

# 2007-2008 SJS Handbook

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# ***Welcome to St. James School!***



*We are happy to have you as part of our school family!*

*The St. James School staff is committed to teach and model Gospel values that will encourage students to live their lives as a reflection of Christ. The philosophy of the school strives to recognize and respect the dignity of each person and to offer a positive, Christ-centered, and safe learning environment.*

*Our goal is to make your child's educational experience both meaningful and productive. To accomplish that goal, every family must be informed of school policies, procedures, and expectations. This handbook serves as the primary reference source for questions about the operation of our school. We ask that you read the handbook thoroughly, review it with your child(ren), and keep it accessible. Throughout the year please also reference our website, where you can find additional updated information and all necessary forms.*

*Blessings to you and your family!*

*Mrs. Sinsigalli,  
Principal*

## **Prayer to St. James**

O Gentle Jesus,  
Saint James was one of Your first apostles,  
but he started out as a very impulsive, self-centered man.

He dared to ask You for a place of honor in Your kingdom,  
and he wanted You to destroy the villages that had rejected You,  
but eventually he developed a true understanding of holiness.

I ask him to pray that my humility grows stronger than my pride,  
that I submit my will to Your will,  
and that, when I speak, my words reveal Your gentleness and love.

Restrain me when I want to rush ahead,  
and give me a broader perspective  
when I'm seeing things through a narrow, limited view.

Saint James, pray for me.  
Amen.

### **Philosophy of St. James School**

It is the aim of St. James School to provide a Catholic educational setting in which our students and their families can integrate Gospel values in daily living. We strive to create a climate in which each child can develop spiritually, intellectually, physically, emotionally, and socially, and in turn, enhance the world.

Each child will develop an understanding of Catholic doctrine, liturgy, the sacraments, sacred scripture, and personal prayer to build a personal relationship with Christ and His Church.

Children will be provided with challenging, yet realistic goals to achieve their full potential. Individual learning styles and rates of achievement will be recognized.

Each child will receive guidance in developing sound attitudes and habits for both mental and physical health.

Each child will develop a Christian awareness of responsibility to God, family, parish, community, nation and world.

### **Middle States Accreditation**

St. James School is accredited by the Commission of Elementary Schools of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools. Middle States accreditation is an expression of confidence in our school's mission, goals, objectives, performance and resources and validates publicly the excellence in education. Middle States is recognized by the academic community throughout the world in assisting with the continuous improvement of total quality schools.

The Middle States Evaluation is an ongoing process requiring the submission of updated plans every three years. After ten years the school is re-evaluated for continued accreditation. We have been accredited since **May 2000**. We maintain accreditation by continually evaluating six main indicators:

- Faith Formation/Catholic Identity
- Academic Excellence
- Enrollment
- Effective Patterns of Organization and Management
- Financial Stability
- Support From Parents and Community

### **NCEA Accreditation**

St. James School is accredited by the National Catholic Education Association. The principal, in conjunction with the pastor, works with the teachers in the religious development and sacramental preparation of the students. A conscious effort is made to create a Christ-centered atmosphere by stressing Christian values and morality in the classroom as well as throughout the school. A conscious effort is also made to integrate catechetics into every aspect of the school curriculum.

## ADMISSIONS / REGISTRATION POLICIES

For children entering St. James School at any grade level (Kindergarten-Grade 8), parents must present a baptismal certificate, birth certificate, and health and immunization records. A student entering kindergarten must be five years of age by September 1<sup>st</sup>. Those applying for grades 5-8 must present letters of recommendation from the previous school in order to be considered. Grade level and academic group determinations are made on the basis of school records.

St. 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.

Children who are not Catholic are expected to participate in religion classes and to attend all religious functions of the school/church. All school families must sign the Memorandum of Understanding agreeing to this. It is expected that all parents will be involved in the Christian development of their children.

## ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance at school is a major factor in determining academic success. Students who are absent for more than thirty days during the academic year may be denied academic promotion. Medical and dental appointments, if possible, should be made outside of school hours. No child will be released from class unless he or she brings a note signed by parents or guardians. The note must be presented to the homeroom teacher and signed by the principal. Parents are required to enter the school building and to sign their child out in the office. Any student not in school during the day may not participate in any extracurricular school activity that evening.

### **Absence**

Absences from school are 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 reasons, such as a death in the family or a 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. *This applies to "Take your child to work" day.*

### **Reporting Absence**

Each day that a child is to be tardy and/or absent the parent or guardian must notify the school prior to 9:00 A.M. with the reason for the absence. If we do not hear from parents, a call will be made to you. This policy will be enforced for the safety of our children. All missed homework is to be made up. Students are generally given one day to catch up for each day of absence.

### **Early Dismissal**

Children who leave school before 12:30 will be marked absent in the afternoon. **For these dismissals, parents or an authorized adult must meet the child at the office and sign him/her out at the authorized time.**

### **Excuses**

**Upon returning to school from an absence, a student must submit a written excuse to his/her homeroom teacher as required by state law.** This must be a dated, written excuse from the parent/guardian stating the reason for the absence and the dates for which the note applies. Sample "Excused Absence Forms" are in the back of this handbook and may be copied for your use throughout the year. Simply fill in the blanks. If an excuse is not submitted **within three days** following the absence, the absence will be classified as **Unexcused**.

*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 the 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."*

## **Tardiness**

To avoid being considered tardy, students must be in their homerooms by 8:05. Every room in the school is furnished with an atomic clock so as to avoid discrepancies in the actual time of arrival. Students arriving late must report to the office, get a Tardy Slip from the secretary, and give it to the homeroom teacher before reporting to class. Children who arrive after 9:35 will be marked absent for the morning.

A trend of tardiness will result in disciplinary action, ranging from making up school time at lunch or at the end of the day in detention. Specifically,

### Primary Grades:

- After 4 tardies, parents will be called or emailed with a warning concerning the accumulation of tardies.
- After 10 tardies, the parents will be called in for a conference with the principal.

### Grades 4-8:

- After 4 tardies, parents will be called or emailed with a warning concerning the accumulation of tardies.
- The 5<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> tardies will result in recess detention on the day of the late arrival.
- The 10<sup>th</sup> tardy will result in an after school detention.
- Subsequent tardies will result in more severe disciplinary action ranging from Saturday detention to a referral to the magistrate in keeping with PA truancy regulations.

## **Truancy**

The laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania provide for a \$300 per day fine and allow the court to impose parent education classes and community service sentences for parents of a truant child who do not show they took reasonable steps to ensure the child's school attendance. It provides that the parent and child must appear at a hearing before the district magistrate. This law also provides that a penalty will follow the truant student until issuance of a driver's license, at which time the license will be suspended for 90 days for a first offense and 6 months for a second offense.

