

St. James School

Student/Parent Handbook

St. James School



Excellent Minds. Exceptional Hearts.

The school reserves the right to amend the Student/Parent Handbook at any time. Parents will be given prompt notice of any amendment.

2019 Revision

INTRODUCTION	5
Vision and Mission Statements	5
Vision Statement / North Hills Regional Catholic Elementary Schools	5
Mission Statement / North Hills Regional Catholic Elementary Schools	5
St. James School Philosophy Statement	5
MIDDLE STATES ACCREDITATION	5
CATECHETICS (Religious Formation)	6
INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM	6
CONTINUOUS GROWTH APPROACH TO INSTRUCTION	6
ACADEMIC SUPPORT	8
CURRICULUM GUIDELINES	8
SUBJECT AREAS	8
Catechetics/Religious Education	8
Language Arts	9
Mathematics	9
Social Studies	9
Science	10
World Languages	10
Physical Education	10
Health	10
Fine Arts	11
Library	11
Internet Use Policy	12
Etiquette	12
ASSESSMENT PROGRAM	13
Achievement Tests	13
Writing Assessment	13
Math Benchmark Assessment	13
AUXILIARY SERVICES	13
Remedial Reading and Math (Title I)	13
Act 89 Services	14
Speech/Language	14
Educational Psychological Testing	14
Counseling	14
Student Assistance Program	14
CURRICULAR RELATED	15
Assemblies	15
Field Trips	15
Homework	15
DAILY PRACTICES AND POLICIES	16
ADMISSIONS/REGISTRATION POLICIES	16

ATTENDANCE	17
Early Dismissals/Early Arrival/Late Pick-up	18
DAILY SCHEDULE	19
CAFETERIA	19
DRESS CODE	20
EMERGENCIES	22
Emergency Cards	22
Emergency Closings and Delays	22
Two-Hour Delay Guidelines	22
Emergency Dismissals	22
EXTENDED CARE	22
AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES	22
TEXTBOOKS/SCHOOL SUPPLIES	23
TRANSPORTATION	23
Bus	23
Car/Walkers	24
STUDENT ACTIVITIES	24
Altar Servers	24
Band	24
Sports Teams	24
Student Council	24
HEALTH AND SAFETY	25
HEALTH ISSUES	25
School Nurse/Nurse Practitioner	25
Dentist/Dental Hygienist	25
Illness	25
Accident and Injury	25
Medication	26
SAFETY ISSUES:	26
Asbestos Notice	26
Fire Drills	26
Weather Emergency Drills	26
Safe Environment Program	27
Security/Visitors	27
Playground	27
DISCIPLINE	28
Introduction	28
Guiding Principles	28
Expectations	29
Before school	29
In school	29
In the classroom	29

During recess	29
During lunch	29
After school	30
At athletic events and assemblies	30
Outside school	30
Bus/Van*	30
Fire Drill	30
Consequences	30
Elastic Clause	31
PARENTS	31
RIGHTS OF NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS	31
PARENT ORGANIZATIONS	32
School Advisory Council (SAC)	32
Parent/Teacher Organization	32
Social Activities	32
Birthday Party Invitations	33
Athletic Association	33
FINANCIAL INFORMATION	33
Scholarship Monies	33
Tuition	33
SCRIP Program and Other Opportunities to Help Offset Tuition	33
Fundraising	34
HOME/SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS	34
On-going Communication	34
Reports and Conferences	35
Telephone	35
VOLUNTEERS	35

INTRODUCTION

Vision and Mission Statements

Vision Statement / North Hills Regional Catholic Elementary Schools

In partnership with parents, NHRCES will help students reach their full potential through academic excellence, spiritual development and acts of service in preparation to live productive faith-filled lives for God, their families and their communities.

Mission Statement / North Hills Regional Catholic Elementary Schools

To teach the Word of God through academic and religious education, and to live the Catholic faith through service to each other and our community.

St. James School Philosophy Statement

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.

WELCOME

Saint James School was instituted in 1913 and has a history that has made it strong and provided for a promising future. Saint James offers educational programs ranging from 3-year-old preschool through eighth grade. The school has always been a vital part of the St. James parish life. The parish and school community work together to provide a quality education and emphasize the belief that a strong Catholic faith foundation is fundamental to a student's future.

The school community welcomes you to a partnership of educational endeavors and the development of your child/children's Catholic faith. As a school community, we engage the whole child, emotionally, intellectually, physically, socially and spiritually.

MIDDLE STATES ACCREDITATION

The Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools accredits St. James School. Middle States accreditation is an expression of confidence in St. James School's mission, goals and objectives, performance and resources and validates publicly the excellence in education.

The Middle States Evaluation is an ongoing process requiring the submission of updated plans every three years. After seven years the school is re-evaluated for continued accreditation. We were re-accredited in December 2013.

CATECHETICS (Religious Formation)

Catechetics is the center of the Catholic school. 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 made 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. Students develop skills and a love for the Church's daily worship. Prayer includes a prayer each morning with simple prayers for before and after lunch and at the end of the day. Attention is also given to the seasons of the year, to the anniversaries of historical figures and peacemakers of our time, and to the civil holidays that have significance for our children.

Faith experiences are an integral part of catechetics. Opportunities for Eucharistic Liturgies, Reconciliation, Stations of the Cross, the Rosary, and other Catholic prayers, classroom prayer and service to others are to be included. Community is at the heart of Catholic education, not simply as a concept to be learned, but as a reality to be lived.

The conferring of the sacraments is the responsibility of a family's home parish. However, the principal in conjunction with the local Pastors and the Catechetical Administrator work with the teachers in the religious development and sacramental preparation of the students. The actual receipt of sacraments is determined by the policies of the parish where the family is registered. Children wishing to receive sacraments outside of their home parish must obtain written approval from their local Pastor.

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

CONTINUOUS GROWTH APPROACH TO INSTRUCTION

The Catholic Schools located within the Diocese of Pittsburgh are committed to a program of education that seeks knowledge and practice of the Catholic faith, academic excellence, moral courage and the learning of the faith in the light of social teachings of the Church.

The Catholic School offers a strong traditional curriculum. In the "Continuous Growth Program" of the Diocese of Pittsburgh, students advance through a defined curriculum according to their individual needs and abilities. In addition to meeting all the requirements of the Pennsylvania Department of Education, the curriculum gives special attention to the integration of Gospel values.

Research indicates that children will achieve according to the expectancies placed upon them by their teachers and parents. Catholic school teachers place high expectation on all children so that all children are encouraged to achieve to the best of their ability.

This is particularly true 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.

The goals of the Continuous Growth Program in Language Arts and Math 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

ACADEMIC SUPPORT

We strive to be as inclusive as possible in welcoming all students for whom we can provide an appropriate education. Therefore, we implement the Diocesan Academic Support Model to assist students who are struggling academically and/or have been identified as a person with a special need. Parents may request more information about this program from the principal or the child's teacher.

