

**Saint James School**  
**Established 1913**  
**Excellent Minds – Exceptional Hearts**  
**Parent/Student Handbook**  
**Revised August 1, 2017**

**PHILOSOPHY**

Saint James School is an integral part of Saint James Parish. The school and parish collaborate in passing on the Catholic faith and proclaiming the Good News of the Gospel. Our community seeks to nurture the students' relationship with and reverence for God. Acknowledging the intrinsic worth of each child, our community endeavors to create an environment which promotes excellent minds and exceptional hearts in our students. We also value the need for our students to become faith-filled responsible citizens who can contribute positively to the world. Students are encouraged to be of service, to recognize and respect diversity; and to grow in awareness of justice as found in Catholic Social Teaching.

**BELIEF STATEMENTS**

- The school is a vital part of the parish community and shares in the ministry of the church.
- The students will be well grounded in their Catholic faith which includes doctrine, liturgy, the sacraments, sacred scripture, and personal prayer.
- The students will develop stewardship for the earth and its resources.
- The school will provide opportunities for service to others so that the students can incorporate and integrate the gospel value of serving others.
- The students will develop behavior that demonstrates respect for others and recognizes the diversity which exists among people.
- The school will engage the whole child, emotionally, intellectually, physically, socially, and spiritually.
- The faculty and staff will provide a safe and nurturing environment which enables the students to reach their potential and acknowledge their intrinsic worth.
- The faculty and staff will integrate technology into the curriculum to enhance the curriculum and prepare the students for their futures.

**Philosophy/Belief Statements**  
**Written April 2011**

## GOVERNANCE

Saint James School is part of the North Hills Regional Catholic Elementary Schools which was established July 1, 2017. The schools in the North Hills Region are under the direction of the NHRCES Board of Directors and the Regional Administrator.

## CURRICULUM AND METHODS

Saint James School provides a learning environment which promotes and encourages the holistic development of each child, fosters the dignity of each person, develops the students' understanding of justice issues in relationship to Gospel values and Catholic Social Teaching and advances the teachings of the Catholic faith.

In addition to the mandated course of studies, students at Saint James School are afforded the opportunity to participate in other areas

- |                    |                                   |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|
| • Art Clubs        | K – 3 <sup>rd</sup>               |
| • Chess Club       | K – 8 <sup>th</sup>               |
| • School Musicals  | K – 8 <sup>th</sup>               |
| • Forensics        | 6 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup> |
| • Band             | 4 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup>  |
| • PJAS             | 7 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup> |
| • Service Projects | Preschool – 8 <sup>th</sup>       |
| • Soccer           | 3 <sup>rd</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup> |
| • G/B Basketball   | 3 <sup>rd</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup> |
| • Cross Country    | 3 <sup>rd</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup> |
| • Cheerleading     | 2 <sup>nd</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup> |
| • Volleyball       | 6 <sup>th</sup> - 8 <sup>th</sup> |

Other activities may be added and supported when an interest arises.

Students in grades 5-8 are taught the **Catholic Vision of Love**. This program sets forth the beauty of the Church's teaching on the family, marriage, and human sexuality.

## MIDDLE STATES ACCREDITATION

The Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools accredits Saint James School. The Middle States accreditation is an expression of confidence in Saint James mission, goals and objectives, performance, and resources, and validates publicly the school's commitment to excellence in education. On November 30, 2016, the Middle States Commission on Elementary and Secondary Schools reviewed and accepted the Mid-Term report completed by Saint James School. . Accreditation received December 1, 2013 through December 1, 2020.

## ABSENCE/TARDINESS

Regular attendance at school is a major component in determining a child's academic success. Absence from school is defined as either **Excused** or **Unexcused** according to guidelines from the Pennsylvania School Code. Excused absences include illness, quarantine, impassable roads, recognized religious holidays, and urgent situations, such as death in the family or court appearance. The state guidelines also permit an **Excused Absence for Educational Trips** if a request is sent to the school **prior** to the dates of the trip\*\*. If no **prior** notice is received, the absence is classified as unexcused. **All absences and tardiness must be recorded in the attendance book.**

\*\*Because lesson plans may change during a week, teachers cannot provide the exact work to be completed prior to a student's departure. Therefore, teachers will provide what they can, but a student is responsible for making up all work upon his/her return. Teachers need to be notified

five (5) days in advance if work is requested. **Homework can be picked up in the office between 2:30 and 3:30 only. Teachers cannot interrupt instructional time to prepare homework for a student who is absent.**

Parents should call the school office on the first day that a child is absent from school. Give the child's name, homeroom teacher, and reason for absence. It is the child's/parents responsibility to make arrangements for missed assignments. Homework assignments are posted on-line.

Upon returning to school from an absence, a **written excuse or an email to the school office** is to be submitted as required by state law. If there is a consistent violation of this requirement, absences may be considered unexcused.