## **CAFETERIA**

St. James School lunches are provided by the "Cougar Cafeteria." Students may buy lunch or bring a lunch from home. Glass bottles are not permitted. Those bringing lunch from home may purchase milk. Each month a menu is sent home. Tickets may be purchased by sending in a check made payable to the "Cougar Cafeteria." More details will be provided on the first month's lunch menu.

### **Cafeteria / Recess Duty**

Parent involvement is necessary to help maintain order during lunch and recess. Each day, teachers are assigned to cafeteria duty and recess. We ask parents or other relatives who are able to commit an hour of time to help in this regard. Please contact the school office to volunteer. This volunteer opportunity is managed through HSA.

## **COMMUNICATION**

Open communication among parents, teachers and administrators is important for student progress and for maintaining a healthy school climate. **The proper line of communication in discussing any facet of your child's progress is to contact the teacher directly.** This may be done through a written message, by an email, or by a telephone call to the office during school hours. Teachers, who are unavailable during class hours, will return your call as soon as their schedule permits. If after communication with the teacher you still are not satisfied, then you may contact the Principal.

### **Weekly Folder**

Both home and school often depend on the student for the faithful carrying of messages to and from school. Each child is provided with a special folder at the beginning of the school year for this purpose. This folder will be sent home on a weekly basis containing schoolwork, weekly Cougar Call newsletter, and any important communication from the teacher, administration, and/or other school group such as HSA or SJAA. Parents are asked to return the folder to school the next day. Parents may return any necessary forms in the folder.

If you would like to include something in the weekly folder, please have it to the office before the end of the day on Monday. All submissions for the Cougar Call must be in the office by noon on Fridays. Everything must be approved by the office prior to being sent home.

## **Monthly Calendars**

Just before the first of each month, the monthly school calendar and hot lunch menu are included in the weekly folder. These two items should be saved for quick daily reference. They are also available on the school website.

## **Phone Calls**

The telephone in the secretary's office may not be used by the students. We do ask that routine family business with your children be conducted at home before the school day begins. Arrangements concerning transportation and after-school activities are to be made before the child leaves home in the morning whenever possible.

**Students are never permitted to carry cell phones during the school day.** If it is necessary for a student to have a cell phone, it must remain turned off in the student's locker throughout the school day. Students may not turn on their cell phones until they have been dismissed and are out of the building. If a cell phone is confiscated, it will be kept in the principal's office until a parent or legal guardian can come to collect it.

## **Email**

Every staff member has access to email. Addresses are available on the website. Please be sure that the school has your up-to-date email address, as many communiqués will be sent in this way.

## **Website**

The school website – [www.stjamesschool.us](http://www.stjamesschool.us) – is intended to serve both as an informational tool for current school parents and students and as a marketing tool for prospective families. Please make use of the site and send any input you may have to improve its usefulness. If you are interested in helping with some aspect of the site, please notify the office of your interest. Most any form that you need throughout the school year is available on the site, as are links to the online grade book, the FACTS tuition management website, Diocesan athletic schedules, teacher email addresses, and more. In addition, the site provides a pictorial report of recent school activities. If you do not want your child's picture to appear in any candid shots on the site, be sure to note that on the Photo Permission Slip distributed on the first day of school.

## **Report Cards**

Report cards are issued four times during the school year. Consult the school calendar for dates. Each family will be given login information for each of their children in the school so that they can access the teachers' online grade book. Interim reports will no longer be issued, as it will be assumed that every family has access to and can monitor their children's grades online. If you are not able to do so, you must notify the office and request paper interim reports.

Make every effort to know your child's intellectual ability and emotional/psychological conditions. Expect and encourage a performance consistent with these. If conditions exist in the family which may affect your child's performance, please advise the teachers and administrations as soon as possible so the school can better understand and serve your child's needs.

## **CURRICULUM**

St. James School endeavors to provide a well-balanced curriculum, designed to meet and exceed the state mandated requirements in the basic subject areas. Courses include religion, reading, language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, Spanish, music, art, library, health, physical education, and computer education.

Grading Scale: A=93-100, B=85-92, C=75-84, D=70-74, E=below 70

## **Catechetics/Religious Formation**

The Catholic Church recognizes parents/guardians as the primary educators of their children. The role of the parish school is to supplement and complement the role of the parent. In the school, a formal catechetical program is taught daily. The Diocesan Catechetical Curriculum Guidelines contain a balance of doctrinal content, scriptural understanding, faith formation, prayer, and worship experiences. A conscious effort is made to create a Christ-centered atmosphere and to integrate catechetics into every aspect of the school curriculum.

Our belief in Jesus has drawn us to this school community. Our beliefs are expressed in and strengthened by daily communal prayer. This includes a prayer service each morning, as well as simple prayers for before lunch and at the end of the day. The introduction over the Public Address system each morning briefly sketches the Saint or feast of the day or some aspect of the liturgical season. Attention is also given to the seasons of the year, to the anniversaries of historical figures and peacemakers of our time, and to civil holidays.

Faith experiences are an integral part of catechetics. An important part of our schedule includes participation in the Holy Mass. First through eighth graders attend Mass once per week, with students serving as cantors, musicians, lectors, gift bearers, and servers. Kindergarteners join in the Mass once the class is adequately prepared, likely in the second quarter. Pre-schoolers also attend Mass occasionally, as their schedule permits. The sacrament of Reconciliation is also made available to the students twice during the school year. (If you would like to receive the sacrament more frequently, the priests of St. James hear confessions every Saturday from 11am to noon.) The students will also join together for several types of traditional Catholic devotion, including First Friday Eucharistic Adoration, the Rosary, and Stations of the Cross.

Parent Preparation Programs for Reconciliation, Eucharist, and Confirmation are held during the year. These are parish programs and involve all eligible children and parents of the parish. Students in grades 5 through 8 also study the mandated Diocesan human sexuality curriculum: *The Catholic Vision of Love*. Information will be made available to parents before this begins. For general Parish Religious Education information, call the Religious Education Office at 412-741-6650.

### **The Continuous Growth Approach to Instruction**

In the skill areas of Reading and Math, the curricula for these subjects are so designed that students can advance through defined levels of competency according to their needs and abilities. Student achievement is evaluated at the students' grade level. On the report card, each student's particular "level" in these areas is indicated. The goals of the Continuous Growth Program are:

- to recognize and provide for differences in each student's growth patterns
- to provide an environment in reading and math classes that permits and encourages continuous progress to adapt the math and reading curriculum to each child so as to challenge maximum individual development
- to encourage students to exert effort so that they may experience success in their encounter with each school situation

Once a student enters 7<sup>th</sup> grade, the curriculum becomes a pre-academic high school curriculum.

### **Honor Roll**

Students in grades 6-8 have the opportunity to be included in Honor Roll each grading period.