CURRICULUM GUIDELINES

In the Catholic schools, quality academic education is dependent on an organized plan of basic content with special attention given to the integration of Gospel values.

Curriculum Guidelines for all subject areas are utilized by all Catholic elementary schools and are aligned to the State and National Standards. The guidelines endeavor to give continuity to the teaching/learning process, and are geared to meet the individual needs of students and to guide the teaching/learning process.

Flexible pacing is an important component of the continuous growth concept. This provision places students at an appropriate instructional level and then allows them to move forward in the curriculum as they achieve mastery of content and skills. Teachers will assess the instructional needs of students and provide differentiation through the use of small flexible groups.

Teachers, recognizing different learning styles, vary their presentations and assignments so as to provide for the individual needs of each child. Critical thinking skills, problem solving and research techniques are a part of instruction. Enrichment activities are provided for all students, to broaden lessons presented.

SUBJECT AREAS

Catechetics/Religious Education

The Catholic Church recognizes parents/guardians as the primary educators of their children. The role of the 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, "Growing in God's Covenant" contain a balance of doctrinal content, scriptural understanding, faith formation, prayer and worship experiences.

The goals and objectives of the Catechetical program consistently enhance the spiritual formation and moral development of all students. A genuine, personal relationship with God is cultivated through worship and service. Liturgical and personal prayer are essential in the development of a strong spiritual foundation. Careful planning and programming ensures a broad and deep understanding of authentic Church Doctrine. A variety of materials and resources are used to foster both spiritual growth and moral development.

Parents are encouraged to communicate in words and actions the Church's teaching concerning human sexuality. When adults respond to their sexuality in a love-giving manner they enable their children to integrate the Church's teaching concerning human sexuality into their own lives. The Catholic Vision of Love is the Diocesan mandated Sexuality Program.

Language Arts

The language arts curriculum presents numerous opportunities for the integration of faith, culture and life by developing an awareness of the Gospel values. The philosophy inherent in the language arts curriculum is one of continuous growth, which recognizes and nurtures the God-given potential and learning style of the individual.

Language, as communication, enables one to become more perceptive through listening, observing and feeling. Language, as a skill, provides one with the important tools to speak fluently, to read and comprehend, to compose, to write legibly and to spell correctly. An awareness of the history of language and the continuous development of vocabulary also are important phases of skill development. An appreciation of literature enriches the student through the experience of skillful authors who vicariously open new worlds to the student.

Mathematics

It is our mission to enable all students to learn the skills, acquire the knowledge, and develop the attitudes in mathematics and technology necessary for them to reach their full potential as morally and socially responsible citizens who can meet the demands of a changing global society. The challenge is not only to meet and exceed grade level expectations but to excite students to explore topics on their own, to develop proof for answers and to learn from one another.

Educational goals for all students are based upon the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics Standards:

- Develop the value of mathematics
- Do and apply mathematics competently
- Find and solve problems
- Communicate mathematically
- Reason mathematically
- Apply problem-solving and decision-making skills to real life situations
- Become self directed life-long learners
- Use appropriate communication and group interaction skills
- Demonstrate concern, tolerance, and respect for others

Social Studies

In the Catholic School, Social Studies provides many opportunities for teachers to help students understand, appreciate, and learn how to live Christian social values.

The scope of the social studies curriculum includes elements of anthropology, economics, geography, history, political science, and sociology, with emphasis on global awareness and values. An integrated interdisciplinary approach helps students develop a sense of relationship among the various social studies disciplines. A clear understanding of current events helps students to integrate the past with the present and prepares them for the future.

The Social Studies curriculum begins in kindergarten with an introduction to community helpers. It progresses in the

primary grades to the study of family and friends, and later encompasses a more in-depth study of the community. Beginning in fourth grade, the curriculum focuses on the study of the United States land regions and Pennsylvania history. At the fifth grade level, both United States history through the Civil War and a study of the United States geographical regions are studied. Sixth grade students study World Cultures and World Geography with an emphasis on the countries of the Eastern Hemisphere. Seventh grade studies United States history to the Reconstruction and eighth grade studies United States history beginning with the Reconstruction to the modern day. Map and geography skills are taught at all levels. Social Studies prepares students for the future by instilling the importance of a value-oriented life perspective.

Science

The primary goals of the teaching of science in the Catholic schools in the Diocese of Pittsburgh are to develop a respect for the sacredness of all life, the pursuit of peace and order in the world, and an awareness of the responsibility to be co-creators of life-giving designs and protectors of the environment.

In kindergarten through fifth grade, the science program covers general science topics. In grades six through eight, the students focus on specific areas including: life, chemistry/physical, earth and space. Across all grades, the science curriculum focuses on an inquiry-based process and fosters collaborative learning. Science education strengthens life skills, such as creative problem solving, critical thinking, team cooperation, use of technology, and the value of life-long learning.

World Languages

Because the Church is universal and embraces all people, regardless of race, nationality and financial status, the Catholic school encourages the study of world languages and other cultures. World language students learn the sounds and syntax of the language and work toward proficiency in listening, speaking, reading and writing. A variety of materials and methods are used for instruction. Spanish is offered in grades third through eighth.

Physical Education

The Elementary Physical Education Program addresses the needs of the individual child through a holistic approach. Spiritual, physical, psychological, social, and emotional needs are given prime consideration. The development of a positive self image through skill development and success is an important factor. An acquired skill enhances the carry-over potential of an activity to daily life. The Physical Education Curriculum Standards are progressive, building on the skills of the previous year.

Components for Physical Education are:

- Presence of God
- Balance
- Coordination/Agility
- Endurance/Fitness
- Flexibility
- Respect/Tolerance
- Skill Building
- Speed/Reaction Time
- Sportsmanship
- Strength/Power
- Teamwork

Health

The Health curriculum provides information at each level of development to help students make wise, moral decisions with respect for the God given Gift of life. The health curriculum places holistic emphasis on wellness, fitness, behaviors, and skills for healthy, active living. Topics include: disease prevention, emotional/social/mental health, environmental and community health, family life and sexuality, nutrition, personal health and related fitness, personal safety and first aid, and substance use and abuse. Education and health for children are inextricably intertwined.

Fine Arts

In the Fine Arts program, students have the opportunity to deepen their awareness of God's gift of creation and to respond creatively to the beauty and goodness of the world through music, art and drama. Instruction in the Arts contributes to the development of the whole person, promotes individual expression, allows experimentation with diverse materials and elements, enables exploration and appreciation of the works of other students and major artists and musicians, develops an awareness and sensitivity toward the environment, and finally promotes a deeper understanding of heritage and culture.

The Fine Arts curriculum provides a holistic approach to education that incorporates many aspects of the core curriculum and can be integrated into the total educational experience.