Notification also needs to be given to the teacher/principal for the following reasons:

- ✚ Excused from gym class
- ✚ Permission for out of school appointments (child is expected to return when possible)
- ✚ Attending funerals
- ✚ Vacation
- ✚ Change of plans in leaving school (bus, ride or walk)
- ✚ Early Dismissal
- ✚ Attending *After- School Care* if the service is not used on a regular basis
- ✚ Other

According to the Pennsylvania School Code, Section 1332, "The absence of any pupil who remains out of school with or without his parent's permission, and is not absent because of illness or for other urgent reasons, as defined in the School Code, shall be unexcused. Such absence will be recorded as 'unlawful-unexcused' for a pupil who is under the compulsory attendance age." Section 1333, "Any such child who has been absent three days, or their equivalent, during the term of compulsory attendance, without lawful excuse...shall be given written notice. If, after such notice is given..., attendance is again violated by the person, such person shall be liable...for referral to the magistrate." Under certain circumstances, Children and Youth Services may also be contacted.

Parents and guardians of students who acquire excessive absences will be required to provide documentation from a physician indicating that the absences are relating to an existing medical condition. **Students who are absent for more than thirty days during the academic year may be denied academic promotion.**

### **EXCESSIVE TARDINESS**

A student arriving on time for school is a parental responsibility. It is imperative to the success of each individual student as well as the classroom as a whole. When a child is tardy, he/she may disrupt the flow of a class already in progress; this is disrespectful to the teacher and fellow classmates. When a child is tardy, significant time is lost for class preparation. Excessive tardiness is also a serious matter and may also necessitate intervention with a magistrate and/or Children and Youth Services.

**The first bell rings at 7:50 a.m. The tardy bell rings at 8:00 a.m. Students must be in their classroom by 8:00 a.m. This is a 10 minute grace time between the first bell and the tardy bell.**

## **ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY POLICY**

Students who participate in the sports program or other school sponsored activities at Saint James must maintain a “C” average in each subject area to be eligible for participation in practice and/or games.

Grades are posted on GradeBook. Mid-term reports are mailed to inform parents that their child has a grade below a “C” average in a particular subject area. The student will then have two weeks to bring the grade up to a “C” average. **If a student does not achieve a “C” after the two week period, he/she will be suspended from sports for a full two week period effective immediately. Even if the grade improves during that two week period, the student is not permitted to practice/play until the two week suspension is completed.** If the grade(s) is not improved at the end of the two week suspension, the suspension will continue until a “C” average is obtained. The same process will be followed at the end of a grading period when students receive their report cards.

Parents and coaches will receive official notice by e-mail, in writing, or by phone from school personnel informing them of a suspension and when or if a child is eligible to begin practice/play based on the criteria mentioned above. **A student’s verbal message is not an official notification and parents/coaches are not to allow him/her to participate in practice/play based on the student’s word.**

**It is required that a student be present for a full day of school on the day of an event in order to participate in any sporting event and/or school activity (such as a dance). In the case of a doctor’s appointment, a slip from the doctor must be presented in the school office before a student is permitted to practice/play. If there are other special circumstances, the school office must be notified in writing so a determination can be made for participation.**

*Special Note:* A student’s consistent lack of academic performance may result in the loss of participation in any school sponsored or school related activity including graduation and/or graduation activities.

Under certain circumstances, to be determined by the principal, there may be an exception to this rule.

## **ACADEMIC PROGRESS**

Kindergarten evaluations are scheduled for January, March and June. These are based upon the child’s progress in social, emotional, developmental readiness, and academic readiness. These factors may determine entrance into the first grade.

First through Eighth Grade – The children are assessed and evaluated on all subject areas according to their progress and mastery of grade level information. Grades are in accordance with the Diocesan grading scale. Progress reports for students receiving a “C” or below are mailed home at mid-term during a grading period. Report cards are issued quarterly for these grade levels.

Iowa testing will be given in October beginning 2017.

### Grading Scale

**A – Advanced Performance: (93-100)** Demonstrates a thorough understanding of basic skill concepts and is working at developing advanced skills and concepts.

**B – Proficient Performance: (85-92)** Demonstrates an understanding of basic skills and concepts and is able to exemplify these skills and concepts in detail.

**C – Basic Performance: (75-84)** Demonstrates an understanding of the basic skills and

concepts.

**D – Below Basic Performance: (70-74)** Demonstrates an understanding of the basic concepts with possible misconceptions.

**E – Experiencing Serious Difficulties: (Below 70)** Demonstrates an inadequate understanding of basic skills and concepts.

**ACCIDENT/INJURY**

An Emergency Card is sent home at the beginning of the school year for **each child** in a family. The card must be completed and returned to school the next day. When an accident or injury occurs at school, parents are contacted to determine what action the parent deems necessary. Such actions may include taking the child home, to a doctor, or to a hospital. It is vital that the emergency information card sent home at the beginning of each school year be completed and sent back to the school immediately. If there is a change in the emergency information, the school office needs to be informed right away. If a child suffers an unexpected injury outside of school, parents need to contact the school office if special arrangements are necessary to accommodate the student.