High Honor--all A's and S's

Honor--all A's and B's and S's

Honorable Mention--A's, B's and one C and S's

No child with any grade below a C, with any U's, or with "<" behavior marks will be included on the Honor Roll.

### **Standardized Achievement Tests**

A periodic, reliable measurement of the development of certain skills is essential for effectiveness of instructional procedures. Therefore, St. James School participates in the national standardized test program selected for the Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Pittsburgh – the TERRA NOVA. This test is administered to private and public schools throughout the country, and results provided to parents are in comparison to the results nationwide. At St. James, testing generally takes place in early spring and involves grades 2-8. Some of the specific purposes of the TERRA NOVA testing program are:

- To determine the developmental level of each child in order to better adapt materials and instructional procedures to individual needs and abilities
- To diagnose specific strengths and weaknesses in students or in our academic program
- To provide information that is useful for grouping children with special needs

A component of the standardized testing program is an aptitude test that helps to define the ability of a student in relationship to the results of the standardized test. If a child should be absent due to illness, every attempt will be made to enable the child to make-up the tests. However, since the tests must be mailed on the last scheduled test day, make-up testing often necessitates taking more tests daily than is ideal. To prevent this, **we ask that you do not schedule trips or appointments during the time of standardized testing.**

### **Standardized Faith Knowledge Tests**

Students in grades 5 & 8 take the "ACRE" standardized religion test to compare faith understanding on school, diocesan and national levels.

## **DISCIPLINE**

The St. James School discipline code is based on the belief that young people must learn to deal with each other and with adults in a manner consistent with Christian teaching. This means that everyone is entitled to respect and that behavior in school should reflect love of God, neighbor, and self.

Students are expected to put forth their best effort and to conduct themselves at all times in a manner that will promote a safe, orderly learning environment. School and classroom rules and expected behavior are explained to the children. Any behavior that causes the learning atmosphere to deteriorate or to be disrupted, or which infringes upon the rights of others in school, will not be tolerated and will subject the student to corrective measures.

Every teacher and staff member shares the responsibility to model appropriate behavior and to support the structure necessary for learning self-discipline. Students are expected to assume responsibility for their actions, develop self-control, and accept responsibility and consequences for inappropriate behavior. Social skills are taught, modeled, practiced, and infused into the daily life and experience of the school family.

Please be aware that any disrespect, destructive act, or inappropriate behavior will be dealt with accordingly. If an individual student does not meet his/her personal responsibility for good conduct, the school may discipline the student.

The severity or repetitive nature of non-compliance will determine the appropriate consequences. To remedy unacceptable behavior, the following actions may be taken:

1. Teacher/student conference to develop a plan for remediation
2. Time-out in the classroom, playground or cafeteria
3. Communication with parent via note, telephone call or conference
4. After school or Saturday detention
5. Referral to the principal
6. School community service requirement
7. Denial of participation in school activities, including sports and field trips
8. Referral to the SAP Team
9. School probation, or
10. Suspension.

The following behaviors will result in immediate administrative referrals and can result in referrals to law enforcement or other government agencies:

- Violations of weapons policy
- Violations of the drug/alcohol policy
- Any purposeful action that results in bodily harm to another

### **Weapons**

No weapon may be brought onto school property, including, but not limited to the school building, outdoor areas, outdoor facilities, or school buses, or to any school related activity. A weapon shall include but not be limited to any knife, cutting instrument, cutting tool, nun-chuck stick, firearm, rifle or any other tool, instrument or implement capable of inflicting bodily injury, which is possessed under circumstances not manifestly appropriate for lawful uses that it may have. This includes firearms that are not loaded or lack a clip or other component to render it immediately operable. A person in possession of a weapon on school property violates state criminal statutes and school regulation, and shall be subject to the following discipline and penalty:

1. Parents will be immediately notified.
2. The local police will be called.
3. The student will be placed on suspension until the administration has concluded an investigation to determine if expulsion is warranted.

### **Substance Abuse**

St. James School adheres to the Substance Abuse Policy as promulgated by the Diocese of Pittsburgh and the Allegheny Intermediate Unit Consortium. The entire policy is available in the school office.

**DRESS CODE**

**Philosophy:** The dress code reflects **the dignity proper to a student attending a Catholic school**. Proper school attire and good grooming are conducive to a student's educational and social development. Whether on regular uniform days or on special dress days, students are expected to dress **modestly and appropriately in keeping with our Christian values**. **The school reserves the right to make the final determination of “modest” and “appropriate” attire.**

This dress code is required of all students, kindergarten through eighth grade. **It is the parents’ responsibility to see that their children adhere to the Dress Code Policy.** It is essential for the maintenance of order in school that parents only purchase accepted uniform clothing for their children to wear at school. Please see the following descriptions to ensure that your purchases are in compliance with the dress code.

	<b>2007-2008</b>
<b>Shirts K-8</b>	All shirts must be white and consistent with the styles offered by SchoolBelles and must have the SJS crest. (The crest is mandatory in grades 3-8 only.) All shirts must be kept tucked into pants or skirts unless they have a waistband. Options: Short sleeve or long sleeve oxford, turtleneck or polo (with/without waistband). Girls K-4 may wear Peter Pan collar with jumper.
<b>Slacks / Shorts K-8</b>	Navy (K-8) or khaki (5-8 only) slacks or shorts which are consistent with the styles offered to SJS by SchoolBelles. The official dates when shorts are permitted to be worn are from the start of school to October 31 <sup>st</sup> and then beginning April 1 <sup>st</sup> to the end of the school year.
<b>Jumpers K-4</b>	SJS plaid in drop waist or split bib style. Grades K-4 only.
<b>Skirts/Kilts/ Skorts/Culottes</b>	SJS plaid skirt, kilt, or culottes for grades 4-8. SJS plaid skort for grades K-8. <b>These must be no shorter than one inch above the knee for sanitary reasons and in the interest of modesty.</b>
<b>Sweaters</b>	All sweaters must be solid navy or white, consistent with the styles offered to SJS by SchoolBelles and must have the SJS crest. Options: vest, cardigan, crew or V-neck.
<b>Other Warm- Weather Wear</b>	Blue fleece pullover, vest or jacket with SJS logo as sold by SchoolBelles; sweatshirts with SJS crest – no hoodies or athletic logos except on dress down days.
<b>Socks</b>	Solid colors only: white, black, navy blue or khaki
<b>Belts</b>	Boys: black, brown, or blue Girls: any safe belt allowed <i>Safety issues include length of sash.</i> Belts must be worn with slacks in grades 3-8.
<b>Neckties</b>	Optional: boys only, K-8
<b>Hair</b>	All: Hair must be clear of eyes. No unnatural hair colors. Boys: Hair must be neat and may brush the collar but not pass it.
<b>Make-Up</b>	No noticeable make up or colored nail polish.
<b>Jewelry</b>	Earrings for girls only. No long dangle earrings or hoops larger than a quarter for safety reasons. Jewelry must not be excessive or distracting, as determined by the teachers and administration.
<b>Shoes</b>	Black, brown or blue dress shoes, 1” heel limit; no athletic style shoes. No open-toe shoes or flip-flops, even on dress down days. We prefer no open-back shoes such as clogs for safety reasons; in 08-09, that will be the policy. School shoes may not double as gym shoes.

