

# 2020-2021 Academic Year



## St. John's Catholic School Student and Family Handbook

### **Contract/Agreement**

This document contains policies and procedures for which our school community members are responsible. The parent(s)/legal guardian(s) and student(s) accept all the conditions set forth in the current St. John's Catholic School Student and Parent Handbook (hereinafter referred to as "the handbook") and agree to comply with all school regulations and policies by their signatures on the *Acceptance of Handbook Policies* form.

The school reserves the right to review and amend the handbook throughout the school year. The Principal, in collaboration with the Pastor, has the right to amend or revise any policy in the handbook. Parent(s)/legal guardian(s) (hereinafter referred to as "parents") will be given prompt notification in writing if changes are made.

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## I. SCHOOL PROFILE



### SIGNIFICANT EVENTS IN THE HISTORY OF ST. JOHN'S SCHOOL

Catholic education in Hot Springs dates back to 1880 with the Sisters of Mercy opening St. Mary's Academy, a boarding school for girls and a day coeducational high school and grade school. St. John's opened its school shortly after in 1908, under the guidance and support of Benedictine priest, Father John E. Weibel, and two Olivetan Benedictine Sisters. At that time, there were eight grades, two teachers, and sixteen pupils attending St. John's School. In 1921, Monsignor William Carroll, Pastor of both parishes, directed that both schools merge and requested that the Sisters of Mercy take over the leadership and guidance of St. John's School. Class sizes and attendance continued to grow, requiring many transformations and building projects to be organized to provide for the educational needs of its Catholic and non-Catholic community.



Venerable Catherine McAuley,  
foundress of the Sisters of Mercy

During the mid-sixties, grades seven and eight were dropped because of a lack of Sisters to teach the students and because of a drop in enrollment. During these years, St. John's School, along with many other Catholic schools, experienced a shift in its teaching staff from Religious Sisters to lay teachers. St. John's School is very fortunate still to have the benefits and blessings of three Sisters of Mercy on its staff!

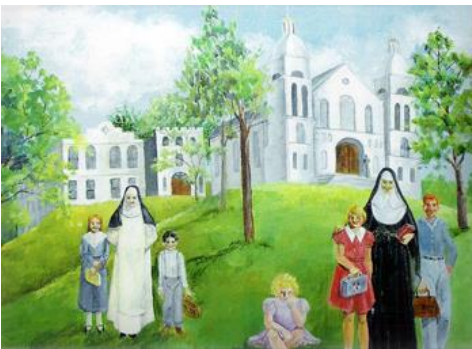
The 1980s and 1990s, under the direction of Father Ralph Bauer, brought about additional renovations and technological advances to the school. The convent building was converted into additional office space and a new building project was underway, housing our present day cafeteria and the gym along with a new library, art and music room, and additional classrooms.

In September of 1987, the school began its first Pre-K program with one teacher and thirteen students. As the student population continued to increase, the need for more space became once again apparent. In the fall of 1996, the school began discussion about restoring the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades. With the support of the parish, under the guidance of the Pastor, Father James West, the 7<sup>th</sup> grade was reestablished in the fall of 1998, and the 8<sup>th</sup> grade became part of the school in the fall of 1999. Building expansions of the 1990 gym building included additional classroom space to accommodate the junior high level students and the addition of a youth room. A new state-of-the-art Science lab was also included with this expansion, which was completed in time for our first 8<sup>th</sup> grade graduation in over 30 years, in the year 2000. The Callahan Computer Lab, which offers wireless internet access throughout the school, continues to evolve and is updated to respond to the changing needs of global IT. At the start of the 2003-04 school year, a second Pre-K class was added.

Today, St. John's School, still located at 583 West Grand Avenue in Hot Springs, continues to offer coeducational classes for students in grades Pre-Kindergarten 3-year-olds through 8<sup>th</sup> grade with the support of St. John the Baptist Catholic Church and its Catholic Community, St. Mary of the Springs Catholic Church in downtown Hot Springs, and Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Church in Hot Springs Village.

St. John's School offers a comprehensive and well-rounded educational environment where students are loved, nurtured, and helped to develop physically, spiritually, emotionally, and intellectually into mature Christians, capable of making free choices in the light of the Gospel. St. John's is a place where all involved form a family which ministers together to provide a loving, safe Christian environment where all feel accepted and respected and where each member of the family is challenged, encouraged, and empowered to develop into a whole person who uses his/her gifts to build up the Reign of God. We realize that our families have a choice and oftentimes make sacrifices in order to provide their children the opportunity to attend Catholic school. Tuition is therefore kept at a minimum and we rely heavily on the support of our Hot Springs business partners and community in order to alleviate some of these extra burdens and financial constraints. It is truly a blessing to be able to share this ministry of educating our youth—our future—and we are grateful for the support of our wider Hot Springs Community in their educational partnership towards this endeavor.

St. John's School offers a rigorous academic program, adhering to the curriculum guidelines established by the Catholic Schools of Arkansas, Diocese of Little Rock. St. John's also offers Religious studies, Spanish, Art, Computer Science, Library, Music, Physical Education, and Latin. Athletic participation includes team sports through the Little Rock Parochial League. Students are also exposed to fine arts activities and are provided opportunities to participate in play performances, academic competitions, writing competitions, and science fairs. They also share their musical talents at church and in the community.



May God continue to support our educational ministry as St. John's Catholic School embraces its 108<sup>th</sup> year of Catholic education here in Hot Springs, Arkansas.

### **ACCREDITATION**

St. John's Catholic School is accredited by the Arkansas Nonpublic School Accrediting Association (ANSAA). In addition to ANSAA, St. John's School is a member of the National Catholic Education Association as well as the Mercy Elementary Education Network.

### **Mission Statement**

St. John's Catholic School is a family of dedicated educators who model and expect from students, courtesy, inclusion, and kindness. We provide an exceptional individualized education in a safe Christian environment. We inspire our students to meet the future with wisdom, compassion, integrity and self-confidence.

### **Statement of Philosophy**

St. John's Catholic School is a spiritually centered community, living the charism of the Sisters of Mercy and Catholic/Christian virtues. We are a dynamic academic environment where the love of learning and the pursuit of creative ideas are strongly promoted in a positive atmosphere which reflects and supports family values. Committed and qualified faculty emphasizes high academic achievement while exploring the quest for wisdom. In addition, our school is a place where students are nurtured, respected, and encouraged to become service oriented members of our local community.

### **Goals and Objectives**

- To provide St. John's students a comprehensive academic program with Catholic identity and culture as its core.
- To provide quality Catholic education to all children in the local parishes who desire to take advantage of such an opportunity, regardless of ability to pay.
- To instill a positive attitude towards the learning process while providing students with the opportunity to achieve academic excellence.
- To promote strongly and recognize Christian values and moral behavior.
- To promote unity, love, respect and understanding among all people regardless of race, religion or socioeconomic group.
- To foster positive self-esteem and mature responsible behavior with the purpose of arriving at the fullness of Christian life.
- To encourage teachers to strengthen their Christian commitment and professional growth to better enable them to integrate Gospel values into daily lessons.
- To promote holistic growth of all teachers, staff, and students, encompassing the physical, social, spiritual, moral, and intellectual realms.
- To live and promote the charism of the Sisters of Mercy and their foundress, Venerable Catherine McAuley.

St. John's Catholic School is made up of a dynamic faculty, a diverse student body and a community of loving families. Our small classes and individual attention focus on a superior academic curriculum and solid Christian values while expanding to meet our ever-changing educational needs.

### **Role of Parents**

"Since parents have conferred life on their children, they have a most solemn obligation to educate their offspring. Hence, parents must be acknowledged as the first and foremost educators of their children. Their role as educators is so decisive that scarcely anything can compensate for their failure in it. It is particularly in the Christian family, enriched by the grace and sacrament of matrimony that from their earliest years children should be taught, according to the faith received in baptism, to have a knowledge of God, to worship Him, and to love their neighbor. While belonging primarily to the family, the task of imparting education requires the help of society as a whole. As for Catholic parents, the Council calls to mind their duty to entrust their children to Catholic schools, when and where this is possible, to support such schools to the extent of their ability, and to work along with them for the welfare of their children."