**Any case of a communicable health issue needs to be reported to the school office immediately.**

**Example: head lice**

**AFTERCARE**

Saint James School offers an Aftercare Program from 2:30 until 6:00. Early dismissal times are from 11:30 until 6:00. The fee schedule is determined on a yearly basis and will be listed on the registration form. When payment is delinquent, services will be suspended until payment is made. When a student missed the bus or when parents are late picking a student up, the student may be sent to the Aftercare Program. The Aftercare fee may be assessed in these situations.

**AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES/SPORTS PRACTICE**

Students who are attending sports practice or other after-school activities, and have a space of time between school ending and the activity beginning, must go to Aftercare. Students are not permitted to leave grounds alone or in groups and return later unless written permission is submitted to the office. Students will not be permitted to call home during the day to make these arrangements. Planning ahead is the key.

Siblings who are not part of a basketball team, forensics, or any other after-school activity must go to aftercare or home. They are not permitted to attend any activity with their sibling. The only exception is if the parent is the coach or moderator.

**ATTENDANCE NOTIFICATION**

For the safety of the student, parents are required to call the school office to report a student’s absence.

*Late to School*

Students who arrive after 8:00 a.m. but before 11:00 a.m. are considered.....TARDY

Students who arrive after 11:00 a.m. are considered.....1/2 day absence

*Appointments*

Leave early morning and return within two hours (must have doctor’s excuse)...Present

Leave before 12:00 p.m. without returning.....1/2 day absence

## **BIRTHDAY INFORMATION**

**Invitations:** Birthday invitations may not be distributed at the school unless all the children, all the boys, or all the girls, are invited.

**Treats for Birthdays and Parties:** Students may bring in healthy snacks for their birthday treats. Small treats are recommended as large treats often are wasted. St. James is a peanut aware school, not a peanut free school. Please be mindful of students with food related allergies and provide snacks that are healthy.

\* Birthday parties for a faculty member are not permitted unless permission is obtained through the school office at least one week in advance.

## **BOOKS**

**Textbooks:** Saint James School participates in Pennsylvania's Act 195/90 whereby the state purchases textbooks and instructional materials of non-religious items. A parent form giving permission to use these books is kept on file in the school office. Books are to be covered at all times. Books taken to and from school are to be carried in a book bag. Students are responsible for the condition of the books loaned to them. Parents are responsible to pay for lost or damaged books at replacement value. If payment is not made, a student may not receive his/her books for the new year until payment is made.

**Library Books:** Students are responsible for the condition of the library books and other materials taken from the library. Parents are responsible to pay for lost or damaged books at replacement value.

## **CAFETERIA**

Saint James offers a hot lunch each day. Students can pay for their lunches on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis. Tickets must be used by the last day of school. Refunds will not be given, so it is advised that attention be given to student tickets at the end of the year.

Students are to order their lunch and extras in the morning during homeroom period. When a student comes to school late, he/she must inform the school office if he/she would like to order a lunch. (Extras mean two extra tacos, extra hot dog, etc.)

**Students are not permitted to bring glass containers of any kind into the cafeteria.**

Containers that resemble any type of alcoholic beverage, snuff, etc. are not permitted. **Students are not permitted to bring energy drinks.**

## **CELL PHONES**

Due to the number of working parents and family schedules, we understand the need for students to carry cell phones. However, cell phone use is not permitted at any time during the school day unless it is determined by the principal or a teacher that use of the cell phone is necessary. Phones must be turned off during the school day.

If a cell phone is used in school without permission, the school retains the right to take the phone from the student. In some cases the child will have it returned at the end of the day, and/or parents may be required to retrieve the phone from the school office. Other consequences are listed in the Code of Conduct.

Parents are not permitted to call or text a student during school hours. All parent calls must be made to the school office.

At no time are pictures or videos to be taken with a cell phone in school, on school property. This may result in a suspension or expulsion depending on the use of the pictures taken. School-sponsored functions off of school property are considered on an individual basis, i.e. 8<sup>th</sup> grade class trip.

### **CLASSROOM PROGRAMS/ACTIVITIES**

Throughout the school year various programs and activities are held in the classrooms and/or the Gathering Space. While we encourage parents, grandparents, and non-school age children to attend, the school does not encourage siblings missing instructional time to attend these programs.

### **CLOTHING IDENTIFICATION**

Parents are **strongly urged** to mark their children's personal belongings with the child's name. Since children do not readily claim lost items, proper identification helps us to find the owner and save parents the cost of replacement. The lost-and-found area is located outside the school office. Parents and children are encouraged to look for lost clothing in this area. Other lost items, such as glasses, watches, and purses are kept in the school office. Items that are not claimed are donated to St. Vincent de Paul throughout the year.

### **OPTION C PARENT-ALERT/GRADEBOOK**

The Option C Parent-Alert is used in many situations to provide information to parents. At the beginning of each year parents are asked for contact information. Parents will be notified by phone and/or email with school information through the Option C Parent-Alert system. If a change is made in phone numbers and/or email addresses, it is important to alert the school office.

Parents may also go on-line to GradeBook to view their child's grades. A username and password is sent home to new families in September.

