents/guardians to investigate the situation and to assure them, if necessary, that the young people involved will be provided the opportunity to complete his/her education in the Catholic school without interruption.
- B. Both parties, the male and female, should then be referred for pastoral counseling given by a priest and a social worker or psychological counselor. This

counseling must emphasize the teaching of the Catholic Church on the sanctity of human life from the first moment of conception.

- C. The pastor and principal must seek to assist the young people to ensure that the child is born, not aborted.
- D. The school's administration, after consultation with the school's pastor/designated priest, will decide whether any sanctions are to be imposed on the students. Because of the public nature of the situation and the Catholic identity of the school, the principal, in consultation with the pastor, reserves the right to undertake whatever additional action(s) seem appropriate for the well-being of the student(s) involved and the school as a whole.

II. Abortion

Every human being is created in the image and likeness of God, and his or her life must be respected and protected from the moment of conception until natural death. The Church views abortion as a grave violation of this principle and the Catholic school must convey the seriousness of this act by its inclusion of this issue in its teaching at appropriate grade levels and of its policies.

Therefore, a student enrolled in a diocesan school who obtains a completed and verified abortion or who aids or induces another person in any manner whatsoever in procuring such an abortion shall be suspended immediately and may be denied the privilege of continuing his or her education in a diocesan school, as determined by the Bishop.

A confidential meeting shall be held with the student(s) and parent(s) involved, the pastor, the school principal, and a person(s) designated by the Bishop, if so desired. The purpose of this meeting will be to ascertain the facts relevant to the commission of the abortion, to provide appropriate pastoral assistance, and to make a recommendation to the Bishop regarding the student's suspension or expulsion.

P4520 – GROUNDS FOR SUSPENSION OR EXPULSION OF STUDENTS

I. The grounds for suspension or expulsion below apply to student conduct which occurs:

- A. On school grounds;
- B. Off school grounds at a school activity, function, or event;
- C. Traveling to or from school or a school activity, function, or event;
- D. At any other time when the principal determines that the student's conduct either causes harm or could potentially cause harm to the other students, school employees or property, or the reputation of the School or the Diocese.

II. The following types of student conduct constitute a non-exclusive listing of grounds for suspension or expulsion subject to the school's provisions for disciplinary review contained in P4530. This listing is not intended to be exhaustive of all types of conduct:

- A. Any conduct which, in the opinion of school officials, is contrary to the principles and teachings of the Catholic Church.

- B. Using violence, force, noise, coercion, threat, intimidation, fear, passive resistance, or other comparable conduct constituting an interference with school purposes, or urging other students to engage in such conduct.
- C. Causing or attempting to cause damage to property belonging to any other person, student, school employee or the school, stealing or attempting to steal property belonging to any other person, student, school employee, or school.
- D. Intentionally causing or attempting to cause physical injury or intentionally behaving in such a way that, in the opinion of school officials, could cause physical injury to any person.
- E. Threatening or intimidating any individual for whatever purpose.
- F. Violation of the diocese's Gun-Free School Policy.
- G. Possessing, using, transmitting, or being under the influence of any controlled substance, including lawfully prescribed medications taken in a non-prescribed manner, or intoxicant of any kind. The prescribed use of a drug authorized by a medical prescription from a physician is not a violation of this rule.
- H. Engaging in the unlawful selling of a controlled substance or engaging in a criminal law violation that constitutes a danger to other students or constitutes an interference with school purposes and/or educational function.
- I. Failing in a substantial number of instances to comply with directions of teachers or other school personnel during any period of time when the student is properly under their supervision.
- J. Engaging in any activity forbidden by the laws of the State of Indiana that interferes with school purposes or education function.
- K. Violating or repeatedly violating any rules that are, in the opinion of the school officials, necessary to carrying out school purposes and/or educational function.
- L. Using on school grounds during school hours an electronic paging device, mp3 player or similar device, cell phone or other mobile message conveyance device in a situation not related to a school purpose or educational function.
- M. Engaging in any unlawful activity on or off school grounds if the unlawful activity is considered by school officials to be an interference with school purposes or an educational function.