Library

The school library exists primarily to support and enrich the curriculum. It is a service and teaching agency as well as a place of purposeful learning where the use of all resources correlate with the school curriculum to intensify and individualize a child's educational experiences. The Library is an integrated part of the total curriculum and is an essential element in the development of lifelong learning skills for students.

The integrated approach permits students to develop library skills as the need for these skills naturally emerge from the curriculum. They plan and implement these activities so that the goals of both the content area and the library program are achieved. The school library is open daily. Lost or damaged books must be paid for.

Technology

Technology instruction is essential in today's educational process. This instruction includes computer awareness, literacy and internet safety. When this instruction and awareness are mastered, the computer becomes a basic tool for teaching logical thinking and problem-solving, creative writing, communication, the handling of information, and many other aspects of the curriculum.

Teachers of computer literacy look beyond hardware and develop an awareness of values such as relationships, collaboration, ethical conduct, responsibility and creative expression. As in all other areas of the curriculum, the integration of the Gospel values is a part of the teaching/learning process in the computer lab and classroom.

Students utilize various applications to master the following:

- Word Processing
- Slide Show presentations
- Basic Programming
- Spreadsheets
- Internet safety

Internet Use Policy

Guidelines for Implementation and Practice

This guideline is established to ensure understanding and application of St. James School Internet Use Policy. The school reserves the right to amend these guidelines at any time. It is understood that the administration will inform parents/guardians of any changes made in these Guidelines via the school's parent communication system. **Students' parents and/or guardians are required to review these guidelines with their child(ren) and complete and return the attached parent/guardian Internet Use Agreement form.**

This guideline includes, but is not limited to, the following areas:

- Information and news from a wide variety of sources and research institutions
- Public domain and software of all types
- Discussion groups
- Access to any educational institutions and libraries.

Etiquette

All Students are required to:

- Be polite when sending written messages to others
- Use appropriate language is expected in all messages
- Avoid anything pertaining to illegal activity
- Protect information, personal or otherwise
- Respect others' access to the internet
- Remember that deleted materials can be retrieved.

The following actions, which are not inclusive, are considered unacceptable actions:

- Placing unlawful information on the Internet
- Using the Internet for non-school related activities
- Sending messages that are likely to result in loss of the recipients work or systems
- Using the Internet for commercial purposes
- Using the Internet for political lobbying
- Sending or receiving copyrighted material without permission.
- Plagiarism
- Using Internet access to send or retrieve pornographic material, inappropriate file text, files dangerous to the integrity of the system, violent or threatening material or messages
- Circumventing security measures on school or remote computers or networks
- Vandalism
- Falsifying one's identity
- Using the Internet to harass another person.

An Internet Use Agreement must be signed annually.

ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

Standardized tests, textbook tests, and teacher-made tests are administered to students throughout the year. These assessments require students to synthesize information, apply what they have learned and demonstrate their understanding of what has been taught.

Acadience Reading Test

Acadience Reading is an assessment used to measure the acquisition of early literacy skills from kindergarten through sixth grade. This diagnostic test is administered three times a year to monitor growth and progress.

Placement Test

Transferring students, after a review of academic records, may be administered an assessment to determine a child's strengths and areas of needed support.

Achievement Tests

Students in grades 2-8 are administered a standardized test to measure progress from one year to another. A component of the standardized testing program for grades 2, 4 & 6 is a cognitive abilities section, which helps compare a student's achievement with other students of the same age, grade, and ability. If a child is absent due to illness, every attempt will be made to enable the child to make-up the tests. However, since the tests must be returned within a two-week period, make-up testing often necessitates taking more tests daily than is ideal. To prevent this, we ask parents not to schedule trips or appointments during the time of standardized testing.

Writing Assessment

Each child in grades K-8 participates in a Writing Assessment. This allows students to respond to a writing prompt and to select and organize content, develop a style and follow standard conventions.

Math Benchmark Assessment

Math Benchmark Tests are administered quarterly to students in Grades K-8. These tests determine if the student is making progress towards grade-level expectations.

AUXILIARY SERVICES

The following services are offered through the Allegheny Intermediate Unit:

Remedial Reading and Math (Title I)

The federally-funded Title I program is designed to provide additional assistance to students who are not demonstrating grade level proficiency in reading and/or math. 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.

Act 89 Services

Intermediate Unit personnel work with and provide support to students in remedial math and reading. These teachers, in collaboration with the classroom teacher, identify educational needs and design educational interventions and strategies to help a child succeed.

Speech/Language

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

Educational Psychological Testing

Educational Psychological testing is available through the student's 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.

Counseling

A certified counselor provides individual and small group counseling sessions to children in grades K-8. Children are referred by parents, principal, teacher and through self-referral. Children may see a counselor once without parent permission or knowledge. After that, individual counseling requires parent permission.

Student Assistance Program

The Student Assistance Program (E-SAP) was established by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania by Act 211 of 1990. It is a program of prevention, intervention, and support for students in grades K-12. The members of the team are the principal and faculty members of the school 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, parents/guardians and evaluates the results. If necessary, after consultation with parents, appropriate referrals are made to outside agencies.

Team members 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.

CURRICULAR RELATED

Assemblies

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

Field Trips

Every class is permitted field trips during the year. Each student must have a signed permission slip before he/she is permitted to participate. Chaperones are required to complete chaperone participation form as well as being compliant with the Safe Environment Policy. Transportation, in accordance with Diocesan directives, is provided by bus, and a fee may be charged to cover costs.

Guidelines for both students and chaperones are in effect for each field trip. A copy of the student guidelines will be sent home by the teacher so that the parent may help reinforce the guidelines presented.

Homework

A reasonable amount of homework, according to grade level, is of great educational value and so is assigned every day. ***Assignments are not always written.*** Study and memory work are frequently given. Homework is assigned on a regular basis for the following reasons:

- 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, telephone, or other distracting elements;
- Check to see what was accomplished during the designated study time regarding completeness, neatness, and correctness;
- Be willing to listen to reading, spelling, and math facts and to explain procedures, but never do the assignment;
- If the child says there is no homework too often, the parent/s should consult the individual classroom teacher.

If, for some reason, the child cannot complete an assignment, the parent should inform the teacher by written note stating the reason. Arrangements should be made as soon as possible to make up incomplete assignments. The Diocese recommends the following time schedule for home study:

Primary (Grades K-2)	10-30 minutes
Intermediate (Grades 3-5)	40-60 minutes
Upper Elementary (Grades 6-8)	70-90 minutes

DAILY PRACTICES AND POLICIES

ADMISSIONS/REGISTRATION POLICIES

St. James School admits students of any race, gender, 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, gender, or national or ethnic origin in the administration of our educational policies, admission policies, athletic or other school administered programs. Students can be admitted with a disability, if with reasonable accommodation, the student can meet program requirements. Children who are not Catholic are expected to participate in religion classes and to attend all religious functions of the school/church.