### **COMMUNICATION**

**Home/School:** An informational folder is sent home with the youngest child the first day of school and each Wednesday. Parents are urged to ask their children for the folder or to check your child's book bag. The empty folder is to be returned to the homeroom teacher right away.

Any information that is sent to parents **must be approved by the principal**. Information for the Wednesday folders must be in the office by **Tuesday mornings**.

**Parent/Teacher:** Questions concerning your child should be directed to the teacher first by email, note, or phone call. Direct communication between parent and teacher is vital to the total educational program and a child's educational success. Please allow a 24 hour grace period for a teacher to respond to an email or phone call. Please contact the principal if a teacher has not responded after the grace period.

Teachers send homework assignments by email on a daily basis.

### **DIRECTORY**

The directory of Saint James Catholic School contains private information and should be used for school purposes only. Please respect the privacy of our families, and do not use the information contained therein for any personal, commercial or political purposes.

### **DRESS CODE**

See pages 19 and 20



### **EARLY DISMISSAL**

Parents should make every effort to schedule appointments at a time when school is not in session. However, if a child must have an early dismissal, he/she must have a written note. Parents or an authorized adult must meet the child at the school office and sign him/her out. Any missed work will be given to the student the following day.

### **EMERGENCY CARDS**

At the beginning of each school year, parents are required to complete a Student Emergency Card **for each child**. It is imperative that the school be able to reach parents to inform you of illness or an emergency situation. It is also important to list the names of others who can be contacted should you be unavailable. The school office must be contacted immediately if there is any change in the information.

### **FIELD TRIPS**

Every class is permitted field trips during the school year. Each student must have a signed permission slip provided by the school before he/she is permitted to participate.

Tuition for an eighth grade student must be paid in full before he/she can participate in the end-of-the-year trip, activities or graduation.

Overnight field trips are not permitted except for the Pennsylvania Junior Academy of Science.

The number of parent chaperones will be based upon the Diocesan guidelines. It is not always possible to have every parent who wishes to attend. The Diocesan policy calls for one (1) adult for every seven (7) children. Depending on the trip and age of students, this may be adjusted to one (1) adult for every five (5) children. Chaperones may volunteer for one field trip a year for their child's class. As the field trip is for class participation, it is not possible to have siblings accompany the class.

### **FIRE DRILLS/LOCK DOWN DRILLS**

Fire drills are conducted throughout the year. Exit directions, which are posted in prominent places in each room, are to be followed. No one may remain in the building during fire drills. When the students hear the bell, they are to leave the room quickly and quietly in single file. Students remain outside until summoned back to class. Students are to remain in absolute silence during all fire drills. Misconduct of any nature is to be reported to the principal.

Lock down drills and weather drills are also conducted throughout the school year. The purpose of the drills is to help students understand the nature of the drill and the necessary procedures.

### **HONOR ROLL**

Students in Levels 6, 7, and 8 may achieve the honor roll by meeting the academic criteria as set forth by Saint James School.

High Honors – A's in all core subjects; nothing below a B for other subjects.

Honors – A's and B's in all core subjects; nothing below a B for other subjects.

Honorable Mention – A's, B's in all core subjects; only 1 C in all other subjects.

#### **Core Academic Subjects:**

Religion, Reading, English,  
Spelling, Social Studies, Science  
Math/Algebra/Geometry

#### **Other Subjects:**

Handwriting, Physical Education,  
Computer, Art, Music, Spanish, Health



## **HOMEWORK**

Homework is an opportunity for students to practice independent study and to reinforce material presented in class. It is of great educational value and therefore is assigned on a regular basis. Assignments are not always written. Study and memory work are frequently assigned. Students also need to review material on a daily basis. Homework is assigned to:

- enrich school experiences
- provide practice and review
- develop good study habits
- teach responsibility, and foster originality.

Parents can assist students with home assignments in the following ways:

- ✚ Provide a quiet spot away from the television, phones, or other distractions.
- ✚ Check child's work regarding completeness, neatness, and correctness.
- ✚ Be willing to listen to reading, spelling, and math facts and to explain procedures, but never do the assignment.
- ✚ Consult the teacher if the child uses the excuse "no homework" too often.
- ✚ Review math facts every day. Flashcards are always a good resource.

Parents doing homework for their child/children is never beneficial for a student.

The Diocese recommends the following time schedule for home study:

Primary (levels 1-3)	30 minutes
Intermediate (levels 4-5)	45 minutes
Upper Elementary (levels 6-8)	1 – 1-1/2 hours

In case of a student's absence, requests for homework need to be made in the morning and picked up in the office after 2:30 or in aftercare until 5:30.

## **ILLNESS**

It is often difficult to decide if your child should stay home from school when complaining of illness. An objective sign is an elevated temperature. It is recommended that a child be kept home from school until the temperature has remained normal (below 100°) for 24 hours.