P4530 – DISCIPLINARY REVIEW FOR STUDENTS (SUSPENSION OR EXPULSION)

Any student accused of wrongdoing in violation of school or diocesan policy that could result in the student's suspension or expulsion from the school will be given:

1. An explanation of what the student is accused of doing that is wrong; and
2. An opportunity for the student, in the presence of the student's parents, to respond to the accusations before either the principal or an impartial tribunal established by the school's administration for the purpose of making a recommendation on the matter to the principal.

The principal (in consultation with the pastor in the case of an elementary school) shall be responsible to make a final decision on all such matters. The principal's decision shall be final and binding on all parties.

Failure or Refusal of Parents/Guardians/Custodians to Participate in a Disciplinary Proceeding (P4420)

The failure or refusal of parents/guardians/custodians to participate in diocesan or school discipline proceedings concerning their student's improper behavior may be considered educational neglect and the child may be considered a "child in need of services" in accordance with I.C.31-34-1-7, and, in that case, the matter shall be referred to the Child Protective Services.

P4550 – STUDENT ACCUSED OF A NON-SCHOOL RELATED CRIMINAL ACT

A student accused of a non-school related criminal act which does not subject the student to suspension or expulsion pursuant to Policy 4520 is presumed innocent and no academic or disciplinary penalties will necessarily be imposed regarding that alleged criminal act unless the student is proven guilty or admits guilt through the civil law process.

Some circumstances, such as a need to protect the safety and/or privacy of the student or others, may necessitate such student's removal from the normal academic setting pending the outcome of the civil law process. In this case, the wishes of the student and/or custodial parents/legal guardians will be considered, but the final decision regarding removal is the principal's, after consultation with the pastor and/or Superintendent of Schools. Should such a removal be deemed necessary, a program of home study will be developed and implemented for the student.

P4560 – GUN-FREE SCHOOLS

Students are prohibited from facilitation in any way the delivery of a firearm, destructive device, or deadly weapon to school or school functions. Further, students are prohibited from possessing a firearm, destructive device, or deadly weapon while en route to or from school or school activities, or while on school property or at school activities. A violation of this policy carries an automatic expulsion from school. The term of expulsion shall be established by the principal after consultation with the Superintendent of Schools. Subject to modification by the Superintendent of Schools, a student expelled for bringing a firearm or destructive device to school or a school activity or for possessing a firearm or destructive device on school property or at a school activity may not return to the school until the first school semester after a one (1) year expulsion period. Exceptions may be made to this policy concerning antique or ornamental firearms or weapons that are transported or possessed for an authorized educational purpose, or firearms or weapons that are used as part of an authorized school program or activity. Any exception must be approved, in advance and in writing, by the principal. A violation of any limitation or requirement contained within a policy exception that is granted by the principal shall be considered a violation of this policy.

Principals will provide information to the Catholic Schools Office annually concerning the following:

- I. a description of circumstances surrounding any expulsions imposed under the policy;
- II. the number of students expelled from the school under the policy; and

- III. the types of instrument concerned.
- IV. for purposes of this policy, the term “firearm” means:
 - A. Any weapon (including a starter gun) which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive;
 - B. The frame or receiver of any such weapon;
 - C. Any firearm muffler or firearm silencer;
 - D. Any destructive device.
- V. for purposes of this policy, the term “destructive device” means:
 - A. an explosive, incendiary, or poison gas;
 - B. bomb;
 - C. grenade;
 - D. rocket having a propellant charge of more than four ounces;
 - E. missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than one-quarter ounce;
 - F. mine;
 - G. device similar to any of the devices described in clauses;
 - H. any type of weapon by whatever name known which will, or which may be readily converted to, expel a projectile by the action of an explosive or other propellant, and which has a barrel with a bore of more than one half inch in diameter; or
 - I. any combination of parts either designed or intended for use in converting any device into any destructive device and from which a destructive device may readily be assembled.
- VI. For purposes of this policy, the term “deadly weapon” means any firearm, destructive device, weapon, taser, electronic stun weapon, equipment, chemical substance, or other item or material that in the manner it is used or could be used, or is intended to be used, is readily capable of causing serious bodily injury.

P4570 – SUBSTANCE ABUSE

The Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend recognizes that substance abuse (drugs and alcohol) is a disease and not a manifestation of character weakness. Persons afflicted with this disease are entitled to the same compassion and treatment as anyone afflicted with any other disease.