Dress code infractions will result in consequences including: verbal warning to student, emailed or written warning to parent, immediate visit to uniform closet for alternate attire for the day, call to family for immediate alternative clothing, or detention depending upon the nature and frequency of the infractions. This can be avoided by ensuring that your children are dressed according to code before they leave for school.

Please note that SchoolBelles will only sell families items that are included in the SJS dress code. Please see the St. James’ SchoolBelles catalog for pictures of items offered and further details. Uniform items may be purchased online or at the SchoolBelles location near Ross Park Mall.

**Uniform Closet**

Gently-worn uniforms are available in the Uniform Closet free of charge. Donations of gently-worn uniforms are welcome.

## **Gym Uniform**

Gym shoes must be clean and free of debris with white or non-marking soles. Laced or Velcro closures are required, as slip-on's too easily slip, or fly, off. Students in grades 5-8 must bring athletic shorts (not jean shorts or spandex) and a t-shirt or sweatshirt for gym. Shorts or sweatpants with words written across the seat are not permitted. No tank tops or spandex. Workout pants are permitted, but for safety purposes they must have elastic around the ankles. No double-duty school /gym shoes.

## **Special Dress Days**

We have four types of Special Dress Days:

1. Dress Down: Students may wear any clothing that they wish that follows the school philosophy and code above.
2. Dress Up: Students may wear their "Sunday Best." This does not include jeans or shorts.
3. Holiday Dress: Students may wear a theme-top and jeans or cargo pants, but the attire must be consistent with the holiday.
4. Spirit Days: Students may wear any clothing that they wish that follows the school philosophy provided it is in the specified colors (i.e. "blue & white" or "black & gold" or "red, white & blue").

## **EMERGENCIES**

### **Emergency Cards**

At the beginning of each school year, parents are required to complete a Student Emergency Card. It is imperative that the school be able to reach you 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. Please keep the card updated by notifying the office of changes.

### **Change Of Address, Email, Or Phone Number**

It is very important for emergency and administrative reasons that every student maintains an up-to-date record at the school office. Notify the school immediately if you have a change of address or phone number during the school year.

### **Emergency Closings and Delays**

If inclement weather or some other emergency requires that the school be delayed or closed, this information will be announced on KDKA, WPXI, and WTAE. We follow the Quaker Valley School District for closings and delays. If you hear an announcement that identifies St. James School, please be sure that it specifies "Sewickley". You may also see an update on our website. It is not necessary to call the school or rectory for this information.

In the event of a delay, all children should report to school at the delayed start time. Children who ride the buses of other districts who are not delayed or who walk or are driven should arrive at the delayed time. PLEASE NOTE: Because our attendance registers are legal indicators of a child's presence at the times we are in session, children who arrive late or are absent because of busing on a day when school is in session will be marked as Excused Tardy or Excused Absent.

**In the event of a delay on a scheduled half day, we will change the day to a full school day with a delay (arrival @10am; dismissal at 2:30pm).**

### **Emergency Dismissals**

In the event that we would be required to dismiss school early, that information will be announced on KDKA. We will initiate a phone chain and mass e-mail to notify parents as soon as possible. However, because phone service and electricity may be interrupted in the school, some emergency situations may not allow for this option. Children will be dismissed as parents are notified and transportation is arranged.

## **EXTENDED CARE**

This service is available on a daily, weekly or monthly basis. Children are supervised by a licensed teacher and an aide (as needed). They are given time for snacks, homework and organized play. Care is available on regular school days from 2:30 to 6:00, and on half days from 11:30 to 6:00. Students who participate in other after-school activities who are not picked up on time will be sent to the Extended Care program for supervision and families will be billed accordingly. Parents must provide an emergency pick-up plan in the event of unforeseen work or traffic problems. At 6:00, this emergency plan will be activated for any children who have not yet been picked up and a surcharge will be applied for any overtime required. **Parents must register if they plan to use this service. The form is available on our website.**

## **HEALTH & SAFETY**

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 degrees) for 24 hours.

If a child has a temperature of 100 degrees or more, a skin rash, diarrhea/vomiting, strep throat, or evidence of pink eye, 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 warn parents of contact and incubation of communicable diseases. All cases of head lice should be reported immediately.

In the case of accident or illness at school, parents will be contacted to take the child home, to the doctor, or to the hospital. It is important for your child's safety and comfort, as well as the effective operation of the office, that emergency information needed to locate parents is available for each child and that this information is kept up-to-date by parents.

Parents of children who have any type of physical disorder should contact the principal, school nurse, and teachers to make them aware of the problem.

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

1. The medication must 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 must 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.
3. Parents must sign an Indemnity Agreement which has been prepared by the Legal Office and distributed through the school office.

### **School Nurse**

A school nurse is assigned through the Quaker Valley School District. Periodic vision, hearing, and weight/height tests are administered by the nurse. She/He is also available to come to the school in the event of a student injury or medical concern. The school nurse works with the State Department of Health to provide a physician and dentist to annually conduct physical, dental and scoliosis examinations for specific grades. Parents are informed of these dates prior to the examinations. These examinations may also be performed by a family physician and dentist and reports must be sent to the school.

### **Dentist**

The Dentist/Dental Hygienist makes routine visits to our school and is responsible for maintaining all dental records. The Pennsylvania School Health Law requires dental examinations for students entering grades K, 3 and 7. These grades were selected because they represent critical periods of growth and development in a child's life.

We recommend that your family dentist do these examinations. School dental health evaluations will be provided for students who do not furnish proof of a private dental examination within the last six months. These forms are given out to the students before school ends so that appointments can be scheduled over the summer.

### **Emergency First Aid**

The school is equipped to handle minor injuries that may occur on the school grounds. If a child suffers a serious injury, parents will be contacted to come to the school immediately. We will be using the Sewickley Valley Emergency Program.

### **Fire Drills**

Fire drills are conducted monthly as required by Pennsylvania State Law. Inspections by local officials ensure that our evacuation procedures meet local and state fire codes. Fire extinguishers are checked regularly. Teachers explain the procedure for a fire drill at the beginning of the school year and review this regularly. Safety precautions require the students to leave the room single file. Running is not permitted and silence is mandatory. Disaster drills are also conducted annually in compliance with state regulations.