Official certificates of birth and baptism are required at the time of registration. Students entering Kindergarten must be five years of age by September 1. Those registering for grades 1-8 must fulfill the age requirement for the desired grade and present letters of recommendation from the previous school. A mini-battery will be administered to all new students to verify placement. Grade level and academic group determinations are made on the basis of school records.

Immunization records must be complete before any child may enter school. The requirements are as follows:

- 4 doses of tetanus, diphtheria, and acellular pertussis* (1 dose on or after the 4th birthday)
- 4 doses of polio (4th dose on or after 4th birthday and at least 6 months after previous dose given)**
- 2 doses of measles, mumps, rubella***
- 3 doses of hepatitis B
- 2 doses of varicella (chickenpox) or evidence of immunity

*Usually given as DTP or DTAP or if medically advisable, DT or Td

** A fourth dose is not necessary if the third dose was administered at age 4 years or older and at least 6 months after the previous dose

***Usually given as MMR

ON THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL, unless the child has a medical or religious/philosophical exemption, a child must have had at least one dose of the above vaccinations or risk exclusion.

- If a child does not have all the doses listed above, needs additional doses, and the next dose is medically appropriate, the child must receive that dose within the first five days of school or risk exclusion. If the next dose is not the final dose of the series, the child must also provide a medical plan (red and white card) within the first five days of school for obtaining the required immunizations or risk exclusion.
- If a child does not have all the doses listed above, needs additional doses, and the next dose is not medically appropriate, the child must provide a medical plan (red and white card) within the first five days of school for obtaining the required immunizations or risk exclusion.
- The medical plan must be followed or risk exclusion.

FOR ATTENDANCE IN 7TH GRADE:

- 1 dose of tetanus, diphtheria, acellular (Tdap) on the first day of 7th grade.
- 1 dose of meningococcal conjugate grade dose. vaccine (MCV) on the first day of 7th grade.

ON THE FIRST DAY OF 7TH GRADE, unless the child has a medical or religious/philosophical exemption, a child must have had the above vaccines or risk exclusion.

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance at school is a major factor in determining academic success. Parents and guardians of students who acquire excessive absences may be required to provide documentation from a physician indicating that the absences are related to an existing medical condition. Students absent for more than thirty days during the academic year may be denied academic promotion.

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. If no prior notice is received, the absence is classified as Unexcused.

A student is responsible for making up work when absent from school and for completing satisfactorily the courses of study prescribed by the State and the Department for Catholic Schools.

Parents should call the school office on the first day that a child is absent from school, giving the child's name, homeroom teacher, and reason for absence. Unless the absence will be for an extended period of time, please make arrangements with another child to have assignments brought home.

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."

Upon returning to school from an absence, a student must submit a written excuse to his/her homeroom teacher as required by state law. If this excuse is not submitted within three days following the absence, the absence will be classified as Unexcused.

A written note should be given to the teacher/principal for the following reasons:

- Following an absence
- Excuse from gym class
- Permission for out of school appointments (Child is expected to return as soon as possible.)
- Attending funerals
- Vacation
- Change of plans in leaving school (bus, ride or walk)
- Early Dismissal

Parents and guardians of students who acquire excessive absences may be required to provide documentation from a physician indicating that the absences are related to an existing medical condition.

The following definitions are helpful in clearly understanding the Attendance Policy:

Compulsory attendance (for Catholic Schools): attendance at a school operated by a bona fide Church or other religious body which provides a minimum of 180 days of instruction and 900 hours of instruction per year at the elementary level (K-6) or 990 hours of instruction per year at the secondary level (7-12).

Compulsory school age: the period of a child's life from the time he/she enters school as a beginner, which may be no later than six years of age, until the age of eighteen or graduation from high school, whichever comes first.

Cumulative lawful absences: a maximum of ten days of cumulative lawful absences verified by parental notification are permitted during a school year. **Absences beyond ten cumulative days require an excuse from a physician.**

Lawful absence: absences for which the school has received a written excuse from the parent/guardian. This excuse should be received within three days of the absence. Absences may be excused when a student is prevented from attendance for mental, physical, or other urgent reasons, which include but are not limited to illness, family emergency, death of a family member, medical or dental appointment, authorized school activities, and educational travel of five (5) or fewer days with prior approval. In addition, lawful absences include student attendance at court hearings related to the student's involvement with the agencies that deal with welfare of children.

Truancy: a student is considered truant when absent for three or more days without a valid excuse.

Unlawful absences: absences for which the school has not received a written excuse from parent/guardian.

Early Dismissals/Early Arrival/Late Pick-up

Parents should make every effort to schedule appointments at a time that school is not in session. However, if a child must have an early dismissal, he/she must submit a written note for the principal's approval. For these dismissals, parents or an authorized adult must come to the office and sign the child out at the authorized time. Children who arrive later than 10:00 a.m. will be marked absent in the morning. Children who leave school after 12:00 p.m. will be marked absent in the afternoon.

Students arriving before the stated time of arrival and/or remain after the time normal supervision ends, will be placed in extended care and their parents will be billed at the standard rate.

DAILY SCHEDULE

7:40	School doors open. Students move to cafeteria.
7:50	Students move to Homeroom.
8:00	Students must be in classrooms for attendance, lunch count, prayer and pledge. (Late Bell)
8:10	1st period
8:50	2nd period
9:30	3rd period
10:10	4th period
10:50	5th period (K-4 lunch / recess)
11:30	6th period (5-8 lunch / recess)
12:20	7th period
1:00	8th period
1:40	9th period
2:20	Afternoon Homeroom, Closing prayer / announcements
2:30	Dismissal

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 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. Students are not permitted to bring glass containers of any kind into the cafeteria. Non Breakable containers are permitted. Containers that resemble any type of alcoholic beverage, snuff, etc. are not permitted. Students are not permitted to bring energy drinks.

The expectations for student behavior and consequences are listed in the Code of Conduct.

DRESS CODE

Revised- August 2018

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 description to ensure that your purchases are in compliance with the dress code.

Shirts K-8

All shirts must be white or classic navy. 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 or without waistband). Girls K-3 may wear Peter Pan collar with jumper.

Slacks/Shorts K-8

Navy (K-8) or khaki (K-8) slacks or walking shorts. Shorts may not be worn November 1 – March 31. Shorts must be a modest length. No cargo pants/shorts or pants/shorts with external pockets.

Jumpers K-3

SJS plaid in drop waist or split bib styles. Grades K-3 only.

Skirts/Kilts/Skorts/Culottes

SJS plaid or navy blue or khaki skirt, kilt, skort, or culottes of modest length for grades K-8.

Sweaters All sweaters must be solid navy or white and must have the SJS crest for grades 3-8. Options: vest, cardigan, crew, or V-neck.

Other WarmWeather wear

Blue fleece pullover, vest, or jacket with SJS logo sweatshirts with SJS crest and St. James athletic wear as approved by the principal. Hoodies may only be worn during outside recess.