*Declaration of Christian Education, VATICAN COUNCIL II*

### **SCHOOL BOARD**

The St. John's School Board is an advisory board that assists the Principal in various duties. New members are recommended by the board and appointed by the Pastor. Individual board members exercise no official consultative role outside the board meeting. Members do not have the responsibility or authority to resolve school matters. If a board member is approached regarding a school issue, he/she will refer the aggrieved person to the complaint procedure outlined in this handbook.

### **PARENT-TEACHER ORGANIZATION (PTO)**

St. John's Catholic School Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) strives to enable **all** parents to form a partnership role in their child's education. This organization will function in accordance with the diocesan regulations and the local by-laws. Parents are expected to show their interest in their child by attending scheduled PTO meetings and participating in school events. PTO by-laws and constitution are available online.

## **II. GENERAL INFORMATION**

## **A. OFFICE COMMUNICATION**

### **HOURS**

School hours: 7:45 a.m.-3:00 p.m. Telephone number: 624-3171.

Office hours of the Principal: 8:30 a.m.-2:45 p.m., by appointment.

### **COMMUNICATION**

Your child (youngest) will bring home a communication envelope every **Wednesday**, which will contain important information. This will also be mailed digitally if possible. Please read all information and return the envelope the next day with your child. If anything needs to be returned to the school, please send it back in the communication envelope. You can also check the school's RenWeb site for important information and forms. Teachers and staff are available by email and phone. We will do our best to provide information and ask that you check all resources often for updates.

### **FAMILY DIRECTORY**

Each year St. John's publishes a directory with student and parent names, phone numbers, addresses, and email addresses. Any parent who does not want their information published in this directory must modify their information in RenWeb.

## **B. ADMISSIONS**

St. John's Catholic School will admit students of any race, color, national or ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to their students.

While the school does not discriminate against students with special needs, a full range of services may not be available to them. Decisions concerning the admission and continued enrollment of a student in the school are based upon the student's emotional, academic, and physical abilities, and the resources available to the school in meeting the student's needs.

### **Transfer Students:**

Students transferring into St. John's School will only be considered conditionally for admission after reviewing their written behavior and academic history. A parent/guardian must sign a request form for these records to be sent from the previous school. The student's welfare and stability of the class/school are assessed when accepting a transferring student. Any misrepresentation of facts will result in immediate dismissal. Priority will be given to a student/family moving from out of town.

## **C. TUITION – PK-8**

St. John's School depends upon the loyal support of its family members to meet the day-to-day operating expenses of the school. A major portion of that support comes in the form of tuition payments. Tuition shall be determined by the tuition schedule, which is to be based annually on budget requirements. There is a tuition reduction policy for families having more than one child enrolled at St. John's School. Catholics who do not support the Church monthly by use of Church Envelopes or check (a record cannot be maintained by giving cash) will be charged Non-Catholic Tuition. Tuition payments may be made annually, semiannually, or monthly. In order for the school to pay its operating expenses on schedule, we must receive the tuition payments from parents on a timely basis. Registration Fees for



the next year will be due in the spring of the current year. This payment guarantees a place for your child at St. John's for the upcoming school year.

### **Tuition Payment Options:**

- Ten monthly payments through FACTS. These payments will be automatically deducted from checking or savings, or automatically charged to credit card (with convenience fee) beginning in August on your choice of the 5th or 20th of the month. The FACTS annual enrollment fee is paid per family, and will be deducted from your account prior to the first tuition payment.
- Semi-Annual payments due August 1st and December 1st (paid by cash or check to the school office or by credit card through FACTS with a convenience fee)
- Annual payment due on August 1st (paid by cash or check to the school office or by credit card through FACTS with a convenience fee)

Books and fees are paid in July through FACTS.

Financial assistance may be available on a first-come-first serve and need-basis each school year. In order to be considered, an application for assistance must be submitted online to FACTS. Applications will be reviewed by the Principal and Pastor in summer, and families will be notified when eligibility is determined. All families who receive financial assistance are required to apply for free and reduced lunches. If there is any doubt that you will be able to meet your financial obligations, it will be essential that you apply for assistance through FACTS at the time of registration. Should a financial crisis occur after registration and you are unable to meet your obligation, an immediate conference with the Parish Manager and/or Pastor should be scheduled. Any student whose tuition account becomes more than 60 days past due **MAY BE SUBJECT TO SUSPENSION** until an agreement has been made.

### **STUDENT WITHDRAWAL**

The penalty for withdrawal any time prior to the first day of school equals one month's tuition forfeited. The penalty for withdrawal anytime thereafter equals two months' tuition forfeited. This penalty is applicable even if the student does not start the school year. For a student who is withdrawn during the school year, tuition is calculated for the portion of time attended, plus a penalty equal to two months' tuition.

### **D. REGISTRATION**

Registration is held each spring for all students attending St. John's School at a fee of \$150.00 per student. Students reapply for admission each year. Admission is not guaranteed. The registration fee is non-refundable.

### **REQUIRED REGISTRATION DOCUMENTS:**

1. Birth Certificate
2. Immunization records
3. Baptismal Certificate for all Catholics
4. Transfer students must submit copies of past and current year report cards and all previous standardized test scores, academic records from previous years, and copies of existing psychological and/or therapy reports and evaluations.

A child must be six (6) years of age on or before September 1, when entering the First Grade;

five (5) years of age, on or before September 1, before entering Kindergarten; four (4) years of age, on or before September 1, when entering Pre-K 4 year old; and two and one-half (2-1/2) years of age, on or before September 1 when entering Pre-K 3 year old.

Special admission requests are handled on a case-by-case basis.

## **IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS**

All students attending Catholic schools in the Diocese of Little Rock are subject to the immunization laws of the State of Arkansas which can be found on the AR Health Department website, [www.healthy.arkansas.gov](http://www.healthy.arkansas.gov).

## **E. SCHEDULES**

### **1. DAILY SCHEDULE**

The first morning bell is at 7:45 a.m., at which time students may enter the classroom. The tardy bell is 7:55 a.m. Students are allowed on campus no earlier than 7:30 a.m., unless other arrangements have been made with the office. Students are expected in the classroom **OR** in church and ready to start the day at 7:55 a.m. Any student arriving after Mass begins will be counted tardy, must check in at the office, and be escorted to Mass by a parent or guardian. Out of respect to the Holy Mass, this policy will be strictly enforced. The written tardy policy is also available online. Regardless of their own religious faith, non-Catholic students will not be proselytized. Students and their families will, of course, be welcome to explore the possibility of conversion to the Catholic faith, if they should so desire.

### **MASS**

Parents are encouraged to attend school Masses. Holy Mass will be attended by students on a regular rotating basis during the week, and all students will attend Mass on Friday as a total school community.

The school day ends with the dismissal bell at 3:00 p.m.

### **2. DROP OFF AND PICKUP PROCEDURES**

**Drop Off:** Pre-Kindergarten students are to be escorted to their classrooms and signed in. Other students are to enter campus through the gate between the intermediate and middle school buildings. Parents may either park in the upper or gym parking lot or drop off at the gate by driving up Sr. Noeline Lane. Please use caution and drive 5 mph if using this option.

**Pickup:** Pre-Kindergarten students are to be signed out of their classrooms or from After School Care. At the dismissal bell, students who are to be picked up will proceed carefully to the upper parking lot, where staff supervision is provided. Parents are encouraged and welcome to wait for their children in the courtyard. Students are **NOT** to be picked up in the gym lot or in front of the church, as supervision is not available in those locations. The driveways are blocked during pickup time for safety of the students and families. Students not picked up at 3:20 will participate in After School Care or Study Hall (see details below).

### **3. FACULTY MEETINGS**

In order to schedule Faculty Meetings and Inservice Programs for the teachers, classes are to be dismissed at 1:30 p.m. each first Friday of the month, unless notified of a change in schedule.

## **F. SCHOOL SUPERVISION**

## 1. DURING SCHOOL

Playground supervision is conducted according to safety and health regulations. Playgrounds will be supervised at all times when students are active on the grounds. During the recess period, a teacher or staff member will supervise the students on the playground or in the gym. Students will not leave the school grounds at any time without the express permission of the Principal and without being accompanied by an authorized adult.