## HOMEWORK

Homework is given to reinforce, extend, or deepen knowledge of concepts that have been taught. It is also a valuable practice in the development of responsibility and the exercise of initiative. The parent's role is primarily that of ensuring a suitable place for study and helping the child decide the best time for study. Parental discretion is needed to help the child maintain a study plan and to make certain that the homework is legible. Each child in Grades 2-8 is required to maintain the assignment notebook that is given to them in the beginning of the year. In addition, grades 4-8 will maintain pages on a homework website that will be updated by students during class with teacher direction. This will be one of the "classroom jobs." The link is available on our website.

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

1. Provide a quiet spot away from the television, telephone, or other distracting elements;
2. Check the assignment book and compare with what was accomplished during the designated study time, focusing on completeness, neatness, and correctness;
3. Be willing to listen to reading, spelling, and math facts and to explain procedures, but never do the assignment for the child;
4. Consult the teacher if the child uses the excuse "no homework" too often;
5. Refer to the online grade book (updated weekly) to monitor student progress.

Homework (written or study) is a regular part of all classes. Homework must be completed and done neatly. If in an extreme circumstance a child can not complete an assignment, the parent should contact the appropriate teacher(s) and arrangements must be made to make up incomplete assignments.

### Sample Homework Guidelines

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

This is not the rule. These are general guidelines. Teachers do communicate with each other in an effort to prevent overloading. Class work not finished at school may be added to the homework load. Time is often given at the end of each class period to begin homework. The same assignment that takes one child 15 minutes may take another child 45 minutes.

### Grades 4-8

All assignments should be written on regular-sized, lined, loose-leaf paper with a proper heading. Assignments on torn-out notebook paper will not be accepted. All written assignments must be neat. Sloppy or illegible assignments will be returned to the student and will not be graded. Please do not use pen for math assignments as they will not be accepted and will be considered incomplete.

If a student misses a class for a special activity (band, altar serving, speech/reading/math support, etc.), it is the responsibility of the student to find out what the assignment is for that class and turn it in within the timeframe that the other students were given to complete the work.

When homework is **not completed** on time, a note will be made on a tally card and **one day** will be given to receive **50% credit**. After that time period the student will not receive credit and will be given a *zero* for the assignment. **Three missed** assignments in a subject area will result in **detention**.

If a student is **absent**, it is the responsibility of that student to find out what assignments were missed. He/She will have **one day for each day absent** to make up the work from the day it was assigned with no penalty; any days extending beyond this will be considered incomplete and will accrue the penalty described above. Every student has a homework buddy who will write down their assignments when they are absent, and their buddy will get the books and work collected to take to the office for parent pick-up or delivery to a sibling's classroom, as directed by the parent who must call the office to specify how the work is to be sent home. When children are absent due to vacation, missed assignments will be given upon their return to class, and a reasonable length of time will be given to complete the assignments.

4<sup>th</sup> graders will work up to this policy gradually over the first report period.

## **LIBRARY**

The school library exists primarily to support and enrich the curriculum. The St. James School library contains a growing collection of fiction, non-fiction, periodicals and reference books. A special section is reserved for religious materials, and a video collection is also available.

The library is open and available to all classes throughout the week for research, presentations, or to check out books. Children are encouraged to read for fun. Books may be signed out for one week and renewed for one week. Parents are welcome to check out materials from the library, including videos.

Fines will be imposed for overdue books. Additionally, parents must pay for lost or damaged books. At year's end, report cards may be withheld from students who do not return all books.

Donations may be made to the library. For a copy of our most recent wish-list and donation guidelines, contact the school office.

## **LOST AND FOUND**

Parents are strongly urged to mark their children's personal belongings with their names. 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 on the main floor near the elevator. Parents and children are encouraged to look for lost clothing items there. Other lost items, such as glasses, watches and purses, if found, are turned in to the office. Items that are not claimed by the end of each report period are donated to charity.

## **PARENT ORGANIZATIONS**

At St. James School, parents play an integral role in the education of their children through involvement in the life of the school. Opportunities for involvement include the following:

### **School Advisory Council (SAC)**

This group meets with the Principal and Pastor on a regular basis to fulfill the following functions:

- to offer support to administration
- to provide regular input so that our school can maintain a level of quality both secular and spiritual
- to provide a core of individuals to do research into public relations, development and volunteerism and matters related to the growth of the school community
- to provide the principal and pastor with information for their reflection and consideration

### **Home School Association (HSA)**

The object of this organization is the advancement of Catholic education and the welfare of the St. James School children. It also promotes parent-teacher activities and increases interest in educational and civic affairs. It attempts to enhance the parents' role in education by increasing their knowledge of education and its processes by providing the opportunity for parents and teachers to work together for the good of the children. The programs organized by HSA include school assemblies, field trips, busses for the field trips, Teacher Appreciation Week, Catholic Schools Week, and many others. These programs help make St. James School a special place for our children. Parent volunteer opportunities are organized through HSA.

### **Volunteers**

Volunteers are vital to the operation of the school. Volunteers give their time and talents as cafeteria workers, playground supervisors, committee workers, chaperones, homeroom parents, and in many other extra-curricular areas when and where needed. We recognize the vast and valuable resources our parents and friends have to offer. Please call the school office if you are willing to assist in any way. Families are asked to at least volunteer 40 hours over the course of the school year. Parents not able to commit to that time may opt out by paying \$200.00. Please be sure to record your volunteer hours in the notebooks kept in the school office. Entries are tallied and updates are reported throughout the year. A complete list of committees and their descriptions is located in the school office.

### **St. James Athletic Association (SJAA)**

St. James School, through its volunteer parent athletic association, offers a variety of student athletic programs. The purpose of the SJAA is to administratively, financially, and spiritually support the student athletic programs of St. James School. All sport programs are under the supervision of the Principal. The SJAA President and Athletic Director are accountable to the Pastor/Principal. Coaches are selected by the Athletic Director and approved by Pastor/Principal and serve on a volunteer basis. The Diocesan Guidelines for Elementary Catholic School Sports Programs guides the policies. Parent interest and willingness to serve on the Athletic Association are vital to the continued success of the program.

SJAA fundraising takes care of all of the athletic team costs that are not covered by the minimal family athletic registration fees. These fundraisers include the concession stand at our games, the plant/bulb sales, and booths at community events such as the Sewickley Harvest Festival and Light Up Night.

### **Other**

St. James Parish offers a wide variety of adult prayer and study groups, such as the “Prayer Group for the Intention of our Children and Grandchildren” on Tuesday afternoons. More information on these opportunities can be obtained in the bulletin, at the Rectory (412-741-6650), or on the parish website ([www.saintjames-sewickley.org](http://www.saintjames-sewickley.org)).

## **PARTIES / TREATS**

### **Party Invitations**

Children are painfully aware when one or two are excluded; therefore, parents are to make private phone calls or mail invitations for birthday parties. No invitations are to be distributed at school. The only exception to this is if every boy or every girl or all students in your child's room are invited. Class lists will be distributed to each family; please refer to these lists to verify the number of students in each class.