***Socks** Solid colors only: white, black, navy blue, or khaki. Girls may also wear white or navy blue tights and navy blue or black ankle-length leggings. Socks must be worn at all times. Socks must cover the ankle.

***Belts** Belts must be worn with slacks and shorts in grades 3-8. Belts for boys and girls are to be black, brown, or blue.

Hair 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. Bows and headbands may be worn, they should not be a distraction.

Make-Up No noticeable makeup or colored nail polish.

Jewelry

Stud earrings for girls only. No other visible piercings. Jewelry must not be excessive or distracting, as determined by the teachers or administration.

Shoes

Black, brown, grey, or navy blue dress shoes in solid colors only, 1" heel limit. Sperry or Sperry like shoes are acceptable. ALL BLACK athletic/tennis shoes may be worn for girls and boys. No colored soles, stripes on the sides, etc. All black means all black. No open-toe shoes, open-back shoes, or flip-flops, even on dress-down days. School shoes may not double as gym shoes. If snow boots are worn in inclement weather, students must bring dress shoes to change into at school. Ugg like boots and hiking style boots do not require a change after arriving at school.

*Special Note: Be conscious of safety when purchasing shoes. The students walk up and down steps and run on the playground. Shoes need to be practical...not just current fashion trends.

Dress Down Days

No strapless, spaghetti strap, tank tops, or tight-fitting shirts permitted. Shorts/skirts must be of a modest length. Jeans and cargo pants are permitted. Athletic shoes and boots are allowed. **No leggings or yoga pants are permitted to be worn in any fashion. No ripped or torn jeans are permitted.**

It is the responsibility of the parents to see that students come to school appropriately dressed. Please take that responsibility seriously. Please note that SchoolBelles will only sell you items that are included in the SJS dress code. Please see the St. James SchoolBelles catalog for a description of the items offered and further details. Uniform items may be purchased online at www.schoolbelles.com and enter our school code S2206 or shop at the 4721 McKnight Road, Pittsburgh location (no longer at Mt. Nebo Road). The phone # is 412-630-8480.

Scrip cards for Schoolbelles are available at St. James rectory. If a child is not in uniform, the student will receive a written warning that must be signed by a parent or guardian and returned to school. After the accumulation of three dress code infractions, the next infraction will result in a detention. It is a parent's responsibility to ensure that your child/children come to school dressed accordingly to the school dress code.

Uniform Closet

Gently-worn uniforms are available in the Uniform Closet free of charge. Donations 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-ons too easily slip, or fly off. Students in grades 5-8 must bring gym shoes, knee-length athletic shorts (not jean shorts or spandex) and a t-shirt or sweatshirt for gym. No tank-tops allowed. Workout pants with elastic around the ankles are permitted.

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 a parent in case of illness or an emergency. It is also important to list the names of others who can be contacted should a parent be unavailable. Please keep the card updated by notifying the office of changes.

Emergency Closings and Delays

If inclement weather or some other emergency requires that school be delayed or closed, this information will be announced via parent notification system, radio, and/or television. PLEASE DO NOT CALL THE SCHOOL OR RECTORY FOR THIS INFORMATION.

Two-Hour Delay Guidelines

In the event the school has a two-hour delay, all children should report to school at 9:50am. Morning preschool is cancelled when school is delayed. Busing is the responsibility of your local school district; therefore, you must listen to their announcement and follow their directives for cancellations and delays. If your district cancels and we do not, there will be no bus service provided. **Likewise, if we are on a two-hour delay and your district is running on a regular schedule, please do not put your child on the bus. Supervision of students may not be available if they arrive at school within the dealy 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 when school is in session will be marked as Excused Tardy or Excused Absence.

Emergency Dismissals

In the event that we would be required to dismiss school early, that information will be announced via radio, television and/or parent notification system. Children will be dismissed as parents are notified and transportation is arranged.

EXTENDED CARE

For an additional fee, St. James School offers before and after school programs for parents who need child care. Afternoon extended day is available from 2:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. This service is available on a daily, weekly or yearly basis. Parents should contact the school office for the fee schedule and contact person if they plan to use the service.

AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

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

TEXTBOOKS/SCHOOL SUPPLIES

St. James School participates in Pennsylvania's Act 195/90 whereby the state purchases textbooks and instructional materials of non-religious nature. A form requesting permission to have a child use these books must be signed by a parent and kept on file in the school office. Students are responsible for the condition of the books given to them. Students will be required to pay for a book if it is damaged or lost. Books taken to and from school are to be placed in a book bag. **All books are to be covered at all times.**

For the convenience of families, supply lists are available each June for the following year. Students provide their own school supplies but are expected to comply with individual teacher requirements. Items not easily available elsewhere, such as primary tablets, will be sold at school. A small number of basic items will be available for sale during morning homeroom period.

TRANSPORTATION

It is important that the school 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.

Bus

Students who live more than a 1.5 mile radius from St. James 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. Students are expected to remain in their seats at all times. This ensures their safety and the safety of others.

If improper conduct occurs, the driver prepares 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. This will result in the student's losing bus privileges. The parent will be responsible to make other arrangements for transportation.

The following bus rules are to be obeyed:

- Use only the bus and bus stop assigned. Only the Department of Transportation can authorize changes.
- 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
- Keep head, hands and feet inside the bus. Do not put anything out the window of the bus.
- In vehicles where seat belts are available, use them properly.
- Observe the same conduct as in the classroom. Quiet, respectful 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.
- Keep the bus clean; do not eat, drink, or chew gum on the bus.
- Cooperate with the driver. Any directives of the bus driver in addition to the above are to be followed.

Car/Walkers

At dismissal students walking and riding cars are dismissed shortly after the bus riders. Walkers are to go to the corner before crossing. Those picking children up by car should get in the pick-up lane. Do not leave your car unattended in the pick-up lane as this creates an unsafe condition.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Altar Servers

Students in grades 4 through 8 have the privilege of serving on the altar. Students who choose this privilege are expected to fulfill assigned responsibilities and be on time. Servers are expected to be in the sacristy ____ minutes before the liturgical service.

Band

Band instruction is available for a fee for interested students from grades 4-8. The Diocesan Program sets the monthly fee annually. The instruments may be rented with the option to buy. Small group lessons are provided one period a week and practice is held once a week. The periods are rotated so 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.

Sports Teams

Please consult the St. James Athletic Sports website for a listing of all St. James Athletic programs. The website can be found at: <https://www.stjamesschool.us/athletics.php>

Student Council

The Student Council consists of officers from grades 4-8 and includes a president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer. Representatives are selected from each homeroom in grades 6-8. To be eligible for office, candidates need the endorsement of two of their core subject-area teachers. Candidates then prepare a speech for the office they are seeking. An assembly is held and the speeches are presented. Ballots are handed out and students in grades 4-8 vote. After the ballots are counted and the winners are announced, each homeroom selects a class representative. The officers are given charge of planning and running the meetings with the help of the faculty advisors.