## PLAYGROUND DUTY

Parents are asked to volunteer for playground duty during the school year from 10:45 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. We have one permanent monitor on the playground every day and one rotating parent to help supervise playground activities. If we have enough volunteers you will only have to serve one day a month or maybe every other month. One day gives you 2 service hours. Please be generous and sign up in the office. A monthly calendar will be in your envelope to remind you of your day(s) signed up. If you are unable to fulfill this commitment, please find someone to take your place. Volunteers are asked to supervise students; caring for younger children or use of phones or tablets are distractions from this very important responsibility.

## 2. AFTER SCHOOL SUPERVISION (AFTER SCHOOL CARE AND STUDY HALL)

After school supervision from 3:10 p.m. until 5:30 p.m. will be available for students from Pre-Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. This program follows the licensing guidelines set forth by the Department of Human Services for church-operated facilities. The fee is \$35 per week or \$10 per day for drop-in students. Any student remaining beyond 5:30 pm will be assessed a \$10 fee per minute. Students with an outstanding balance greater than one month's fees will not be permitted to attend After School Care. Students in Pre-K through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade will participate in After School Care in the cafeteria. Students in 4<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grades must proceed to Study Hall in the computer lab until 4:00 p.m., and then transfer to After School Care, unless given permission to participate in another school activity. After school study hall is strictly for academic purposes. All students must be signed out by a parent or authorized adult.

**Please note that ANY student remaining on campus is under the care of the school and thus will be placed in the aftercare program until a parent is present for pick up. Standard aftercare fees will be charged based on current policy.**

## 3. OFF-CAMPUS ACTIVITIES

Before groups of students are taken off the school grounds, written approval must be obtained from the parent of each child. No off-campus trip will be taken without the approval of the Principal.

## FIELD TRIPS

Field trips will be organized throughout the year by the classroom teacher. The trips will be appropriate and educationally rewarding. Field trips are a privilege and students can be denied participation if they fail to meet academic and/or behavioral requirements. Prior to the outing, each student will receive a Field Trip Permission Form. This form will contain the details of the trip and a section to be signed by the parent granting permission for his/her child to attend. This form must be returned to the teacher in order for the student to attend. Failure to return the permission form will lead to the student remaining in school, under supervision. **Handwritten notes or phone calls will not be accepted.** Parents do have the right to refuse to allow their child to participate in a field trip.

Parents who plan to chaperone any field trip must be certified in cmg.org at <https://www.dolr.org.safe-environment> and have notified the teacher prior to the day of the field trip. **If chaperoning, parents should not bring other children.** Each driver on a trip must provide the office with a copy of his/her driver's license and auto insurance. Because licenses and insurance expire, copies will not be kept on file, and new copies may be required for each trip.

If a DVD player will be used in a vehicle while traveling for a field trip, any movies shown must be rated G or approved by the Principal.

## **G. DRESS CODE/PERSONAL HYGIENE**

A sense of Christian modesty will dictate the type of clothing worn by the students and teachers. "Free Dress" day opportunities will be offered at various times throughout the school year. At all times, however, clothing should be appropriate for the academic and Christian climate of St. John's School. The administration reserves the right to interpret what is appropriate. Gum is not allowed on campus except during Terra Nova testing, if teacher permits.

## **UNIFORMS**

### **BOYS AND GIRLS—PK 3/4--every day**

- SJS logo tie-dyed T-shirt
- Navy blue shorts (logo) or plain Navy sweatpants or Navy elastic waist pants from Toggery
- SJS Navy blue sweatshirt
- Tennis shoes and white socks

### **P.E. UNIFORMS—BOYS AND GIRLS, K-5th**

- Plain Navy blue sweatpants or SJS logo shorts (should be just above the knee)
- Ash grey T-Shirt **with** St. John's Logo.
- Navy blue SJS Logo sweatshirt OR Navy blue SJS Logo fleece jacket (cold weather days)
- Tennis shoes with solid white socks
- P.E. Uniforms for boys and girls in grades K–8th may be purchased at The Toggery in Little Rock. Navy blue sweatpants may be purchased anywhere, as long as they are the correct color and style pant.

### **GIRLS – Kindergarten – 5th Grade:**

- Navy blue plaid box jumper
- Navy blue plaid skirt or skort
- White or Navy polo shirt **with** St. John's embroidered logo
- \*\*Dress uniform includes the white polo shirt with embroidered logo

### **BOYS Kindergarten – 5th Grade:**

- Navy blue twill pants or Navy blue walking shorts with belt (Kindergarten boys do not wear belts)
- Light blue or white polo shirt **with** St. John's embroidered logo
- \*\*Dress uniform includes the white polo shirt with embroidered logo

### **Uniforms for Middle Grades (6-8):**

- Girls: Navy blue plaid skirt or skort
- Girls: White or Navy polo Shirt **with** embroidered logo or white pointed collar blouse **with** embroidered logo

- Boys: Navy blue twill pants or walking shorts with belt
- Boys: White or light blue polo shirt (not Navy blue) **with** embroidered logo or white oxford cloth shirt **with** embroidered logo, plaid uniform tie for dress uniform
- Girls & Boys: Navy blue sweater vest **with** logo
- \*\*Dress uniform includes sweater vest **with** logo, long-sleeved oxford shirt/pointed collar blouse, and uniform plaid tie for the boys in cool weather, or white polo **with** logo in warm weather.

**OUTER WEAR for classroom and church (Boys and Girls - Grades Pre-Kindergarten-8th)**

- St. John's Sweatshirt, or solid Navy blue cardigan sweaters **with** logo, or fleece zip jacket **with** logo (sold by PTO), or all-weather logo jacket from Toggery; no hoodies please.

**ALL STUDENTS:**

- Under skirts/jumpers, girls must wear Navy blue modesty shorts, Navy leggings (no skin showing at ankles), or Navy tights.
- Slacks and shorts are to be uniform style - No cargo, baggy, Capri, etc.
- Belts -Solid brown, black, or Navy belts, no wider than 2 inches, are required with slacks and walking shorts (except Kindergarten).
- **Shoes and Socks: Soft-soled** walking shoes and tennis shoes are required. Shoes must be closed-toed and closed-heeled for safety. (Sandals, Crocs, boots, and open-toed shoes are not allowed.)
- Solid white socks or St. John's logo socks are required. No-show socks are NOT permitted.

***Uniforms, except sweatpants, must be purchased from The Toggery.***

- The first violation of a dress code violation is 5 minutes off the child's recess.
- The second violation of a dress code violation is 10 minutes off the child's recess.
- The third and every after violation of the dress code for the school year is wiping down all the cafeteria tables in the lunch room.

**PARENTS: WE DEPEND UPON YOUR SUPPORT REGARDING THE DRESS CODE.**

**REMEMBER: You and your children are representatives of not just the school but God's Holy Catholic Church.**

The Uniform policy is ALSO available online or in the school office.

**STUDENT ATTIRE, HAIRSTYLES AND MAKE-UP**

St. John's students are expected to be neat and clean in appearance at all times. Hair shall be worn in an appropriate manner, well groomed, and not extreme. Boys' hair must not touch the collar, the eyebrows, or the top of the ears. Girls' hairstyles must be off the face and out of the eyes. Hair colors should be natural color. Feathers and any other hair extensions are not permitted. No makeup, visible tattoos, or artificial nails. Nail polish may be worn IF it is a light color and completely painted at the discretion of the faculty.

**OTHER UNIFORM GUIDELINES**

- Clothing deemed inappropriate cannot be worn.
- All uniforms should fit properly and have no holes or significant fading.

- All pants must be uniform style with pockets on the inside, not sown outside; no Cargo pants or Capri pants.
- Pants, skirts, and shorts must be worn at waistline.
- All skirts must touch the top of the knee in both the front and the back.
- Shorts must be worn under jumpers and skirts.
- Undershirts must be white, should not show through the over shirt and sleeves should not stick out past uniform shirt.
- Shirts must be tucked in (if the belt cannot be seen, the shirt is considered un-tucked).
- Tights and leggings must be navy blue. They cannot be loose-fitting. **Leggings must be long enough to tuck inside socks.**
- Girls' bows and hair accessories should be simple; colors must match the uniform.
- Shoes must be closed toe, closed heel, and rubber soled to protect the gym and other floors. No slip-on shoes, extra-high high tops, "finger" shoes, boots, or shoes with wheels, lights or cleats.
- Socks must be solid color white. Must be crew sock- no "no-show" socks.
- One pair of single post earrings can be worn on the lower lobe. No hoop or dangling earrings. No earrings on boys.
- No bracelets, rings, or necklaces, except for religious items, and limited in size/number.
- No make-up, visible tattoos, fingernail polish, or artificial nails.