### **Class Parties**

Parties will be held at the discretion of the homeroom teacher and with the assistance of the designated “homeroom mom (or dad!)”

### **Treats**

All treats (including drinks) sent in to school for birthdays, class parties, or any other reason must be healthful. These treats should be wrapped individually so that students are not obligated to eat them during the school day but can instead take them home for enjoyment at their parents’ discretion. The SJS Wellness Committee will provide guidelines for what is considered healthful in accord with the Diocesan Wellness Policy. For example, sweets are permissible when distributed to individuals in an appropriate serving size.

## **PRESCHOOL**

St. James School offers a preschool program for children ages 3-5. Sessions are held for three-year olds on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. Sessions are held for four-year-olds on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings. The Pre-K program for four and five year olds is offered Monday through Friday afternoons. All classes are taught by a certified teacher with an aide. Class size does not exceed 16 for the 3-year-old program or 20 for the older programs. Children must be potty-trained to be admitted into all programs.

## **SECURITY**

All doors to the school are locked during school hours. Parents and visitors must use the buzzer at the main school door on Broad Street or at the Gathering Space entrance to gain access to the building. Anyone entering the school is to report directly to the office regardless of the purpose of the visit. *For the safety of all students, a visitor's badge must be worn and guests must sign in.*

Any items to be left for a student during school hours must be left in the school office. Communication with teachers and students must also be handled by the school office so as not to disrupt the educational process.

Each family must sign and submit our internet use policy and permission (or refusal) for use of photos in publications.

## **SEPARATED / DIVORCED / SINGLE 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 is to be on file in the school and those persons responsible for the child(ren) are to be informed of the circumstances. Non-custodial parents may request to be on the mailing list.

## **STUDENT ACTIVITIES**

### **Altar Servers**

Students in grades 5 through 8 have the privilege of serving on the altar. To qualify for this privilege, students must go to Mass regularly. Servers are expected to fulfill assigned responsibilities and be on time. They must be in the sacristy 15 minutes before the Mass.

### **Assemblies**

Assemblies are held for children throughout the school year. The assemblies are planned in conjunction with the principal, faculty, and the HSA with a focus on education.

### **Athletics**

The athletic programs are school programs, therefore they are under the authority of the Pastor and the Principal. By signing up for any of the athletic programs, both parent and child are responsible for all of the regulations.

### **BASKETBALL**

Basketball is offered beginning with instructional teams in the primary grades and continuing with separate boys' and girls' junior varsity and varsity teams at upper levels. The season begins on October 15<sup>th</sup>.

### **CHEERLEADING**

Students in grades 3-8 are eligible to be part of the cheering squad.

### **CROSS-COUNTRY**

Students in grades 3-8 are eligible to be part of the cross country team.

### **SOCCER**

Soccer is offered beginning with instructional teams in grades 3-4 and continuing with co-ed junior varsity and varsity teams at upper levels. There is a fall season and a spring season.

### **Band**

Band instruction is available for a fee for interested students from grades 4-8. The Diocesan Program dictates the monthly fee annually. The instruments are rented with the option to buy. Small and large group lessons are provided one period a week and are rotated so that the same classes are not missed too often. However, it remains the responsibility of the student to make up missed work. A meeting is held at the beginning of each school year to provide more information for interested parents. Additional opportunities for band students are Honors Band, All-Star Band, and the Pep Band.

### **Contests: Art, Writing & Multimedia**

Throughout the course of the year, students will be made aware of a variety of contest opportunities. Some will be mandatory; others will be optional. Students are encouraged to participate in these events as it provides them an opportunity to express themselves creatively, to win cash prizes, and to gain recognition for themselves and for our school.

### **Field Trips**

Each classroom will attend at least one field trip per school year to complement the academic program. The classroom teachers will be responsible for determining the location of these field trips. The annual Race for Education provides most of the monies necessary to defray the cost of buses, admission fees, etc. and is allocated on a per-pupil basis. Parents may be asked to supply the remainder of the money needed. Teachers will plan trips that are reasonably priced so this will not be too great of a financial burden for each family. Written permission of the parents must be obtained before such a trip is taken and students must be supervised during the entire activity. Parents may be invited to chaperone these trips.

**Forensics**

This is open to students in grades 5 through 8 and involves weekly after-school or weekend meetings/practices as well as local and regional competitions.

**Math Club**

This is open to students in grades 4 through 8 and involves weekly after-school meetings/practices as well as local and regional competitions.

**\*Newspaper** (*New in 07-08!*)

This will be an after-school activity for students in 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grades, integrating journalism, photography, and computer applications.

**PJAS**

Students in grades 7 & 8 are invited to participate in the Pennsylvania Junior Academy of Science (PJAS) competition.

**Schola**

The schola of St. James School sings traditional sacred music of the Roman Catholic Mass, with emphasis on Gregorian chant and Latin. Open to students in grades 3-8, the schola will lead the school in the singing and chanting of sacred music at selected Masses and other devotions.

**Spelling Bee**

Interested spellers meet at pertinent times of the year during lunch recess or after school to qualify and prepare for various spelling bees. This is open to students in grades 3 through 8.

**Student Council**

The student council is school-wide. Officers from among the 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grades are elected by students in grades 3-8, and homeroom representatives for those grades is voted on by the students in the homerooms. A representative for grades K-2 is elected from among the 6<sup>th</sup> graders.

**Youth Group**

O.C. (Operation Christ) is the middle school youth group for St. James Parish. For more information, contact the Religious Education Office at 412-741-6650.

**STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES**

The following services are offered through the Allegheny Intermediate Unit:

**Remedial Reading and Math (Title I)**

The Title I program is designed to provide additional assistance to students who are not demonstrating grade level proficiency in reading and/or math. Funding for these services comes through the local public school district. Referrals for the program are based on teacher referrals, standardized test results, and parent approval. Alternate strategies are planned for students in accordance with individual instructional goals and in support of the classroom curriculum to help students develop mastery of basic skills.

**Speech/Language**

Speech and language services are provided through Act 89 funding. This is a special service offered to students to enhance communication skills which directly impact social and academic interactions.

**Psychological Testing**

A certified psychologist is assigned to St. James to advise and assist teachers. Psychological testing is available through your local school district by parent request or at the recommendation of the teacher in consultation with the principal. 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 is not shared with anyone without parent permission.

**Special Needs**

For those students with diagnosed learning barriers, the diocese has put into place a Special Needs program through which individual needs can be addressed. Teachers work together with doctor recommendations to create a growth plan which includes plans for the individual student and curricular adaptations. These plans are reviewed by the teachers quarterly to evaluate their feasibility and effectiveness.

## **Counseling**

A certified counselor is available weekly to provide individual and small group counseling sessions to children in grades K-8. Children are referred by parents, principal, teachers, and through self-referral. Individual counseling requires parent permission.