If a child has a temperature of 100° or more, skin rash, diarrhea/vomiting, strep throat, pink eye, or evidence of lice, the child will be sent home. Parents are asked to use discretion in sending their children to school if they display any of these symptoms. Please inform the school office if your child becomes sick with a contagious illness. Notes will be sent home with the other children to inform parents of contact and incubation of certain communicable diseases.

## **INTERNET USE**

Saint James School provides access to the Internet for all students, faculty and staff. Students must have permission from their parent/guardian to access the Internet in school.

The use of the Internet is a privilege and is to be used as an educational tool to enhance learning. The student accessing the Internet on a school site is responsible for his/her activities. When using a network students must comply with the rules appropriate for that network. Inappropriate use will result in disciplinary action.

Each year a copy of this policy is sent home for review and signatures. **A student must have the signed agreement on file in the school office before being allowed to use the Internet.**

## **MEDICATION**

Whenever possible, medicine is to be given at home, and parents are to request the physician to adjust the schedule for administration so that it can be given before and after school hours. A student is never permitted to carry any type of medication in his/her book bag, pockets, or on his/her person. Labeled medication (including cough drops) needs to be turned in at the office with a note stating a time the medications are to be given. Students can report to the office at the stated time to take their medication.

If medicine must be administered at school, the following guidelines apply:

1. The medication needs to be delivered to the school office by a responsible adult along with a physician's written request for distribution by school personnel.
2. Medication brought to school needs to be in a container labeled by a pharmacist or doctor. The label must include the student's name, the name of the physician, date of prescription, dosage, and frequency of administration.

## **PLAYGROUND**

Weather permitting; the students enjoy an outside break supervised by a staff member and/or volunteers. Students are never to leave the playground area without the permission of the principal and/or the knowledge of the playground monitor. In case of illness or accident, the student is to report to the school office. Students are to report any problems to the playground monitor immediately.

## **PROCEDURES FOR SCHOOL DELAYS, CLOSINGS, EARLY DISMISSALS**

Saint James School follows the Quaker Valley School District when delays and closings occur.

Through our "Parent Alert" system, parents receive a phone call and/or email when there is a delay or closing. Delays and closings are also listed on local TV stations and their websites. It is very important that families complete a "One Call" form. Any changes in contact information must be reported to the office immediately. This helps ensure effective communication.

### ***School Delays/Closings***

When Quaker Valley School District has a two hour delay or a closing, Saint James School will also be delayed two hours or a closing respectively. There are several school districts that bus students to Saint James School and you will need to follow **your** district's schedule. For a two hour delay, students need to be at school at 9:50 and not before 9:30.

***SPECIAL NOTE:*** If your local school district closes, and Saint James School is open, your district **will not** provide bus transportation. Transportation to and from school becomes the responsibility of the parent.

### ***Weather-Related Early Dismissal***

Discuss the possibility of an early dismissal with your child(ren). You need to discuss where they are to go in the event of an early dismissal.

Students who are riding busses from **ANY** district will be dismissed when the busses arrive unless we are instructed otherwise by parents. Again, we have many school districts, so please pay attention to the TV/Radio for information concerning your local district when inclement weather happens.

If your child is normally picked up or you will be picking your child(ren) up on a weather-related early dismissal day, please park by the old convent and come to the school office. We will call

for your child(ren). Children will not be dismissed until a parent or designated person comes to the office.

Forms are sent home in the fall. These forms provide the school with information about your family procedures when a weather-related early dismissal occurs.

**THERE WILL BE AFTERCARE IF AN EARLY DISMISSAL OCCURS.**

### **REPORTING INCIDENTS/PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

Parents must call the school immediately when there has been an incident with other student/students. Waiting to report an incident makes it difficult to investigate the incident. Parent/parents of one student are not permitted to confront or question another child regarding an incident that may have occurred between students on school grounds, the bus, or at a school sponsored activity. Violation of this may result in the dismissal of the family from Saint James School. Parent-to-parent communication in regards to an incident is a personal choice.

### **SACRAMENTS/LITURGY**

The reception of the Sacraments and regular attendance at Sunday liturgy are a vital aspect in the children's Catholic faith development.

**Liturgy:** Students attend liturgy once a week and on Holy Days. Families are invited to join the school liturgy and are encouraged to attend Sunday liturgy on a regular basis.

**Penance:** Penance is scheduled for students during Advent and Lent. However, families are encouraged to participate in this sacrament on a regular basis. Students in grades 3-8 receive the sacrament of penance twice a year.

**Second Grade:** Students are prepared for and receive the Sacrament of Penance and First Eucharist in conjunction with the parish Religious Education Program.

**Eighth Grade:** Students are prepared for and receive the Sacrament of Confirmation in conjunction with the parish Religious Education Program.

### **SCHOOL HOURS**

The school day begins at 7:50 a.m. and dismissal begins at 2:25 p.m. The first bell rings at 7:50 a.m. The tardy bell rings at 8:00 a.m. Students must be in their classroom by 8:00 a.m. This is a 10 minute grace time between the first bell and the tardy bell.

### **SECURITY/SAFETY**

All doors to the school will be closed and locked during school hours. Parents and visitors need to enter the school using the security system. Everyone may be asked to identify him/herself before entering the building.