**The final decision for appropriate attire rests with the Principal and/or Pastor.**

## **H. POSSESSIONS BROUGHT TO SCHOOL**

All items brought to school should be marked with the student's name (sweaters, jackets, raincoats; etc.) Please make sure BOTH ITEMS (of a pair) are marked. If a student loses articles at school, he/she should check the LOST AND FOUND BOX. The school is not responsible for items lost, stolen, or broken at school. Electronic devices such as cell phones, tablets, radios, digital devices, CD players, video games, etc., may not be brought to school without special permission and the approval of the Principal. If a student needs to bring a cell phone to school, it is to remain off and in the student's backpack until after the final bell, unless the teacher gives permission for educational activities.

On-campus use of devices or possessions without proper authorization will result in immediate confiscation by the Principal, such that a parent/legal guardian must come to the office for its return. It will NOT be returned to the student.

## **III. HEALTH RULES AND POLICIES**

### **A. GENERAL**

Please do not send a child to school with an elevated temperature. If a child has had a temperature over 100°, do not send him/her back to school until the temperature has been normal for 24 hours. Communicable diseases should be reported to the child's teacher. Dental and medical appointments should be made after school hours.

### **INJURIES AT SCHOOL**

Minor injuries are taken care of by the teacher or in the office. In case of a serious injury, parents will be notified as quickly as possible. If the parents cannot be reached, the emergency numbers will be tried. If the emergency numbers cannot be contacted, the injured child will be taken to the hospital if necessary. All accidents will be reported on the school incident report form and a copy will be sent home and the original will be placed in the child's file. Since medical bills resulting from accidents to students at school are the responsibility of the parents, all parents of students at St. John's are given the opportunity to purchase student accident insurance through the school. Forms are available in the school office.

## **B. MEDICATION AT SCHOOL**

- Any medication brought to school will be stored in a designated place in the office.
- Prescription drugs must be in the original container labeled with the physician's name and appropriate dosage.
- No medication will be administered to a student by any school personnel unless a Medication Form is on file in the office for the specific medication, including time and dosage of medication to be administered.
- Students may not keep any medication, whether prescription or non-prescription, in their possession while at school, except Epinephrine auto-injectors and asthma inhalers. A Medication Administration Release form must still be on file in the office for these items.

## **C. STUDENT ACCIDENT INSURANCE**

All students will be offered the option to enroll in school accident insurance. The Diocesan Board of Education will assist the Superintendent in selecting the insurance to be used by the Catholic schools in the Diocese.

## **D. DRUGS/ALCOHOL**

If any student brings to school, or has in his/her possession on the school grounds, during or after school hours, any illegal drugs, medications not authorized, tobacco, or alcohol, the proper authorities will be notified. The student will be immediately removed from school grounds, pending the proper investigation and consequential expulsion.

# **IV. SCHOOL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

## **A. ATTENDANCE**

Student achievement is directly related to consistent school attendance. In addition to the fact that state legislation requires school attendance, St. John's School believes that regular school attendance is necessary to ensure that students understand the instruction and material presented by its faculty. Time lost from class is irretrievable in terms of opportunities for instructional interchange. Thus, a student's attendance should not be interrupted, except for important matters or unavoidable circumstances. Parents should be aware that the student's grade might be adversely affected by absence. Generally, a pupil who has accumulated 25 days of absences during the school year (three tardies equating to an absence) shall repeat the grade or be required to attend summer school. Pupils are expected to be in attendance at all times when school is in session, unless illness or an emergency prevents it. Excessive tardiness and/or absences from school inhibit learning and are disruptive to the student's classmates and teachers. For

this reason, family vacations or other activities requiring absence from school, even doctor's appointments, should be avoided.

**Reporting Absence and Makeup Work:** It is the responsibility of the student or parent to contact the teacher to obtain makeup assignments. If a child is to be absent due to illness or for any other reason, the parents must notify the school office before 9:00 a.m. When the child returns to school, his or her parent is to send an email or a note to the office or classroom teacher stating the reason for the absence. When there is a planned absence, the student is required to gather advanced assignments from his/her teachers and establish a schedule (not to exceed 5 days from the time of return to school) for completing assignments and tests. Since it is not always possible or desirable to provide all of the assignments that will be covered during the time of the absence, some assignments may be required to be completed by the student upon his/her return to school. The parents will submit a letter to the office and to the student's teacher detailing the date of departure and date of return as well as reason for absence. This request should be made at least 5 school days prior to the planned absence. An "excused absence" includes illness, quarantine, or death in the immediate family. An "unexcused absence" is the nonattendance of a student for truancy. Such reasons as "overslept, visiting, out of town, needed at home, had to go on an errand," are considered unexcused absences. Excuses of a doubtful nature shall be investigated by the Principal.

## **B. TARDINESS**

A student is considered tardy if not in the classroom or in Mass when the 7:55am class bell rings. Tardiness interferes with progress in school and constitutes a disturbance for all members of the class. Excused tardies are for doctor or dental appointments. Three tardies, either excused or unexcused, will be counted as an absence. Parents will meet with the Principal if excessive tardiness continues to occur. The tardy bell rings at 7:55 a.m. All tardy students must check in at the office. **THIS INCLUDES TARDINESS TO MASS.** For the safety of the student, we ask parents to accompany their child to Mass, after checking in with the office. The tardiness policy is available online and in the appendix.

**PARENTS:** The celebration of the Holy Catholic Mass is integral to the St. John's School mission. As such, tardiness will be handled in the same manner as classroom tardiness. Any student not seated in mass by 7:55am must sign in at the office.

## **EARLY CHECK-OUT**

Parents wishing to pick up their children during the school day must first report to the school office, sign their children out, and wait for them to be called to the office. If returning during the same day, the parents must sign their child back in at the office. These are recorded as tardies or partial absences.

## **PERMANENT WITHDRAWAL FROM SCHOOL**

As early as possible the parent is to notify the school if a withdrawal is forthcoming. Issues with delinquent tuition, outstanding library books, school books, athletic uniforms, or other fees must be settled before records will be sent to another school.

## **C. CURRICULUM**

All Catholic schools will follow the Diocesan and Arkansas State requirements regarding basic materials, specific courses, and suggested time allotments. St. John's Catholic School follows the *In Spirit and Truth Curriculum Guide*.



1. A planned instructional program will lead to discovering and developing the abilities of each student.
2. St. John's offers a balanced curriculum including Religion, Language Arts (English, Reading, Literature, Oral and Written Communication, Speech Arts, Handwriting, Spelling Usage, Vocabulary, and Grammar), Science, Mathematics, Social Studies (History, Geography, Civics, Economics and Sociology), Spanish, Latin, Art, Music, Health, Physical Education, Computer Skills and such electives as deemed practical and helpful. All Catholic schools in the Diocese of Little Rock will use approved texts in the instructional program. The Title I program is used to meet the special reading and math needs of the students. Guest speakers, service projects, and field trips enhance the curriculum.

### **Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten**

The philosophy of the Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten Programs is based on the premise that children are unique and have individual needs which must be met. Emphasis is placed on helping students develop in their social skills and interaction with others. The development of language arts skills, especially oral language, receives a great deal of emphasis. Oral language development is closely related to academic skill development. The nature of the program provides opportunities for students to begin their basic reading and math skills. This includes recognition of numbers and letters. The reading readiness includes the sounds for which the letter stands. Each child moves into the reading readiness program as he/she is ready. The program, in compliance with DHS guidelines, is designed to help the students in making a transition to a formal school setting. Guidelines are available for preview upon request.

### **LIBRARY**

Books are checked out for one-week intervals. The student who signs the Borrower's Card is responsible for any fines should the book be lost or damaged. A student who violates the policy may have restricted library privileges and a \$25 fine per book. Lending a library book to a friend is strongly discouraged as the student's name on the Borrower's Card is still responsible for any damage to the book regardless of his/her innocence in the loss of the book.