## **Student Assistance Program**

The Student Assistance Program (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 and certain faculty members who have received special training through approved agencies.

The program exists in order to promote the growth and development of the child. The team members work with students who are experiencing behavior 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 and parents/guardians, and then 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.

## **TEXTBOOKS**

St. James School participates in Pennsylvania's Act 195/90 whereby the state purchases textbooks and instructional materials or non-religious items. A parent form with permission to have their child use these books is kept on file in the school office. **All books are to be covered at all times.** Students are responsible for the condition of the books given to them at the beginning of the year. At the end of each school year, an assessment will be made of all textbooks returned. Carelessness or abuse of textbooks will result in a replacement fee. The average price of a student book is \$50.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

It is important that we know the ordinary means by which each child arrives and departs daily. A note is to be sent when a change is necessary. For reasons of safety and insurance, each child is to ride his/her assigned bus. Most bus companies do not permit children to ride as "guests" on a bus other than that to which they were assigned. The bus driver reserves the right to refuse transportation to any student not on the bus manifest.

### **Bus**

Students who live more than a 1.5 mile radius from school are eligible to be bused to the school. Those who live along a route that has been declared "hazardous" are also eligible for busing. The Board of Education Transportation Division determines "hazardous route" claims. The student transportation policies and procedures of the local educational agencies responsible for busing students are applicable to all students in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Students are expected to maintain appropriate behavior while in route on the bus. Every bus follows the guidelines that are within our own discipline code. The bus driver is in charge of discipline on the bus. If the bus driver/company recommends that a student be removed from the bus, the principal will support it. This will result in the student losing bus privileges. The student/parent will then be responsible to make other arrangements for transportation.

Students are expected to remain in their seats at all times. This insures their safety and the safety of others. If improper conduct occurs, the driver may prepare a report which is sent home to alert the parents to the problem. If the behavior persists, the bus company has the right to ask the school district to suspend the student's privilege of riding the bus, temporarily or permanently.

The following bus rules are to be obeyed:

1. Remain seated at all times until the correct stop has been reached. If the driver has assigned seats, these seat assignments are to be honored.
2. Keep head, hands, and feet inside the bus.
3. In vehicles where seat belts are available, use them properly.
4. Do not ask to ride a bus other than the one to which you have been assigned or ask the driver to let you off at another stop. Only the Department of Transportation can authorize such changes.
5. Observe the same conduct as in the classroom. Quiet talking is permitted. Loud talking, etc. may distract the driver, prevent students from hearing instructions, or prevent the driver from hearing signals from emergency vehicles.
6. Be courteous; use no profane language.
7. Do not eat, drink or chew gum on the bus.
8. Keep the bus clean.
9. Cooperate with the driver.
10. Do not put anything out the window of the bus.
11. The driver is in charge. Directives of the bus driver in addition to those above are to be followed.

### **Arrival**

Buses, walkers and car riders all arrive via the Gathering Space entrance. The inner school doors open at 7:55. The Gathering Space opens at 7:45. Students arriving prior to that may assemble in the alcove leading to the Gathering Space until the teacher reports for duty at 7:45. At that point, students will be ushered into the Gathering Space (or cafeteria as necessary). We ask that walkers and car riders not arrive any earlier than 7:45.

### **Dismissal**

At dismissal walkers and car riders are dismissed from the Gathering Space doors. Students walking home are dismissed first, followed by car riders. Drivers, please stay alert. Bus riders are dismissed through the cafeteria exit to Bank Street where the buses await them. **Car riders who are not picked up by 2:40 will be sent to the Extended Care program for supervision, and families will be billed accordingly.**

## **TUITION / FUNDRAISING**

### **Tuition**

St. James School utilizes the FACTS tuition management system. School families can choose to pay their tuition in full prior to the start of school or they can use the FACTS automated payment system. FACTS options include 10-month direct debit, 2-month direct debit, and a credit card option. If a family using FACTS is experiencing financial challenges, they must speak with the principal at least five days prior to the scheduled debit to discuss an adjustment or a temporary freeze.

### **Tuition Assistance**

Each year, tuition assistance is offered through the parish, the Diocesan Schools Office, and state government monies. Application information is available on the Admissions page of our website. **These applications are kept confidential, crossing the desks of only the pastor and principal before being mailed.**

#### **PARISH TUITION ASSISTANCE**

In addition to subsidizing the educational costs of all parishioners attending our school, St. James Parish also raises money via special Sunday collections for the Tuition Assistance Fund. Included in this fund are bequests from generous parishioners who have remembered the school in their wills. To apply, complete the Parish Tuition Assistance Application available on the website. Be prepared to provide proof of need.

#### **DIOCESAN AID**

Throughout the year you will notice collection envelopes for the Bishop's Education Fund. These monies are pooled from churches throughout the diocese and distributed to Catholic school families who demonstrate need. To apply, complete the PSAS (Private School Aid Service) Application. You can track the progress of your application on the PSAS website. The link is on our website. After review, PSAS will notify the diocese of your calculated need. Then the diocese will notify you of your calculated need and your actual award (usually mid-June), copying the letter to the principal as well.

## STATE MONIES DISTRIBUTED BY THE DIOCESE

In the state of Pennsylvania, business owners of type S and C corporations can direct certain state taxes to the Diocese of Pittsburgh SOS fund or earmark it for a particular school. This is referred to as the SOS Educational Tax Credit. **Contact the school office if you or someone you know owns a business and might be interested in directing taxes to our schools to benefit families who might otherwise not be able to provide a Catholic school education for their children. Please keep the issue of Educational Tax Credits in mind when voting.** To apply, complete the PSAS (Private School Aid Service) Application. In general, the cutoff to qualify is an annual income of under \$60,000 for one child, or \$10,000 more for each additional child. Other exceptions and allowances apply.

## Fundraising

The Diocesan policy for funding Catholic elementary schools calls for each school to have fundraising activities to generate approximately 13% of their total operating budget. For us, this means \$150,000 in fundraising. This enables us to keep tuition rates at 60% of the total cost. *(The parish contributes the remaining percentage.)*

School parents are expected to participate in fundraising activities. Each family is personally responsible for \$600 in fundraising profits. This appears on the tuition statement as the “family fundraising fee” and can be paid outright or earned in a variety of ways including purchase of SCRIP, Sarris, Market Day, or tickets to the annual dinner/auction. For example, a family spending \$150 per week on groceries could use Giant Eagle certificates for a total annual purchase of \$7800. With the 4% rebate, that’s \$312 fundraising credit from Giant Eagle alone. After the mandatory \$600 is reached, any qualifying fundraising overage is split so that 50% goes to the school in the current year and 50% to the family toward the following year’s tuition.