Students are not permitted to leave school grounds while participating in extra-curricular activities. Example: A student attending a dance, basketball game, etc. is not permitted to leave the designated area.

Another parent (familiar adult) is never permitted to offer another child a ride home or take a child off grounds for any reason. The office must always be informed of any change in transportation by a child's parent or designated adult who is familiar to the office personnel.

### **SPORTS**

Registration for St. James Sports Program may be completed on-line by visiting the SJS website. No student is to participate in practice and/or games until all forms – *physical, parents' release, insurance, and emergency contact* – are on file. Financial obligations must also be met.

## **STUDENT RECORDS**

Student records are maintained in compliance with the State Board of Education Regulations on Pupil Records adopted July 12, 1974.

Confidential information about the student and/or family may not be held in the student's permanent record without the knowledge of the student and/or parents. Records are not released to any person or entity unless there is written parental consent.

Eighth grade record transfers to high schools will be sent to one school. If sending applications to more than one school a \$3.00 mailing fee will be charged to parents. The \$3.00 fee must be sent with each request after the first set of records is sent.

## **USE OF OFFICE TELEPHONE**

A child is not permitted to use the school phones except for emergencies. Forgotten homework, books, gym clothes or changing afternoon plans with friends, etc. are not sufficient cause to call home. If calls are deemed necessary, school personnel will make the phone call. If a lunch is forgotten, the student will be provided a hot meal from the school cafeteria, and parents will be responsible to pay the following day.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

It is important that we know the means by which each child arrives and departs daily. A note, phone call, or email must be sent to the school office when a change in transportation is necessary. On the first day of school, please return the information sheet which provides us with your child's bus number.

Students are provided bus transportation from their home school district. Several school districts provide busing to Saint James School. **State law does not permit students to ride buses from another district.**

Saint James School is located in the Quaker Valley School District; we follow its yearly calendar as closely as possible and also follow their lead for weather delays and cancellations.

When bus transportation is needed from any school district, it is the parents' responsibility to call your local school district and arrange for bus transportation. The school districts do not take requests from the school.

While on the bus, students are expected to remain in their seats at all times. This insures their safety and the safety of others. If inappropriate conduct occurs, the driver may prepare a report which is sent home to alert the parents about the problem. A copy is also sent to the school. If the inappropriate behavior persists, the student's privilege of riding the bus may be suspended temporarily or permanently.

Another parent (familiar adult) is never permitted to offer another child a ride home or take a child off grounds for any reason. The office must always be informed of any change in transportation by a child's parent or designated adult who is familiar to the office personnel.

## **VALUABLES**

Students are not to bring anything of value to school such as large amounts of money, various forms of technology, toys, etc. The school is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

## **VOLUNTEERS/VISITORS**

It is the goal of Saint James School to ensure a safe and orderly environment. In the interest of this objective the following protocol is provided to assist in ensuring a safe environment through appropriate security practices and an orderly environment that supports organized and uninterrupted educational processes.

Everyone may be asked to identify themselves before entering the building. Everyone must report to the school office and state the purpose of their visit. Everyone must then sign-in and receive a visitors' badge which must be worn when in the building. Everyone must sign-out when leaving the building.

Parents are not to visit with teachers during morning arrival or afternoon dismissal unless an appointment has been scheduled. Random visits to classrooms are not permitted any time during the school day.

Any parent wishing to meet with a teacher must have a previously scheduled appointment. If a parent arrives for an unscheduled visit, teachers are instructed to call the school office and inform the principal of the situation.

When a student forgets anything at home, parents must drop the articles off in the school office. Parents are not permitted to take the items to their child's classroom.

Parents are not permitted to randomly visit their children at any time during the school day. If a parent needs to see a child, the parent must first report to the school office, and the child will be called to the school office. Teachers are instructed to call the school office to inform the principal if parents go directly to a classroom.

## **WEBSITE**

The school's website is an invaluable communication tool. Please utilize the website for all types of communication. [www.stjameschool.us](http://www.stjameschool.us)

## Other Policies

### **ADMISSION PROCEDURES**

Saint James School admits students of any race, or national, or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to all students formally accepted into the school. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, or national, or ethnic origin in the administration of our educational policies, admission policies, athletic or other school administered programs. Any student who attends Saint James School must participate in religion classes, worship services and other religious activities.

### ***Severe/Life Threatening Allergies or Similar Medical Issues***

Because St. James does not employ a full-time nurse, the school reserves the right to deny student admission.

### ***Acceptance***

Applications will be reviewed for acceptance once the application materials and/or prior school records are submitted and reviewed.

### ***Admission***

New students are granted admission on a nine week probationary period. A student may be asked to leave at any time during the nine week period. New students and their families need to be cognizant of, and willing to comply with, all school policies and procedures. Students may be dismissed for any of the following reasons:

- Lack of cooperation
- Recurring unacceptable behavior
- Failure to disclose any special needs of students – or special needs that were not identified after the nine week probationary period, and the school cannot meet the child's needs.
- Delinquent tuition

This list is illustrative but not exhaustive of possible reasons for dismissal.