### **D. HOME-STUDY ASSIGNMENTS AND RECOMMENDED TIME**

Home assignments, whether written or study work, are a necessary part of each student's educational program. Home-study/homework is thus to be expected in all grades and will be age specific as determined by that grade teacher.

In order to assimilate the academic skills acquired at school, it is essential that good study habits be fostered in the home. Parents can do much to help their child by:

- Providing an atmosphere conducive to study
- Scheduling a definite time for study
- Showing an interest in the child's work
- Realizing that homework does not solely consist of written work, but that both written and study work are important
- Expecting the child to have his assignments for homework written down
- Checking with the teacher if the student repeatedly says he has no homework

Home-study time varies according to the needs of the individual child.

If your child is ill, call the school office (624-3171) by 9:00 a.m. to report the absence and to request homework. Homework can be picked up in the school office or sent home with a friend or sibling.

## **E. GRADING/REPORTING OF STUDENT'S PERFORMANCE**

Uniformity of grading will be conscientiously maintained throughout the school. That is, work of similar quality will receive about the same mark from all teachers. Academic marks are to be based on academic achievement and not on conduct, as behavior is to be graded separately.

Grading—The letter system or percentage system will be used for reports to parents, and for permanent record files. In either case, the following interpretation will be maintained:

A Superior Work	90 to 100%	O - Outstanding
B Above Average	80 to 89%	S - Satisfactory
C Average	70 to 79%	N – Needs Improvement
D Passing	60 to 69%	U - Unsatisfactory
F Failure	Below 60%	

### **REPORT CARDS**

Report cards are distributed every nine weeks. The students' grades are used to report individual progress and should not be used as a comparison to other students. All report cards must be signed and returned within a week of the distribution date.

Pre-K and Kindergarten will be evaluated on developmentally appropriate skills which are recorded quarterly on a student checklist.

### **HONOR ROLL**

St. John's will publish an honor roll each quarter. Students will be recognized who have earned all A's and all A's and B's. All subjects for which students earn letter grades will be counted in determining these honor rolls.

### **STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

In order to document a student's handicapping condition, the school must have a current psychological evaluation on file in the office. Grades for students with special needs are used to indicate a student's progress in relation to his or her ability and not in relation to an expected grade norm. A modification checklist can be prepared on an individualized basis. If quantity of coursework or grading is modified, it will be noted on the report card and permanent record card.

## **F. PROMOTION**

A student is promoted each year after evaluation by the teacher and the Principal. When making an evaluation of the student's academic progress, the teacher will consider the social, emotional, physical, and moral development of the student. The Principal will have the final say in promoting or retaining a child.

- Two failures (less than 60% for the year) in core academic subjects constitute a grade failure unless made up in summer classes approved by the Principal.
- Proof of attendance at summer school or approved tutoring and passing marks from the tutor, must be presented to the Principal before the child is promoted.

- Accumulation of 25 days of absences during the school year may be grounds for retention.

## **G. GUIDANCE AND TESTING**

Every teacher is concerned with helping students meet their personal, emotional, educational and vocational needs. The guidance program involves the following services:

1. Orientation of students
2. Records - individual inventory of physical and mental growth
3. Testing and assessment
  - SAT-10 Achievement Test is administered to students in grades K or 1 through 8 in April.
  - The classroom teacher is responsible for informal guidance in the classroom or on the playground, etc., and formal, individual counseling for personal, educational and social needs. Referrals are made to professional sources.
  - Students having learning difficulties may be referred to an appropriate provider.
  - Health Services: Vision test for students in grades Kindergarten, 1, 3, 5 and 7 and any others referred by the teachers. Hearing test for students in Kindergarten, grades 1, 3, 5 and 7 and any others referred by teachers. Scoliosis Test for girls in grades 5-8 and boys in grades 7-8.

## **H. STUDENT CONFIDENTIAL RECORDS**

According to the Buckley Act of 1974, a student's records are confidential and will be open only to members of the professional staff and to the student's parents/guardians, or to the student herself/himself, if she/he has attained the age of 18, at times pre-arranged with the Principal.

### **PERMANENT RECORDS**

Permanent record cards are kept in the school office for every student. Annual attendance, average grades for each year, and standardized test scores for each year are the only items recorded on these cards.

### **ACCESS TO STUDENT RECORDS**

Parents may access student records by submitting a request in writing at least 24 hours before they would like to see the records.

## **I. PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES**

Mandatory Parent-Teacher Conferences will be scheduled once each semester as announced by the Principal or teacher. Parents are encouraged to contact the teacher or Principal to request an additional conference if they have a particular concern.

## **J. NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS**

Non-custodial parents are not to use the school as a meeting place to visit with their children. In the case of divorced parents, a copy of the court order, stating visiting rights may be required to be on file in the school office. If no court order is provided, St. John's School will assume both parents have equal rights. The Principal will allow a noncustodial parent to take the child as specified in the court order. A copy of the child's report card may be given to the non-custodial parent.

## **K. VISITORS AT SCHOOL**

Visitors at the school must sign in at the office and obtain a Visitor's Badge before visiting a class or contacting a teacher or student. Visitors are to sign out and return the Visitor's Badge to the office before leaving campus. **Please use only the office gate entrance to enter the campus.**

## SOLICITORS

No one is allowed on the school grounds or in the school building to solicit or to request signatures for a petition unless authorized by the Pastor and/or Principal.

## L. DISCIPLINE

### 1. GENERAL

The ultimate goal of discipline at St. John's is to teach students to become effective modifiers of their own behavior. Good order and self-discipline are expected. The classroom teacher is responsible for developing age appropriate rules, rewards, and consequences, which are clearly conveyed to students verbally and in writing. Emphasis will be placed on positive values rather than negative. A disciplined person consistently reflects correct attitudes and respect for the rights of others. For the individual's own good, and for the good of the nation, the school will aim at producing disciplined citizens. Students must be intent on mastering subject matter, and this is best accomplished in an atmosphere conditioned by discipline. Every student and parent will be held accountable for any disorderly conduct in school, on the school's entire campus (includes church, parking lots and playgrounds), or at any school function. A grade-level discipline policy will be read and signed by parents and students.

### OFF-CAMPUS CODE

Students remain St. John's students at all times, on and off campus, and their behavior reflects on themselves and the school. A student will be held accountable for behaviors that are detrimental to the reputation of St. John's School. Parents also have a responsibility to St. John's School and are expected to maintain positive behavior and a cooperative relationship with the school and its employees. If parents fail to support this relationship, their child may be removed from the school.

### 2. REWARDS/PUNISHMENTS

Emphasis is placed on positive values, rather than punishments. When violations do occur, each case will be dealt with patiently, respecting the personal dignity of the student, the teacher, and all who have been offended by the student's misconduct. Means of coping with problem situations include, but are not limited to:

- a. focusing on virtue-based, restorative solutions,
- b. providing appropriate consequences to the misbehaving student,
- c. talking to the student in private,
- d. informing parents or guardians,
- e. seeking positive help for the student, and/or
- f. assigning the student to detention.

Serious or continuous disciplinary problems will be referred to the Principal and Pastor, and parents will be notified of the infractions and of the disciplinary actions taken. If a student cannot be helped through these actions, the Principal will follow the procedure for suspension and/or dismissal.

Examples of types of conduct not tolerated:

- a. Any disorderly conduct or destruction of property. Students will pay for any damage to school or parish property.
  - b. Fighting
  - c. Defiance of school authority
  - d. Disrespect or any type of abuse of school staff, volunteers, or other students
  - e. Possession of firearms or other weapons
  - f. Any behavior that threatens the safety of others
  - g. Consistent lack of cooperation, both within and outside the class
  - h. Theft, cheating, plagiarism
  - i. Possession of or use of alcohol/drugs (See ALCOHOL/DRUGS Section)
- \*St. John’s School reserves the right to search and seizure if necessary.**

### 3. DISMISSAL OF STUDENTS—SUSPENSION

Suspension is defined as “the temporary exclusion of a student from school for disciplinary reasons.” Suspension from the school will be the decision of the Principal in consultation with the Pastor. Students may be suspended for serious reasons by the Principal, for a period of time not to exceed ten (10) days. Some infractions would not rise to the level of suspension. In such cases, an In-School Suspension would be considered. The Principal will notify the student and the student’s parents or guardians of the reason for the suspension, the time of the suspension, and the requirements for reinstatement, which are to be determined by the Principal and the Pastor and are not negotiable.