The organizational goal is to foster *esprit de corps* through student planning and implementation of school activities. The goal of St. James is to set a leadership example within the student body to assist Administration in teaching all students about proper conduct, fairness, and compassion towards other students. The Student Council also sponsors social events and dances. They raise money for various charitable causes, such as Chimbote, Catholic Charities, and other worthwhile organizations that spread the message of social justice and charity towards others.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

HEALTH ISSUES

School Nurse/Nurse Practitioner

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.

- Maintain updated health records
- Make sure all immunizations are current
- Conduct vision screening
- Conduct scoliosis screening
- Work in conjunction with the speech therapist for hearing and speech screening
- Assist the school in appropriate health education
- Contact parents/guardians if any health problems arise
- Make arrangements for physical exams for 6th graders

It is the parents'/guardians' responsibility to secure proper medical treatment, as it is needed.

Dentist/Dental Hygienist

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, 3rd and 7th. 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 previous six months. These forms are given out to the students before school ends so that appointments can be scheduled over the summer.

Illness

It is often difficult to decide if a 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, 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 warn parents of contact and incubation of communicable diseases.

Accident and Injury

In the case of accident or illness at school, parents are contacted to take the child home, to the doctor, or 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, or teachers to make them aware of the problem. All cases of head lice should be reported immediately.

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:

- The medication must be delivered to the school by a responsible adult along with a physician's written request for distribution by school personnel.
- 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.
- Parents must sign an Indemnity Agreement which has been prepared by the Legal Office and distributed through the school office.

SAFETY ISSUES:

Asbestos Notice

Pursuant to the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Act (AHERA), our school was inspected by a certified AHERA Inspector. A Management Plan was developed and submitted to the PA Department of Education. A copy of our Asbestos Inspection Report and Management Plan is on file in the school office.

The school is re-inspected by a certified AHERA Inspector every three (3) years. The maintenance and custodial staff have received two (2) hours of Awareness Training and conduct a periodic surveillance twice a year, in December and June.

Fire Drills

Fire drills are held monthly. Exit directions, which are posted in prominent places in each room, are to be followed. No one—teacher, student or other personnel—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. Misbehavior during fire drills is a very serious offense and will be dealt with immediately.

Weather Emergency Drills

Weather emergency drills are practiced yearly. Teachers follow the policy governing weather emergencies for student safety. Students must maintain silence at all times during a weather emergency drill. Staff assists handicapped students.

Safe Environment Program

The purpose of the Safe Environment Program (SEP) of the Diocese of Pittsburgh is to take reasonable measures to assure that adults who have contact with minors (1) are committed to providing a safe environment for children and youth and (2) are capable of identifying and preventing abuse of children and (3) have no personal history of behavior that would be a threat to children.

Adults (18 or older) volunteering with children at St. James School must be compliant with the requirements of the safe environment policy:

- Complete application at www.diopitt.org, which processes the PA State Police Criminal Record Clearance;
- Read and sign the Code of Pastoral Conduct;
- Receive the Department of Public Welfare Child Abuse History Clearance;
- Attend the Protecting God's Children Program.

Security/Visitors

All doors to the school will be closed and locked during school hours. Parents and visitors should use the buzzer on the main school door (Broad Street side of the building) to gain entrance to the building.

For security reasons, anyone entering St. James School is to report to the office or receptionist immediately regardless of the purpose of the visit. For the safety of all students, a visitor's badge must be worn. Communication with teachers and students will be handled by the school office and will be done in a manner that does not disrupt the educational process in the school.

Any articles or items to be left for a student will be left in the school office or with the receptionist. This will eliminate any unnecessary interruptions to classes and instruction.

Playground

Every school day, weather permitting, the students enjoy an outside break supervised by a staff member and volunteer monitors. Organized play is encouraged. Rough games, water guns, snowballing, and frisbees, are not permitted.

Students are never to leave the playground area without the permission of the principal and the knowledge of the playground monitor. In case of illness or accident, the student is to report to the school office.

Lunch monitors have the responsibility of enforcing rules. They are to be obeyed and treated respectfully. When the bell rings to end the playground session, the students will be met the Lunch Monitor / Parent Volunteers and taken to their classrooms in silence.

The following rules are to be observed on the playground:

- Not to re-enter the building unless for an emergency
- Display good sportsmanship and exercise self-control
- Play in assigned areas.
- Stay on school grounds (This includes not retrieving a ball that has gone off school grounds.)
- Obey the directives of the playground monitors, courteously and promptly.
- Stop playing at once when the first bell rings and walk quietly to line when the second bell rings.

If inclement weather makes it necessary to stay indoors at lunchtime, classroom rules are to be observed:

- Stay in seat.
- Engage in quiet activities.

DISCIPLINE

A copy of BOTH the St. James Code of Conduct and Bullying Policies can be found on the St. James Website, located at, <https://nhrces.org/handbooks-policy>

Introduction

St. James School administration and faculty are committed to teach and model Gospel values to 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, safe learning environment based on the Social Teachings of the Church. Discipline is considered an element of moral guidance, not a form of punishment.

Every teacher and staff member shares the responsibility to model appropriate behavior and to support the structure necessary for learning self-discipline. Students are encouraged to assume responsibility for their actions, develop self control, and accept responsibility and consequences for inappropriate behavior.

A Christ-centered school environment fosters the following behaviors:

- Recognizing and fostering the uniqueness and dignity of each individual
- Nurturing respect in all relationships involving school and parish community
- Developing a sense of rights and responsibilities and commitment to the entire school and parish community.

Social skills, both interpersonal and intrapersonal, are taught, modeled, practiced, and infused into the daily life and experience of the school family.

Guiding Principles

The following seven principles are the basis of Catholic Social Teachings and are the principles that guide us in all of our interactions.

- We believe in the life and dignity of the human person. Each person is sacred.
- We believe we are called to family, community, and participation. It is our duty to support each other by our actions.
- We believe that we have rights and responsibilities. Every person has the fundamental right to life and responsibility to and for one another.
- We believe that we have an obligation to the poor and vulnerable. We are called to put the rights of others before our own.
- We believe that we are called to care for God's creation. We are all stewards of the earth..
- We believe that solidarity is our call. We are one family regardless of our differences.
- We believe that workers have rights and that work has dignity. Work is a form of participating in God's creation.