If a principal becomes aware of facts or circumstances which gives the principal reason to believe that a student is experiencing a substance abuse problem, the principal and/or the school’s counselor shall meet with the student and arrange a conference with the student’s parent(s)/legal guardian(s) at which time the underlying problem and treatment options will be explored, as appropriate. The principal reserves the right to require that a student see a substance abuse counselor for an evaluation at the parent/guardian(’s) expense, and to require that recommendations for treatment be implemented and followed by the student as a condition for the student’s continued enrollment in the school. Should the student or the student’s

parent(s)/legal guardian(s) refuse to cooperate, the principal may require the student to withdraw from school.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the principal reserves the right to discipline a student, up to and including expulsion, for any violation of the school's policies or rules and regulations of student behavior, regardless of whether the violation involved was related to a substance abuse problem.

P4580 – HARASSMENT PROHIBITION

Harassment shall not be tolerated in the Catholic schools.

It is the policy of the school to maintain a learning and working environment that is free from harassment based on sex, race, national origin, color, age, disability, or any other impermissible factor that is prohibited by law and/or the teachings of the Catholic Church.

It shall be a violation of this policy for any employee of the Catholic schools to harass a student through conduct or communications of a sexual nature as defined in Section I of the Procedure to this policy or on any other impermissible grounds described in Section II of the Procedure to this policy. It shall also be a violation of this policy for any student to harass another student or employee, through conduct or communication of a sexual nature as defined in Section I of the Procedure and on any other impermissible grounds as described in Section II of this Procedure. The use of the term "employee" also includes non-employees and volunteers who work subject to the control of school authorities.

This policy and procedure covers situations in which a student claims to be the victim of harassment.

VI. Sexual Harassment

- A. Sexual harassment shall consist of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other inappropriate verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when made by any employee to a student, or made by any student to another student.
- B. Conduct of a sexual nature may include verbal or physical sexual advances, looks, leers, gestures, comments, jokes, or other inappropriate conduct based on the victim's sex.
- C. The Diocese forbids sexual harassment and retains the right to address sexual harassment or inappropriate conduct of a sexual nature in the schools through whatever means it determines are reasonable and appropriate.

VII. Other Forms of Harassment

- A. Harassment may be based on any protected characteristic, including race, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, or other protected area. Harassment may consist of unwelcome, derogatory, and/or inappropriate verbal, or physical comments or conduct relating to the victim's race, color, religion, national origin,

- age, disability, or other protected trait, made by any employee to a student, or made by any student to another student.
- B. Comments or conduct of an offensive or harassing nature may include verbal or written comments, jokes, or physical gestures regarding physical, personality, or other characteristics related to a person's race, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, or other protected trait.
- C. The Diocese prohibits harassment and retains the right to address harassing conduct through whatever means it determines are reasonable and appropriate.

PLAN FOR SECLUSION AND RESTRAINT IN SCHOOLS

Saint Joseph Grade School in the Diocese of Fort Wayne/South Bend believes a safe and healthy environment should be provided in which all children can learn, develop, and participate in instructional programs that promote high levels of academic achievement. As an Indiana accredited non-public, state law requires that our school have a Seclusion and Restraint Plan. The purpose of the plan is to ensure that all students and staff are safe in school, and students who may have behavior crises are free from inappropriate use of seclusion or restraint.

Behavior interventions for children must ensure all children are treated with dignity and respect. This environment should allow all children to be free from physical or mental abuse, aversive behavioral interventions that compromise health and safety, and any physical seclusion or restraint imposed solely for purposes of discipline or convenience.

Seclusion or restraint shall not be used as routine school safety measures; that is, they shall not be implemented except in situations where a child's behavior or action poses imminent danger of physical harm to self or others and not as a routine strategy implemented to address instructional problems or inappropriate behavior (e.g., disrespect, noncompliance, insubordination, out of seat), as a means of coercion or retaliation, or as a convenience. Any use of either seclusion or restraint shall be supervised, short in duration, and used only for the purposes of de-escalating the behavior.

SURVEYS OF STUDENTS & PARENTAL REVIEW

Survey of Students

No student shall be required without prior written consent of the student's custodial parent(s) or guardian to submit to a survey, analysis, or evaluation in which the primary purpose is to reveal information concerning:

- political affiliations;
- mental and psychological problems potentially embarrassing to the student or his/her family;
- sex behavior and attitudes;
- illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating and demeaning behavior;
- critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationship;

- legally recognized privileges and analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, ministers, and priests; or
- income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such program).