Administration reserves the right to revoke admission of any student for just cause.

### ***Application***

\* **Siblings of currently enrolled students** who are just enrolling at Saint James School must complete the entire **New Student Application process** before being considered for acceptance.

\* **New students** – Applications are considered **complete** once **ALL** the following materials are submitted to the principal:

- 1. Application for admission**
- 2. Birth Certificate** - To be considered for acceptance a child must reach the required school age (pre-3=3, pre-4=4, Kindergarten=5) by **AUGUST 31<sup>ST</sup>**
- 3. Immunization Record**
- 4. Baptismal Certificate** (N/A if baptized at Saint James Parish)
- 5. Permanent Records** (Required for students who are applying for acceptance to grades 1-8)
- 6. Teacher Letter of Recommendation**
- 7. Non-Refundable Application Fee of \$100** (Waiver for all siblings of currently enrolled students)
- 8. Pastor Verification Forms** (Required for all students who are not members of Saint James Parish but are members of another Catholic Parish)
- 9. Student Interview** (as needed)
- 10. Parent Conference with Principal**

## **AUXILIARY SERVICES**

The following services are offered through the Intermediate Unit:

**Health:** Quaker Valley School District provides a school nurse. The nurse schedules doctor's visits for dentals and physical examinations that are required by PA law. The nurse also conducts the vision and hearing tests and height and weight screenings for designated grades. Health information and emergency cards are kept on file in the school office.

**Remedial Reading:** A reading specialist teacher is provided through Act 89 for those students who are eligible. The reading specialist also serves students who are eligible for Title I.

**Speech and Language:** Speech and language services are also provided through Act 89.

**Counseling:** A certified school counselor is provided by Allegheny Intermediate Unit 3. The counselor provides individual and small group counseling sessions to children in grades K-8. The children can be referred by parents, principal, and teacher or by self-referral. The counselor is permitted to see a child once without parental permission. If further sessions are requested by the school or self, parental permission is necessary.

**Psychological Testing:** When it has been determined by parents, principal, teachers and other support teachers that testing would be appropriate for a student, the parents must request the testing from a child's local school district. Information about how to request testing is available in the school office. Results are formally reported to parents, principal and teachers along with a list of recommendations made by the psychologist. This information is kept confidential and only shared with necessary school personnel. When teachers are asked to complete a behavioral assessment or other forms in regards to testing, these forms will only be mailed or faxed to a doctor's office and/or the child's school districts office. Forms will not be given to parents.

**Student Assistance Program:** The Student Assistance Program (E-SAP) is mandated in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania by Act 211 of 1990. It is a comprehensive program of prevention, intervention, and support for students in grades K-12. The members of the team are the principal, faculty members and school counselor of the school who have received special training through Approved Agencies.

The program exists in order to promote the growth and development of a child. The team members work with students who are experiencing behavioral/academic difficulties which impact their social, emotional, and educational progress. Referrals for the program are made by faculty and/or parents. Once a referral has been received by the team, classroom teachers are asked to complete a form which helps identify the behaviors. The team then makes informed assumptions as to what is needed to help the student, conveys this information to classroom teachers, parents/guardians and evaluates the results. If necessary, after consultation with parents, appropriate referrals are made to outside agencies.

Team members must maintain all information regarding students and their families under **safeguard of privacy and confidentiality**. Access is limited to those who have a legitimate educational interest.

## **CHILD ABUSE**

The school will follow the policy set forth by the Diocese of Pittsburgh and in accordance with the provisions of the Child Protective Services Law of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Act. No.124 of 1975. School personnel are mandated reporters in regards to child abuse.

## **FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS – FROM THE DIOCESAN EDUCATIONAL OFFICE**

The following rule is a matter of policy and justice: No transfer student will be accepted into another Catholic school until all outstanding tuition obligations are met at the previous school.



Principals are required by policy to contact the principal from the school where the student is transferring from to be certain that all outstanding tuition has been paid.

A form must be signed by the former principal or pastor verifying that all of the financial obligations have been met. Admission will not be complete until this form is received.

Any family with an outstanding tuition balance, volunteer commitment balance, or aftercare balance at the end of the school year will not receive final report cards or school records until your account has been paid in full.

**Tuition** - Tuition is set annually in the spring of the year for the upcoming school year. Catholic families are given lower tuition prices than non-Catholic families. Families with multiple children are given discounts for each successive child in the family. In every case, the amount charged for tuition does not cover the *cost per pupil* required to maintain the school building, pay salaries and benefits, and to operate the school's programs. Saint James School parents are expected to commit to participating in the school's fundraising efforts as well as to give 40 volunteer hours to school functions per school year.

**SCRIP Program and Other Opportunities to Help Offset Tuition** - The Gift Card Program was adopted by parents and encouraged by the Diocese of Pittsburgh as a way to manage the increasing cost of tuition in Catholic elementary schools. Essentially the program created an opportunity for families who support local merchants to have the merchants pay a "commission" to the school. The Gift Card Program has saved school families over \$60,000 through profits paid by merchants and credited to individual families to pay their tuition costs each year.