Expectations

As a matter of safety, students are expected to behave in the following manner:

Before school

- dress according to the school dress code
- arrive on time
- gather in the designated area
- engage in quiet conversation
- line up quietly when the school bell rings

In school

- walk quietly through the halls
- use proper language at all times
- follow the dress code for school days and dress up/down days
- respect school property and the property of other students
- have a note from their parent/guardian if they change their mode of school transportation

In the classroom

- follow the classroom rules of each teacher
- be responsible for submitting homework on time and making up assignments missed within a reasonable amount of time
- have a respectful attitude toward teachers and one another
- be responsible for appropriate supplies
- be honest in all communications
- use computers and school equipment appropriate
- refrain from chewing gum
- leave or do not enter a classroom at any time without a teacher or designated adult present

During recess

- refrain from reentering the building unless for an emergency
- display good sportsmanship and exercise self control
- include all classmates in play activities
- play in assigned areas only
- stay on school grounds at all times (This includes not retrieving a ball that has gone off school grounds.)
- use equipment properly
- avoid throwing harmful objects
- obey the directives of playground monitors, courteously and promptly.
- stop playing at the first bell and walk quietly to the designated area when the second bell rings

During lunch

- remain seated until finished eating and the "recess" bell rings
- clean up, pick up all papers, scraps of food, etc., and dispose of them properly
- obey cafeteria monitors at all times
- speak in a conversational tone
- walk at all times

After school

- follow dismissal procedures
- walk to assigned place to wait until bus or car ride arrives
- avoid running or playing games on the school grounds
- leave the school grounds immediately
- sign in at the extended care program if not picked up by 2:35 p.m.

At athletic events and assemblies

- practice good sportsmanship as spectators and participants
- show respect towards coaches, referees, and visiting teams
- maintain an appropriate silence during special performances

Outside school

- to behave responsibly off school property
- (If the principal is made aware of misconduct off school property of a child recognized to be a student in St. James School, parents may be contacted; however, it is important to note that the school is not responsible for students actions that occur off school property.)
- Principals will forward disciplinary notices given by public school bus drivers to parents to support the disciplinary report of the bus driver. (See page 10 for Bus Expectations.)

Bus/Van*

- use only the bus and bus stop assigned
- remain seated while the bus in motion
- talk quietly and make no unnecessary noise
- refrain from talking to the driver unless it is necessary
- refrain from placing objects or body parts outside the windows
- refrain from littering inside the bus or from throwing anything out the window

*Principals will forward disciplinary notices given by public school bus drivers to parents to support the disciplinary report of the bus driver. Continual infraction of rules will result in loss of bus transportation privileges.

Fire Drill

- walk quickly in a single file
- keep arms at sides
- observe silence!

Any staff member will correct students who do not follow expectations.

Consequences

Please be aware that inappropriate behavior will be addressed. The severity or repetition of non-compliance will determine the appropriate consequences. To remediate unacceptable behavior, the following actions may be taken:

- Teacher/student conference to develop a plan for remediation
- Loss of recess
- Notification to parents
- Detention

- Administrative referral
- Referral to the E-SAP Team
- Denial of participation in school activities, including sports
- School probation, or
- Suspension.

Should the student receive a detention, the parent/guardian will receive a written notice with at least a 24-hour notice. It is in the best interest of the student that home and school work together for the child's academic and social development.

In the event of a serious act of misbehavior or repeated acts of misbehavior, a student may serve either an in-school or out-of-school suspension. If misconduct continues, a student may be asked to leave the school. These decisions rest with the administration and may be necessary for the benefit of the total program.

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

Elastic Clause

Because it is impossible to foresee all problems that arise, this clause empowers the administration and faculty to take disciplinary action for any behavior that violates the spirit and philosophy of the school even though it is not specified in the Discipline Policy.

The principal is the final recourse in all disciplinary situations and may waive any regulation for just cause, at his or her discretion. For a more detailed understanding of the consequences when this

PARENTS

The basic principles of the philosophy of a Catholic School flow from the obligation of parents to be the primary educators of their children. To fulfill this responsibility, the parent must become the educational partner with the school.

To help the parents' partnership in education become a reality, the school endeavors to help parents to

- have a clear understanding of the philosophy of a Catholic School
- have a working knowledge and a commitment to the philosophy of the local Catholic school
- establish mutual cooperation concerning all aspects of their child's education
- provide home experiences that will complement, reinforce, and extend the formal religious and academic instruction received in school

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 is to be on file in the school and those persons responsible for the child(ren) are to be informed of the circumstances. Every effort is made to keep the non-custodial parent appraised of the progress of the child(ren) through reports, report cards and parent/teacher conferences if requested by the non-custodial parent and not prohibited by the court.

PARENT ORGANIZATIONS

School Advisory Council (SAC)

St. James School has a School Advisory Council which is an advisory body to the regional administrator and principal. The Council consists of a president, vice-president, and nine appointed members. The SAC assists the school administration in long-range planning and fundraising for the school. Monthly reports from the Athletic Association, the HSA Board and the Technology Committee are shared at the Board meetings. Those parents committed to helping St. James School continue its tradition of excellence are invited to serve on the Board.

Parent/Teacher Organization

The Parent Organization (HSA) as an advisory body, is intended to provide support for St. James School to fulfill their God given role as educators and to give mutual support through collaboration with the school. The HSA mission is to enrich the activities of students and parents within the school by organizing and running various events. These include, but not limited to, classroom parties, field trip support, organizing social events, assisting in communication of school activities, over-seeing volunteer services, etc.

The membership of the parent organization consists of the parents/guardians, pastor, and the school principal. It is not intended to replace the Education Committee of the Parish Council, nor the School Advisory Council.

The objectives of the organization are the following:

- offer opportunities for parents to understand the Catholic Philosophy of education and the Diocesan School Program(s);
- publicize through an on going and effective public relations marketing campaign the contributions of the school to the parish and the broader Church and civic communities;
- maximize financial resources available to the school through well-planned fund raising activities, volunteer services, and contributions from the business community.

Social Activities

The HSA sponsors social activities for special occasions during the school year. No other instructional time should be used for these events without the principal's permission. Class treats for birthdays should be distributed during lunch or recess. Consideration must be given to students with allergies. A note should be sent to the homeroom teacher the day before the treat will be sent to school.

Birthday Party Invitations

Please do not send party invitations to school to be distributed for your child's birthday unless ALL students within that grade are invited. This may cause hurt feelings among the students who are not invited. The only exception to this is if every boy or every girl or all students in your child's room are invited.

Athletic Association

All sport programs are the responsibility of the Principal. The Athletic Director is accountable to the Principal. Coaches are selected by the Athletic Director and approved by the Principal and serve on a volunteer basis. The Diocesan Guidelines for Elementary Catholic Schools Sports programs guide the policies. Parent interest and willingness to serve on the Athletic Association are vital to the continued success of the program, but all school associations and advisory boards are under the supervision of the principal.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

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 operate the school's programs. Every effort is made to keep the tuition costs as low as possible. Saint James School parents are expected to commit to participating in the school's fundraising efforts (beyond the opportunities that offset family tuition) as well as to give 40 volunteer hours to school functions per school year.

Because of the importance of maintaining a continuous cash flow to meet ongoing school expenses, it is necessary that the payment plan be enforced. If a family is temporarily burdened by a financial problem, a parent should contact the principal in advance of the due date. If such unusual circumstances exist, the school authorities will arrange for an alternate payment plan and try to assist the family with their tuition amount.