Parental Review of Instructional Materials

The custodial parent/guardian of a student who is to take part in a survey described above shall be entitled to inspect all instructional materials which will be used in connection with any survey, analysis, or evaluation taken as a part of that program. Parents/guardians have the right, upon request, to inspect a survey created by a third party before it is administered or distributed to students. Such requests should be made in writing to the principal.

FORMATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN CATHOLIC CHRISTIAN ANTHROPOLOGY AND PASTORAL ACCOMPANIMENT OF THOSE WHO EXPERIENCE GENDER INCONGRUENCE OR SAME-SEX ATTRACTION

Please see the complete document at <https://diocesefwsb.org/genderformation>.

Given the cultural challenges we face, it is necessary that we have clear policies for our parishes and schools regarding conduct related to sexual identity and sexuality. It is important that our Catholic school educators, parish staffs, catechists, youth ministers, and parents who enroll their children and young people in our Catholic schools, religious education programs, and parish youth ministries are knowledgeable of these policies based on the anthropological teachings of the Catholic Church summarized above in this document. These policies are established as binding for diocesan institutions, including all diocesan offices, parishes, and schools in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend.

1. Designations and Pronouns: Any parochial, organizational, or institutional documentation that requires the designation of a person's sex is to reflect that person's God-given sexual identity, that is, his or her biological sex. No persons may designate a "preferred pronoun" in speech or in writing when related to ministry activities of any kind; nor are diocesan institutions to permit such a designation. Only pronouns that accurately reflect a person's God-given sexual identity shall be used when addressing or referring to that person.
2. Bathrooms and Locker Rooms: All persons must use the bathroom or locker room that matches their sexual identity, that is, his or her biological sex. Individual-use bathrooms are permitted in diocesan institutions and are to be available to all members of the respective communities.
3. Attire: Appropriate modesty in dress is expected in a manner consistent with the cultivation of the virtue of chastity. Where a dress code or school uniform exists, all persons are to follow the dress code or uniform that accords with their God-given sexual identity.
4. Single-Sex Programs and Activities: Participation in institutional programs and activities (whether curricular or extracurricular, athletics, camps, retreats, etc.) that are designated

as single-sex must be consistent with the person's God-given sexual identity. Some programs and activities may be open to participation by persons of both sexes.

5. Single-sex Accommodations: Participants in overnight events or programs sponsored or approved by diocesan institutions may only reside in single-sex rooms or accommodations consistent with their God-given sexual identity. The only exception is, of course, accommodations used by persons whom the Church considers validly married and family members.
6. Conduct: Chaste conduct is expected and required in our diocesan institutions and at all events and programs sponsored by our diocesan institutions, including at parish or school dances and social activities. Public advocacy for, or celebration of, sexual behavior or ideologies contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church are prohibited. Active, hostile, and public defiance of these teachings is prohibited since it is harmful to the institution's Catholic identity and mission.
7. Treatments for Gender Incongruence: Compassion and sensitivity is expected and required in our diocesan institutions towards those who struggle with gender incongruence or dysphoria. Just as "Catholic health care services must not perform interventions, whether surgical or chemical, that aim to transform the characteristics of a human body into those of the opposite sex or take part in the development of such procedures," so our diocesan institutions are not permitted to cooperate in such interventions, including the taking of puberty blockers, on diocesan property. While we strongly support efforts to alleviate the suffering of those who struggle with their sexual identity, we cannot support interventions which, we believe, ultimately harm them. We support pastoral and counseling services to alleviate their suffering and assist them in accepting the God-given gift of their sexual identity.
8. Protecting the Vulnerable: All who teach, serve, and minister to young people in our diocese are expected to uphold the teachings of the Church regarding sexual identity, sexuality, and marriage, to affirm their God-given dignity and worth, and to treat them with the love and compassion of Christ. Ministers have a special responsibility to assist those who are hurting or struggling, including those dealing with confusion about their sexual identity or with same-sex attraction. Ministers must not tolerate any ridiculing, bullying, or hostile speech or behavior directed against them.