### 4. DISMISSAL OF STUDENTS—EXPULSION

Expulsion is defined as “the permanent dismissal of a student from the school.” Expulsion from the school will be the decision of the Principal in consultation with the Pastor. Notification of this expulsion will be sent to the School Board President. A written report containing reasons for the expulsion will be sent to the student’s parents or guardian and to the Diocesan Superintendent’s office. The written report to parents will contain the information concerning the process of appeal.

### 5. COMPLAINTS

Any parent or guardian feeling aggrieved concerning any matter connected with the school will contact the individual involved before discussing with other patrons. Complaints should be handled in the following manner:

1. If a person has a complaint, the individual will go to the employee who is most directly involved in the situation to seek a solution to the problem.
2. If the matter cannot be resolved satisfactorily at that level, the person will contact the Principal for an appointment and discussion.
3. If the issue is still not resolved, the person will submit a written complaint to the Pastor who will then determine the best course of action.
4. If no solution is found to the problem, the matter will be referred to the superintendent.

*It is not the responsibility or authority of the School Board members or PTO officers to resolve school matters. If board members or PTO officers are approached with complaints, they are to refer the aggrieved person to the above procedure.*

## V. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### A. ATHLETICS

The purpose of the athletic program at St. John's Catholic School is to provide an opportunity for all interested students to use the physical talents that God has given them and experience the Christian values that can be found in sportsmanship, camaraderie, and teamwork, all while improving basic skills in sports. The athletic program will strive to encourage active participation and individual efforts of each student regardless of skill level. As a result of participating in the sport, the student should develop a respect for authority (coaches, referees, parents, etc.) and a respect for others (teammates and opposing players). The Athletic Department hopes that each individual will develop self-confidence, increase self-esteem, and have fun. A volunteer athletic director works in coordination with the Principal in organizing the athletic program. The Parochial League policies are available on the school website. Students absent or who arrive at school after 10:00 a.m. on a game day are not allowed to play in that day's game. If a student checks out of school early, he/she must receive approval from the Principal in order to play.

## B. COMPUTER AND INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USE

Access to e-mail and the Internet will enable students to explore thousands of libraries, databases, and bulletin boards throughout the world. Families should be warned that material accessible via the Internet may contain items that are illegal, defamatory, inaccurate, or potentially offensive to some people. The intent is to make Internet access available to further educational goals and objectives. We believe that the benefits to students from access to the Internet, in the form of information resources and opportunities for collaboration exceed any disadvantages. But ultimately parents and guardians of minors are responsible for setting and conveying the standards that their children should follow when using media information sources. The school supports and respects each family's right to decide whether or not to apply for access.

Students are responsible for behavior on school computer networks just as they are in a classroom or school hallways. The network is provided for students to conduct research and communication with others. Access to network services is given to students who agree to act in a considerate and responsible manner. Parent permission is required. Access is a privilege – not a right. Access entails responsibility.

Within reason, freedom of speech and access to information will be honored. During school, teachers will guide students toward appropriate materials. As outlined in the school policy and procedures the following guidelines must be followed:

### Computer Access:

- The administration or teacher has the right to access information stored in any student file on any student screen, or student electronic mail.
- Hardware or software shall not be damaged, modified or abused.
- Intentionally altering the files, data or software on the school computers will be viewed as vandalism.
- Loading software on any computer without authorization of the technology coordinator is forbidden.
- Making copies of licensed or copyrighted software is illegal and therefore prohibited.
- Using of or sharing another's password is not allowed.
- Before accessing the Internet, each student will receive instruction in the proper use of the online tools.
- Students must notify teacher immediately of inappropriate material found.
- Use of Internet without the knowledge and permission of a teacher or administrator is prohibited.
- Students may not download programs.

- Use of the Internet without a clearly defined educational objective understood by both student and teacher is not allowed.
- Students will use polite language; obscene language, harassing, insulting, or attacking language will not be tolerated.
- Transmitting or downloading materials in violation of copyright laws is prohibited.
- Users are prohibited from sending and displaying offensive messages or pictures.
- Trespassing in another's folders or files is forbidden.
- Intentionally wasting limited resources is not allowed.
- Students are not to reveal any personal information.

Violation may result in loss of access as well as other disciplinary or legal actions.

By signing the *Acceptance of Handbook Policies* form, students agree to comply with the above stated rules – communicating over the network in a reliable fashion while honoring all relevant laws and restrictions.

By signing the *Acceptance of Handbook Policies* form, parents grant permission for their children to access networked computers services such as electronic mail and the internet, understand that individuals and families may be held liable for violations and that some materials on the internet may be objectionable, and accept responsibility for guidance of internet use – setting and conveying standards for their children to follow when selecting, sharing, or exploring information and media.

### C. EVACUATION

If in an emergency situation it is necessary to evacuate the building indefinitely, all occupants of the school buildings will go to St. John's Catholic Church. This will be our safe point from which students can be picked up.

### D. FEDERAL PROGRAMS

Each year St. John's Catholic School students receive benefits from Title I through funding from the federal government. These funds are used to provide programs, teacher inservice and materials to address student improvement. Because much of this funding is based on the number of free or reduced lunch students attending the school, we encourage everyone to apply.

Civil Rights Statement:

### E. HOMEROOM REPRESENTATIVES

Homeroom representatives are selected to help the classroom teachers and Principal with student and school activities. All activities are to be approved by the Principal. Homeroom representatives are to assist or solicit assistance with classroom parties, field trips, teacher appreciation week, etc. The PTO coordinates this program and needs your help in this important responsibility.

### F. LUNCH

- Menus for the month will be sent home at the beginning of the month with the school newsletter and are available online. They change occasionally, and every effort will be made to communicate changes with parents.
- Lunches are paid in advance. Please send lunch payments to the office in an envelope labeled with the student's first and last name and the amount enclosed.

- If lunches are brought from home, please prepare nutritious lunches. No carbonated or caffeinated drinks are to be brought to school.
- Parents are welcome to eat lunch at school with their children. Visiting parents are invited to order a lunch; please let the office know as soon as possible of your plan.
- Breakfast can be provided daily for \$1.50 per day. Lunch cost is \$3.50, and students purchasing only milk pay \$0.50. If a student has an outstanding cafeteria balance greater than one month's cost, the student must bring lunch from home until the balance is paid down.

St. John's participates in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) through the Department of Agriculture.

#### G. MOVIE/VIDEOS

To promote and recognize Christian values and moral behavior, a stated goal of St. John's Catholic School and by recommendation of the School Board, only movies with a MPAA rating of "G" (General Audiences) will be allowed to be viewed at the school. Middle school students may also be allowed to view movies rated "PG" (Parental Guidance Suggested) if the teacher has previewed the movie prior to showing it to his/her class, and has received prior approval from the Principal. (The Principal will consult the USCCB listing of movie reviews for information.) "PG - 13" movies are not permitted.

#### H. PARTIES

Students may not have individual birthday parties at school. Permission to send cupcakes or other treats on your child's birthday must be coordinated with the child's teacher and will usually be given at lunch or afternoon snack time. At no time are gifts to be exchanged in the classroom. Party invitations may only be passed out in class if **all** students in the classroom receive one. *Students are not allowed to receive flowers, balloons, candy, or other deliveries at school.* These will be forwarded to the home address. A classroom Valentine's Day Party will be coordinated by the homeroom Mom/Dad and teacher. An all-school Christmas Pancake Breakfast will be provided the day before Christmas Break.

#### I. PHOTOS

St. John's reserves the right to use student photos and videos for school publications, website, advertising, and official social media pages, including publications for the diocese, ANSAA, and other official organizations. All such photos and videos become the property of St. John's School for both current and future use. If parents do not want their children to appear in school photos or videos, they must sign a waiver in the office.

#### J. SAFETY DRILLS

St. John's School follows the guidelines of the Diocese of Little Rock and the Department of Human Services for safety drills. Students participate in regular fire, tornado, and lockdown drills. In addition, the teachers orient students regularly in classroom safety rules.

#### K. SCHOOL TRADEMARKS

The school name and logos may not be used on any physical or electronic materials without the written permission of the Principal, Parish Manager, or Pastor.