The family fundraising fees will only bring in \$60,000 of the needed \$115,000. We count on the rest to come in through the other fundraisers over the course of the year, such as the auction profits from the dinner/auction, the proceeds from the Race For Education (used to cover instructional supplies and activities), and our Annual Giving Campaign.

## Unpaid Balances

Actions will be taken to ensure that all debts are paid in a timely fashion. Failure to meet the tuition and fundraising obligation by the deadline may result in report cards being withheld, families not being invited to return, or records not being transferred to the next school until obligations are satisfied. If a family is experiencing a hardship, notice of the same and a request for assistance must be sent to the principal and/or pastor in a timely fashion so that we can work to meet your needs. As stated above, **financial assistance is available**, but only to families who ask.

## Excused Absence Form

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date absent from school: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for absence: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of parent or guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

*\*This form must be turned in to the homeroom teacher upon return from an absence. Failure to submit a signed excuse within three days of return will result in the absence being classified "Unexcused." Even if you have called to report an absence by phone, it is a state requirement that all absences be excused in writing.*

## Excused Absence Form

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date absent from school: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for absence: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of parent or guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

*\*This form must be turned in to the homeroom teacher upon return from an absence. Failure to submit a signed excuse within three days of return will result in the absence being classified "Unexcused." Even if you have called to report an absence by phone, it is a state requirement that all absences be excused in writing.*

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\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of parent or guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

It is the responsibility of parents to cooperate with teachers, administrators, and others at the school who are working with their children. It is the responsibility of parents to be aware of their child's actions, dress, and language at school and to monitor their attendance and academic performance throughout the school year. It is the responsibility of the parents to encourage proper behavior, good manners, and honesty. The best method for ensuring student success is for the parent to be supportive, informed, and involved. Please read this handbook carefully, as well as subsequent information that is sent home in the Wednesday folders.

I have read the school handbook and understand that I am expected to function within the guidelines therein described.

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Signed

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Date

Please sign and return to the school office with the following forms attached:

- Memorandum of Understanding
- Textbook Loan Form
- Internet Use Policy
- Permission for use of Photos

## NUTRITION AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY POLICY

The Department for Catholic Schools Diocese of Pittsburgh promotes healthy students by supporting the Nutrition Guidelines for Competitive Foods in Pennsylvania as a part of the total learning environment. Schools are encouraged to provide a healthy environment where students learn and participate in positive dietary and lifestyle practices. By facilitating learning through the support and promotion of good nutrition and physical activity, schools contribute to the basic health status of students. Improved health optimizes student performance potential.

The Department for Catholic Schools Diocese of Pittsburgh has developed its local policy through the work of a committee comprised of representatives of the Principals Advisory Council, parents, leaders in food/exercise authority and employees. Locally, the principal will designate an individual to monitor implementation and evaluate the implementation of the policy and will report annually to the Catholic Schools Office regarding the effectiveness of this policy.

The Department for Catholic Schools Diocese of Pittsburgh will recommend physical activity that

1. is daily (The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends at least 150 minutes

### **Daily Recess**

Elementary schools should provide recess for students that

1. is at least 20 minutes a day;

### **Physical Activity Opportunities after School**

After-school child care and enrichment programs will provide and encourage—verbally, and through the provision of space, equipment and activities—daily periods of moderate to vigorous physical activity for all participants.

### **Integrating Physical Activity into Classroom Settings**

#### **Meal Times and Scheduling**

The Department for Catholic Schools Diocese of Pittsburgh encourages schools to

1. provide students with at least 10 minutes to eat after sitting down for breakfast and 20 minutes after sitting down for lunch;
2. should schedule meal periods at appropriate times, e.g., lunch should be scheduled between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.; should not schedule tutoring, club or organizational meetings or activities during mealtimes, unless students may eat during such activities;
3. will schedule lunch periods to follow recess periods (in elementary schools);
4. will provide students access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks; and,

### **Foods Sold Outside the Meal (e.g. vending, a la carte, sales)**

All foods and beverages sold individually outside the reimbursable meal programs (including those sold through a la carte [snack] lines, vending machines, student stores or fundraising activities) during the school day, or through programs for students after the school day, will meet the following nutrition and portion size standards:

#### **Beverages**

- **Allowed:** water or seltzer water without added caloric sweeteners; fruit and vegetable juices and fruit-based drinks that contain at least 50 percent fruit juice and that do not contain additional caloric sweeteners; unflavored or flavored low-fat or fat-free milk and nutritionally equivalent nondairy beverages (as defined by the USDA).
- **Not allowed:** soft drinks containing caloric sweeteners; sports drinks; iced teas; fruit-based drinks that contain less than 50 percent real fruit juice or that contain additional caloric

sweeteners; beverages containing caffeine, excluding low-fat or fat-free chocolate milk (which contain minimal amounts of caffeine).

### **Foods**

1. will have no more than 35 percent of its calories from fat (excluding nuts, seeds, peanut butter and other nut butters) and 10 percent of its calories from saturated and trans fat combined;
2. will have no more than 35 percent of its weight from added sugars;
3. will contain no more than 230 mg of sodium per serving for chips, cereals, crackers, french fries, baked goods and other snack items; will contain no more than 480 mg of sodium per serving for pastas, meats and soups; and will contain no more than 600 mg of sodium for pizza, sandwiches and main dishes; and,
4. will include a choice of at least two fruits and/or nonfried vegetables for sale at any location on the school site where foods are sold.

**Examples:** Food items could include, but are not limited to, fresh fruits and vegetables; 100 percent fruit or vegetable juice; fruit-based drinks that are at least 50 percent fruit juice and that do not contain additional caloric sweeteners; cooked, dried or canned fruits (canned in fruit juice or light syrup); and cooked, dried or canned vegetables (that meet the above fat and sodium guidelines).

**Portion Size**

Limit portion sizes of foods and beverages sold individually to those listed below:

**Fundraising Activities**

To support children's health and school nutrition-education efforts, school fundraising activities during the instructional day will not involve food or will use only foods that meet the above nutrition and portion size standards for foods and beverages sold individually. The Department for Catholic Schools Diocese of Pittsburgh encourages fundraising activities that promote physical activity.

**Snacks**

Snacks served will make a positive contribution to children's diets and health, with an emphasis on serving fruits and vegetables as the primary snacks and water as the primary beverage. Schools will assess if and when to offer snacks based on timing of meals, children's nutritional needs, children's ages and other considerations. The Committee will make available a list of healthful snack items to teachers, after-school program personnel and parents.

**Rewards**

Food will not be used as a reward for classroom or school activities unless the reward is an activity that promotes a positive nutrition message (ie., guest chef, field trip to a farm or farmers market, etc.).

**Celebrations**

Schools should evaluate their celebrations practices that involve food during the school day. The Diocese of Pittsburgh Schools Office will disseminate a list of healthy party ideas to parents and teachers.