There is no limit to the amount of tuition discount you can generate from the Gift Card Program profits (commissions to the school) --- allowing Giant Eagle and other vendors to pay your tuition costs. Basically, 100% of any family's Gift Card Program profits will be credited directly to their tuition bill. (For example, if you and your extended family generate \$1000 in Gift Card Program profits, then you pay \$1000 less in tuition.) Other profits that also count toward tuition credit are profits from Anderson Candies sales.

Parish staff members administer the Gift Card Program and other eligible fundraisers, keeping a full record of all purchases and profits. A report is sent to each family in November, January, April and May to clarify the family's tuition balance, profits/deductions, and credit due.

If a family has established consistent use of the Gift Card Program from year to year, that family will have the option to reduce their tuition payment **up to** \$600 per year (this amount depends on the consistent profit shown by that family). Any shortfalls in anticipated Gift Card Program and other eligible fundraising profits will be collected in May.

**Fundraising Events/Programs** - As with any Catholic elementary school, Saint James School depends on fundraising in addition to tuition to meet its annual operating budget. The Diocese of Pittsburgh mandates that each Catholic school in the Diocese raise at least 15% of its operating budget through fundraisers unrelated to tuition. Saint James School does this through three specific fundraisers throughout each year. We sponsor an annual Race for Education, Gala, and soliciting contributions through Annual Fund.

The parish also hosts Lenten Fish Fries to benefit the school, and we have received generous donations from individuals to upgrade specific aspects/programs in the school. These fundraisers are an essential part of school finances and aid in keeping tuition at an affordable rate. Every family is asked to participate in the fundraising efforts.

## **REGISTRATION/TRANSFER**

### **Kindergarten:**

- Child must be five (5) years of age by August 31.
- Child must have proof of required immunizations.
- A birth certificate is required.
- A baptismal certificate if baptized Catholic.

### **Grade One:**

- Child must be six (6) years of age by August 31.
- Child must have proof of required immunizations.
- A birth certificate is required.
- A baptismal certificate if baptized Catholic.
- If a child attended another Catholic school, proof that all financial obligations have been met.
- Proof that no behavioral, educational or psychological problems were demonstrated in another school.

### **Grade Two (2) through Eight:**

- A birth certificate is required.
- Proof of completed immunizations is required.
- A current year report card and any current standardized test results are required.
- Any additional testing which a child may have had is required.
- If a child attended another Catholic school, proof that all financial obligations have been met.
- Proof that no behavioral, educational or psychological problems were demonstrated in another school.

## **Further Requirements for Transfer Students**

Saint James School retains the right to contact a student's last school to gather information concerning behavior, academics, or any other information deemed necessary. A student who transfers to Saint James School is accepted conditionally even though registration requirements have been completed. If a student demonstrates the inability to adjust academically and/or behaviorally to Saint James School and/or the parent/guardian demonstrates an unwillingness to support the school's mission and/or policies, the administration reserves the right to dismiss the student at any time.

## **RIGHTS OF NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act gives full rights to each parent, unless the school has been provided with evidence that there is a court order, State's statute or legally binding document relating to such matters as divorce, separation or custody that specifically revokes these rights. Such an order must be on file in the school office. Every effort is made to keep the non-custodial parent apprised of the progress of the child(ren) through reports, report cards and parent/teacher conferences.

## **COACHES/VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS AT SAINT JAMES SCHOOL**

At Saint James School, volunteers play an integral role in the education of our children through involvement in the life of the school. There are many opportunities for volunteering and your time and talents are vital to the operation of the school. We recognize the vast and valuable resources our parents have to offer. We look forward to working with you to accomplish our goal to make your child's educational experience both meaningful and productive.

The Diocese of Pittsburgh's Safe Environment Policy is a program designed to create a safe environment for children throughout the diocese and here at Saint James School. These procedures are a means to insure that our school not only fulfills the mandate of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops as outlined in the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* but also meet the requirements of state and federal law.

The Safe Environment Policy requires that all volunteers who have regular contact with the children of our school complete the following items. **THESE PACKETS ARE AVAILABLE AT THE RECTORY OFFICE.** Please contact the rectory office with any questions.

If you plan on volunteering your time in our school, these items will need to be completed prior to volunteer service. If not completed in a timely manner, volunteering will no longer be an option until said requirements are fulfilled. Clearances need to be renewed every five years.

#### **WEATHER EMERGENCY DRILLS**

Weather emergency drills are practiced during the year. Teachers follow the policy governing weather emergencies for student safety. Students must maintain silence at all times during an emergency drill.

#### **WITHDRAWAL OF STUDENTS**

When a student withdraws or is dismissed from Saint James School, the school must be notified where the student will be attending school. If notification is not given within a week from the date of withdrawal, it is standard procedure that a letter is sent to the school district in which the student resides informing them that the child no longer attends Saint James School.