#### L. SERVICE HOURS

St. John's Catholic School recognizes the importance of family commitment to Catholic education. Families are required to give at least 30 service hours to the school each year. Single parent families will give at least 15 service hours. Service hours may be obtained in many ways. For example, helping with



playground duty, dismissing students/parking lot duty, helping at Bazaar, Mardi Gras, etc., assisting teachers, helping around the school, attending PTO meetings, helping with PTO projects, driving on field trips, Track & Field Day, and substituting in a class when a teacher is out, are some of the many needed services where we rely on the generosity of our parents/community for assistance. Many families contribute more than 30 hours, which is of great benefit to the students and is appreciated. Parents will receive information about opportunities to earn service hours, but should also contact the school to seek service opportunities. Families can register their services hours on RenWeb or submit a service hours form to the office. At the end of the year, families are required to pay \$10 for each uncompleted hour.

#### M. STUDENT INTERVIEWS

Officials from the Department of Human Services (DHS) and certain other agencies have the authority to come to school and interview students when necessary. The Principal will be present at any such interview, according to DHS policy.

#### N. CIRCLE OF GRACE TRAINING

**Every** volunteer in the school is required by the Diocese of Little Rock to have completed the Circle of Grace “Protecting God’s Children” training. Training sessions are available online at [www.cmgconnect.org](http://www.cmgconnect.org).

#### O. WEATHER CONDITIONS

School closings because of inclement weather will be announced on major radio and television stations and sent out through RenWeb. The decision to close school due to storms is made by the Principal and Pastor. **Please listen to the news, check your texts and phone messages, and check your email, but try to avoid calling the school or church offices.** When school closes due to inclement weather, After-school care will also close. If the school is in session when the announcement is made to close school, parents are to make arrangements to have their children picked up as quickly as possible. Cyber-day assignments will be utilized as often as the diocesan policy allows in an effort to minimize the amount of lost instructional hours.

#### P. HUMAN SEXUALITY POLICY

St. John’s Catholic School of Hot Springs has fully adopted the Diocese of Little Rock’s *Human Sexuality* policy. The diocesan human sexuality policy is a part of the diocesan *Manual of Policies and Regulations* for Catholic schools, and is located in subsection 4.42 of the section titled “4.0 Students.” It can be viewed on the Catholic Schools Office website at: <http://www.dolr.org/schools/policy-manual>

#### Q. RIGHT TO AMMEND

In developing these rules and policies, the administration has tried to be as explicit as possible. Nevertheless, during the school year new and unusual situations will arise. **Therefore, the Pastor and Principal have the authority to use their discretion in whatever circumstances the handbook does not precisely apply. The Principal, with the approval of the Pastor, reserves the right to amend the handbook for a just cause in keeping with the spirit of the St. John’s mission.** Updates will be posted to the online version of the handbook in red font.

***When the printed and online versions of the handbook differ, the online version will be followed.***

By signing the *Acceptance of Handbook Policies*, students and parents agree to comply with the policies outlined in the Handbook.

## **APPENDIX 1: SJS Form and Fee Information**

Along with the completed Registration and Emergency Information forms, the following documents must be returned. Failure to submit all required paperwork will delay the application process.

Birth Certificate

Baptismal Certificate (Catholics only)

Standardized test scores and recent Report Card for students Grades 1-8

Current Immunization Record

Social Security Number

Interview with Principal, if appropriate

Registration Fee – PreK through 8th grade: Non-Refundable \$150 per student. This fee is due at time of registration.

Building and Maintenance Fee: \$200 per family for new families enrolling in SJS. This fee is due before the first day of school and is non-refundable.

Books, Consumable Supply, PTO, and Activity Fee – This fee is \$640 (\$600 books/supplies, \$10 PTO, and \$30 Activity/field trip fee) and is due in July. All classroom supplies will be provided for students.

Breakfast Fees: \$1.75 is charged. This is an all/or nothing option. Must sign up for the breakfast program.

Lunch Fees: \$3.25 per meal and \$0.50 for milk, money will be put in a student's meal account and as they take a lunch or milk, the account will be charged. Notices will be sent home when you need to replenish your student's meal account. St. John's does participate in the Federal Free Lunch Program; students who qualify may receive free or reduced lunch. Please fill out appropriate paperwork and return to school by 9/15.

After School Care/Extended Care is available from 3:30-5:30. Cost is \$35 per week or \$10 per day. A bill will be sent home at the end of the month and fees are to be paid through FACTS.

### Tuition Aid

Registered Catholic families with PK4 through 8<sup>th</sup> graders can apply for tuition aid by completing the application online at [www.factstuitionaid.com](http://www.factstuitionaid.com).

### Tuition Agreement

In order to qualify for Catholic rate, the family must be registered, envelope-contributing members of their local parish, and we must have a copy of the student's baptismal certificate on file here at the school. The family must also continue to be a supporting member to maintain the rate.

We offer an annual tuition discount of \$150 for a 2<sup>nd</sup> child and a \$250 discount for a 3<sup>rd</sup> child. The 4<sup>th</sup> and subsequent children are not charged tuition, but the family is still responsible for paying required fees.

## **APPENDIX 2: Fundraising**

### **FUNDRAISING**

St. John's does everything possible to keep tuition as low as possible. The tuition paid by each student is approximately half the amount actually required to educate each child. By choosing to be a part of St. John's Catholic School, parents should be ready to assist the school in providing the best educational environment. In order to reach this goal, there are several fundraisers throughout the year. Each family is expected to participate in the fundraisers to the best of their ability.

Why Fundraising? Because everyone receives tuition assistance!

Catholic students in grades K-8 pay \$ 5,735 total annual fees. Of that total, \$3635 is allotted for tuition, and \$640 is for other fees, as outlined below.

\$600 – textbooks, consumables, copying costs, laminating, technology upgrades, etc.

\$20 – Activity fee

\$20 – PTO fee

Registration = \$150 per student per year

Building Fee = One time per family \$200

**The actual cost to educate a K-8<sup>TH</sup> grade student at SJS is approximately \$8400. You pay only \$4265 annual fees (Catholic rate). The \$4135 gap is “tuition assistance” and has to be made up in fundraising, or we have to charge each student the actual cost of their education. We do NOT receive federal education money, with the exception of a small amount for Title I programs (assistance for struggling students) and for students who qualify for National School Lunch Program Free or Reduced Lunch.**

We receive a substantial subsidy from St. John's Church. Fortunately, we are blessed to have many avenues for raising the money to fill the tuition gap. But each family must do their part to help, whether it is as a volunteer for our annual Bazaar, buying/selling gift cards, collecting BoxTops for education, or signing up everyone you know for a Kroger Plus Card and registering it with our school.

## APPENDIX 3: PARENT COVENANT

### St. John's Catholic School Parent/School Covenant

St. John's Catholic School, serving as an evangelical ministry of the Catholic Church, strives to provide a nurturing Catholic Christian environment to all of our students. The goal of this ministry is to teach children to be strong in faith, serve society, and take an active part in the life of the church. In order to be successful in this goal, we must enter into a partnership with the parents who are the first and foremost educators of their children.

**Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children in the faith, prayer, and all the virtues. They have the duty to provide as far as possible for the physical and spiritual needs of their children (Catechism of the Catholic Church #2252).**

St. John's Catholic School believes that each student is a child of God deserving respect, who should be developed spiritually, intellectually, and physically. St. John's is committed to providing instruction that integrates Catholic values, fundamental truths, and academic excellence while building on the Christian foundation begun at home.

By enrolling your child in St. John's Catholic School, your family is entering into an agreement to support and reinforce the teachings, traditions, and sacraments of the Catholic Church. This includes but is not limited to:

For Catholic families:

- Attending Sunday Mass and Holy Days of Obligation
- Sharing in the Sacramental life of the Catholic Church
- Modeling and supporting your child's practice of the Catholic Faith
- Involvement in Parish Ministries
- Communicating moral and ethical values

For non-Catholic families:

- Providing regular family prayer, and worship opportunities for your child, and involvement in church or service ministries
- Providing a faith-based example for your child
- Communicating moral and ethical values

The Parent/School/Church partnership is an integral part to the success of your child's development. The greatest single factor in building a child's spiritual, intellectual, cultural, and moral attitude is the example you provide in your home. Without the commitment by the parents and the support from the school and church, your child's faith formation will not be reached.