If payments for tuition and fees are not made on schedule **and** parents have **not** contacted the school, the following steps may occur:

1. Access to the on-line grading system may be denied.
2. Report cards may be withheld.
3. The student may be asked to transfer at the end of the second quarter or at the end of the year.
4. Student academic records will not be sent to another school.
5. The student may not receive transcripts or an 8th grade diploma.
6. The student may not participate in extracurricular school activities.

SCRIP Gift Card Program

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 to earn tuition credits through purchasing gift cards. The school purchases gift cards at a discount from hundreds of merchants. The school passes this discount to the school families as tuition credits. The Gift Card Program has saved

school families between \$30,000 to \$60,000 each year through profits paid by merchants and credited to individual families to help pay their tuition costs.

We strongly encourage the participation in the Gift Card Program to offset the cost of your tuition.

There is no limit to the amount of tuition credits you can generate from Gift Card purchases. The Gift Card Program Tuition credits are distributed twice per year via adjustments to your monthly FACTS payments in December and April. If you pay your tuition in full, then your tuition credits will be applied to the following school year.

The St. James Parish Scrip Coordinator administers the Gift Card Program and other eligible fundraisers, keeping a full record of all purchases and profits. Reports are given to the school families three times per year coinciding with report card distribution.

If a family has established consistent use of the Gift Card Program and has generated at least \$500 in tuition credits, that family will have the option to reduce their tuition by \$500 to earn back through the Gift Card Program. Any shortfalls will be billed to the family for the difference prior to the end of the school year.

The Gift Card Program is a voluntary program. It is not a mandatory requirement.

Families will receive a full description of the Gift Card Program at the beginning of the school year.

VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS AT ST. JAMES SCHOOL

St. James School is held to Diocesan and State Regulations in approving volunteers at our school. The Diocese of Pittsburgh's Safe Environment Policy is a program designed to create a safe environment for our children throughout the diocese and at St. James School. There are many opportunities for volunteering. 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. Kindergarten through 8th grade school families are required to commit 40 hours of volunteer service to the school. In lieu of volunteering, a fee of \$350 will be part of the family's financial obligation to the school. There is not a volunteer requirement for Preschool only families.

THE SAFE ENVIRONMENT POLICY

The Diocese of Pittsburgh's Safe Environment Policy requires that all volunteers who have regular contact with the children of our school complete seven requirements. If you plan on volunteering your time in our school, these requirements will need to be completed PRIOR to volunteer service. If you do not complete all the requirements, you CANNOT volunteer at the school. The Volunteer Packets, which contain the instructions on these requirements, are available at the rectory office. Please contact our Parish & School Safe Environment Coordinator, Susan Ponticello, in the rectory office with any questions. The information is also available through the school website and also through the Diocese of Pittsburgh's website, www.diopitt.org.

FINANCIAL AID

Financial Aid is available for eligible families. The financial aid application is an online application only. It is used and assessed by an independent evaluator through FACTS Management. The same application is also used for Scholastic Opportunities Scholarships, Bishop's Education Fund, as well as St. James Parish Aid. The financial aid application can be found on the diocesan website, www.diopitt.org, under Catholic Schools, select "How can I afford a Catholic Education".

Please contact Susan Ponticello in the St. James Rectory office for more information.

Fundraising

The Diocesan policy for funding elementary Catholic schools calls for each school to have fundraising activities to generate a minimum of 10% of the total operating budget. This enables tuition rates to remain at 60% of the total cost. School parents are expected to participate in these fundraising activities to the best of their ability through monetary donations, purchases and/or volunteer work.

HOME/SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS

On-going Communication

A packet of school information will be sent home each month with the youngest child in every family. Parents are asked to initial this envelope and return it to school the next day. Any information or fliers, etc. that a parent may want to distribute must be approved by the principal. Parents may return any necessary forms in the envelope.

The school newsletter is published bi-weekly times during the school year and is sent home in the monthly envelope as well as posting to St. James electronic media avenues. The deadline for submitting articles and information to our Newsletter is the 15th of the month prior to publication. A monthly calendar and our monthly hot lunch menu are also included in the envelope and posted on our website.

The "School News" section of the parish Sunday bulletin also contains information for parents and includes special times for children's Masses. Parents and friends are welcome to join in these liturgical celebrations.

An automated parent notification system is used for emergencies and other time-sensitive issues.

Parents are informed of the student's progress and other school information as follows:

- On-line grading
- Interim Reports
- Quarterly Report Cards
- Parent/student/teacher conferences
- Conferences on request
- Conduct referrals
- School Newsletter
- Parent Teacher Guild meetings

Any questions concerning your child should be directed to the teacher. Please call the school office and the teacher will be notified to contact you. Positive communication between teacher and parent is vital to our total educational program. Parents are asked not to call teachers at their homes.

Reports and Conferences

Reporting student progress to parents is one of the primary responsibilities of the school. In addition to posting grades on-line, the school combines parent conferences with written reports of a student's progress. Written reports are issued four times a year, with the exception of Kindergarten which is issued three times. Parent-teacher conferences are formally conducted twice, once in the fall and once in the spring.

Parent teacher conferences have the following goals:

- enable home and school to meet the needs of the student more effectively;
- establish a working relationship with parents in the interest of the student;
- interpret to parents their child's academic growth and progress;
- suggest ways parents can help students succeed in school.

Efforts are made to provide every parent with an opportunity for a conference. Students may be dismissed early to facilitate meeting with parents. Evening conferences may be scheduled.

Telephone

No child is permitted to use a telephone, including cell phones, except for emergencies. Forgotten homework, books, lunch, gym clothes or changes in afternoon plans are not sufficient cause to call home. In an emergency, the office will call the parent.

VOLUNTEERS

The help of volunteers is always appreciated in the school and at school-sponsored events. Please consider using some of your time and talent to help enhance our quality program. The possibilities are endless. At St. James School parents play an integral role in the education of their children through the School Advisory Council (SAC), Parent Teacher Association (HSA), athletics, fund-raising activities, homeroom parents, playground/lunchroom monitors and field trip chaperones. This partnership is invaluable to the success of our school.

The Safe Environment Program (SEP) of the Diocese of Pittsburgh takes reasonable measures to assure that adults who have contact with minors (1) are committed to providing a safe environment for children and youth and (2) are capable of identifying and preventing abuse of children and (3) have no personal history of behavior that would be a threat to children.

Adults (18 or older) volunteering with children at St. James School must be compliant with the requirements of the safe environment policy:

- Complete application at www.diopitt.org, which processes the PA State Police Criminal Record Clearance;
- Read and sign the Code of Pastoral Conduct;
- Receive the Department of Public Welfare Child Abuse History Clearance;
- Attend the Protecting God's Children Program.

Please contact Mrs. Sue Ponticell in the St. James Rectory for more details, or to begin this Safe Environment Program process.