By signing the *Acceptance of Handbook Policies*, I/we agree to uphold the requirements of this covenant.

## APPENDIX 4: Volunteer Handbook

### Mission Statement

*St. John's Catholic School, a fully accredited educational institution, develops the whole person, promotes Gospel values, inspires a love of learning, and upholds academic excellence in a nurturing community.*



St. John the Baptist Catholic School relies heavily on parent involvement and participation in school activities. Parent volunteers support, manage, and maintain many school activities and events throughout the year. Families are asked to contribute 30 service hours per school year (15 hours for single parents). Being a homeroom parent or playground aide, chaperoning field trips, and helping with the fundraising events are ways in which parents directly support staff and students. Some events help to build community and foster a sense of Christian growth. In addition, fundraisers – most notably the annual Bazaar – bring in thousands of dollars for the operating budget of the school. There are a number of volunteer opportunities available at St. John's, many of which appeal to those looking for “behind the scenes” volunteer hours. If a family situation makes fulfilling the parent commitment impossible, please make an appointment with the Principal to discuss options. In cases of such impossibility, the option is given of paying \$10 per service hour.

Research indicates that parent volunteers in school enhance student self-esteem, increase academic achievement, and improve student behavior and attendance. We appreciate the priceless service that you provide us and we have created this Volunteer Handbook to assist you.

St. John's Catholic School reserves the right to amend this handbook as needed.

### Responsibilities of the volunteer are:

- ✓ To complete the requirements of the *Virtus Protecting God's Children* Program when the volunteer position requires contact with children.
- ✓ To register with the office and submit a volunteer application if necessary.
- ✓ To sign in and out in the school office and wear a visitor's badge while on campus.
- ✓ To be prompt and reliable.
- ✓ To notify the appropriate person if you are going to be absent or tardy and/or to prearrange the times with the teacher if volunteering in the classroom or let the teacher know of any changes.
- ✓ To be aware of the school's emergency plans for fire, tornado, and lockdown.
- ✓ To keep young people under your supervision safe and appropriately occupied.
- ✓ To notify administration about unsafe conditions or issues.
- ✓ To support the teachings of the Catholic Church and St. John's School as well as the authority of teachers, staff, and administrators.
- ✓ To perform your tasks to the best of your ability.
- ✓ To respect and uphold the rules and policies of the school and contribute to maintaining a smooth working relationship between staff and volunteers.
- ✓ To respect the school office as a place of business.
- ✓ To interact with all students with equality and fairness.
- ✓ To protect the confidentiality of any information either shared to do the job or observed while on the job, unless the information compromises the safety, health, or life of a student.
- ✓ To arrange for childcare, when necessary, so that full attention can be given to the job at hand.
- ✓ To record volunteer hours and submit to the office.
- ✓ To get approval from the classroom teacher or principal before bringing food to the classroom.

## **IMPORTANT – CIRCLE OF GRACE TRAINING**

The Diocese of Little Rock requires that all who are involved in ministry or any volunteer position with the Church or School attend the “Protecting God’s Children” training and complete monthly followup bulletins. If you have never completed this training and plan to volunteer or serve, contact Carolyn at the church office, 501-623-6201.

### Child Abuse Laws and Reporting

Volunteers should inform the administrator of any suspicions of abuse. The obligation to report suspicions to authorities falls upon the person who has the suspicion, not the administrator. The Child Abuse Hotline is 1-800-482-5964.

### Confidentiality

All volunteers, no matter what job they perform, have an **obligation** to keep information to which they are privy in the classroom **confidential**. Information regarding students is **not** to be discussed with others outside of the school employees and administration. When this confidentiality is breached, it can be harmful to children, their families and to the staff.

\*From Milford Catholic Elementary School Volunteer Handbook and *An Administrator’s Guide to Legal Considerations*

## APPENDIX 5 : St. John's School Safe School Policy

**Everyone at St. John's Catholic School is committed to making our school a safe and caring place for all students. We will treat each other with respect, recognizing the dignity of all people.**

*Bullying is a conscious, willful, deliberate activity intended to harm another person. It is meant to belittle, hurt, frighten, or exclude someone. It can be direct or indirect. Common forms of bullying are physical bullying, social bullying, verbal bullying, and cyber bullying. Harassment is bullying that continues over time.*

In order to be considered bullying, the behavior must be aggressive and include:

- An Imbalance of Power: Kids who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.
- Repetition: Bullying behaviors happen or have the potential to happen more than once.

Some examples of behaviors that could lead to bullying include, but are not limited to:

- Physical acts of a harmful nature, like hitting, tripping, kicking, pushing, giving mean looks, poking, and so on, over time
- Making threats about hurting someone in any way
- Stealing or damaging another person's things
- Teasing someone in a hurtful way, lying about someone to get them in trouble, or taunting
- Leaving someone out on purpose, or trying to get other kids not to play with someone
- Using put-downs or ridiculing someone because he/she is different
- Calling someone a name that is meant to insult or embarrass
- Encouraging others to be mean
- Touching or showing private body parts
- Spreading rumors or gossip about someone
- Using technology to harass, threaten, spread gossip, or impersonate someone

Students at our school will do the following things to prevent such hurtful behavior:

- Treat each other with respect
- Learn about virtues and how they help relationships with others
- Refuse to watch, laugh, or join in when someone is being hurt
- Try to include everyone in play, especially those who are often left out
- Report hurtful behavior to an adult

Staff at our school will do the following things to help children feel safe at school:

- Closely supervise students, watch for harmful behavior and intervene quickly
- Respond quickly and sensitively to bullying reports
- Take seriously parents' concerns about bullying
- Assign consequences for hurtful behaviors which incorporate restorative justice
- Provide immediate consequences for retaliation against students who report inappropriate behaviors

## APPENDIX 6 : ST. JOHN'S SCHOOL ELEMENTARY TARDY AND EARLY CHECK-OUT POLICY

- Students learn when they are in class. Not only do tardy students miss valuable instructional minutes, but their late arrival or early check-out is a disruption to the teacher and the other students in the class.
- The missed instructional minutes add up quickly! If your children arrive a mere 10 minutes late each day, they miss **50 minutes of instructional time every week**. During a 35-week school year, they will miss nearly **30 hours of instruction**. If they are 20 minutes late, it's 60 hours, and so on. These instructional minutes are exceptionally important at St. John's School.
- Students will be **in class and ready** at 7:55 AM. They should arrive by 7:45 so they can prepare for class. An excused tardy is allowed for medical and/or therapy appointments with a slip from the practitioner, for funerals, other family emergencies, or traffic emergencies.
- Students who arrive at school after the tardy bell are required to come to the school office for a slip. A staff member will record the exact time of your child's arrival before sending him or her to class. **An excessive number of lost instructional minutes could prevent your child from being promoted to the next grade level.**

For the benefit of **ALL** students, the following is our tardy policy:

- PER SEMESTER, Tardiness or early check-outs will incur the following consequences:
- **1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> unexcused tardy or early check-out** – These are consequence-exempt.
- **4<sup>th</sup> unexcused tardy or early check-out** – Student will lose privileges, e.g., recess time, computer free time, early morning or after school play time, etc., and a conduct notice will be issued.
- **5<sup>th</sup> unexcused tardy or early check-out** – Lunch time "KP" or cleanup duty in the cafeteria or on the playground, and conduct notice.
- **6<sup>th</sup> unexcused tardy or early check-out** –parent conference with administration, conduct notice.
- **7<sup>th</sup> unexcused tardy or early check-out** – Student will serve a 2-hour cleanup project, conduct notice.
- **8<sup>th</sup> unexcused tardy or early check-out** – Detention or suspension and mandatory parent meeting to discuss possibility of grade retention, conduct notice.
- A student who continues to accumulate excessive tardies and/or early check-outs may be reported to the appropriate agency.
- The above schedule of consequences applies to each semester. Therefore, at the beginning of the second semester in January, each student has a "clean slate" for consequences. However, the total number of tardy, early checkout, and absence occurrences will be maintained for the purposes of year-end consideration of grade promotion.
- Regarding attendance policy and grade promotion: Three tardies constitutes one absence; if a student misses 25 days (or the tardy-equivalent) in a school year, summer school attendance may be required for grade promotion. Final decisions rest with the administration.