



# **St. James School Parent-Student Handbook 2022-2023**

*Last Updated: July 26, 2022*

Dear St. James School Family:

St. James School is blessed to have such a great community of students, parents, faculty, and staff who come together to provide a strong learning environment rooted in our Catholic faith.

To help ensure our school's success in accomplishing its mission, this handbook has been prepared to provide you with a basic understanding of the mission, vision, and policies of St. James School. It also includes the responsibilities of students and parents. It is important that you take the time to become familiar with its contents.

While this Handbook provides important information relative to all aspects of the life of our school, it cannot be used as the basis for all decisions and is not all-encompassing. It is my hope that this Handbook with help provide the right parameters and expectations for the students and staff of St. James School.

Thank you for your support and for choosing to be a part of the St. James community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Chrissy Riggins".

Chrissy Riggins  
Principal

## **Table of Contents**

4	Principal's Right to Amend
4-5	School Ideology
5	School Administration
5-6	Parents' Responsibilities
6-8	Admissions
8-10	Tuition & Financial Aide
10-13	Attendance
13-20	Academic Information
20-27	Respect & Behavior
27-30	Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying, & Discrimination Policy
30-34	Uniform Policy
34-37	Health Information
37-44	General Information

## **Principal's Right to Amend**

The principal, or his/her appointee, is the final recourse and retains the right to amend this handbook for just cause at any time. Parents and students will be given prompt notification if changes are made.

## **School Ideology**

### **St. James School Mission Statement**

By honoring God through our words and actions, the St. James School community embraces Catholic values and commits to faith formation, personal and academic excellence, and service to others.

### **Vision Statement**

At St. James School, an exceptional elementary school in the Catholic tradition, we are committed to being:

- A community of faith where the God-given talents of our students are celebrated and nurtured through an ever-present commitment to prayer, service, and faith formation.
- A community of love where all members are valued, cared for, and called to share the Gospel message.
- A community of learners where all are challenged to attain their personal best, develop a love of learning, and grow in the skills necessary to excel both now and in the future.

### **Collective Commitments**

We, the staff of St. James School, commit to:

- 1) Be a community of faith:
  - Where we model the Catholic faith for our students.
  - Where our faith is ever-present in our words, our actions, and throughout our curriculum.
  - Where we work each day to spread the Good News as we partner with our parents in the faith formation of their children.
  - Where we pray with and for our community.
- 2) Be a community of love:
  - Where we celebrate the successes of our school community and its members.
  - Where we create a safe learning environment in which all students are free to be themselves.
  - Where open communication is fostered between staff and all stakeholders.
  - Where we work collaboratively with one another and the parents of our school.
- 3) Be a community of learners:
  - Where we recognize that all students can learn and maintain a culture which puts students and their learning first.
  - Where we meet the individual needs of students across the curriculum.
  - Where we engage in meaningful professional development in order to grow in our understanding of how to best serve our students.
  - Where we prepare students academically for the next level of learning.

## **Belief Statements**

- We believe that Christ is the center of our school community and all that we do.
- We believe that all St. James staff members will be models of Christ through their words and actions.
- We believe that through a Catholic education, students will grow in their faith through participation in prayer, celebration of the sacraments, and service to others so that they may become life-long disciples of Christ.
- We believe that parents are the primary educators of their children in the faith and we commit to partnering with and supporting our school families in the faith formation of their children.
- We believe that each St. James School student will be challenged as an individual learner to achieve personal and academic excellence through the recognition and use of their God-given gifts and talents.
- We believe through a partnership with our students, the St. James School staff will create a learning environment which engages students in the curriculum, empowers them to collaborate, create, communicate, and think critically, and ultimately prepares them to live in an ever-changing world.
- We believe that all students, parents, teachers, administrators, and staff members have the responsibility to unite in their roles in fulfilling the mission of our school.

## **Accreditation**

St. James School is fully accredited with the Ohio Catholic School Accrediting Association (OCSAA) and follows the Course of Study as outlined by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.

## **School Administration**

The school administration consists of the principal and assistant principal. The principal is responsible for the overall operations of the school, its faculty and staff, and students. The assistant principal is fully empowered to act as the principal in the principal's absence. The assistant principal will share in supervisory and evaluation duties. The school administration report to the parish pastor.

## **Parents' Responsibilities**

In enrolling your child at St. James School, you agree to certain important responsibilities. These include:

- to be a partner with the school in the education of your child.
- to understand and support the religious nature of the school.
- to read all communications from the school and to request clarification when necessary.
- to know who your child's teachers are and to observe parent teacher conference dates and any special requests for meetings.
- to discuss concerns and problems with the person(s) most directly involved before contacting legal authorities.
- to be as actively involved as you can be in the life of the school and to volunteer assistance when possible.
- to promote your school and to speak well of it to others.
- to meet your financial obligations in a timely manner and to support the fundraising efforts of the school when possible.

- to appreciate that Catholic education is a privilege that many persons do not have.

We will use the Wednesday E-Envelope newsletter to send all information through PlusPortals email. Please be sure to check the Wednesday E-Envelope newsletter for important school information. The Wednesday Envelope will be used for paperwork that needs to be returned to school or for information that cannot be conveyed through the Wednesday E-Envelope newsletter. Please make sure you see and sign your envelope each Wednesday so your child can return it on Thursday.

Parents and teachers are encouraged to maintain good communication to enhance the progress of the child. Notes to and from school, phone calls, and face to face conferences are excellent ways of communicating how the student is doing in school. Formal Parent/Teacher conference days will be scheduled during the school year. Parents may request a conference with the teacher as the need arises. Please contact your child's teacher to schedule an appointment. Every effort will be made to insure that phone calls and emails are returned promptly. Parents are expected to maintain courtesy and respect in communications with school personnel and school volunteers.

Situations may arise when you may question a particular situation or practice that is taking place at school. When these situations do occur, it is important that you follow the proper procedure to be certain that your concerns are answered in the most effective way possible. Concerns should be handled at the lowest level possible.

The following procedural steps are recommended:

- Contact your child's teacher. Most questions and concerns will be satisfactorily resolved at this level.
- Only after such attempts have failed, contact the school principal/assistant principal.
- If you have further concerns, contact the parish pastor.

By following these steps, parents and students will be able to communicate their concerns in the most effective way.

Parents and students are expected to be respectful and maintain a positive tone toward St. James School, its staff, the PTO, and students on social media. Social media is not the correct forum to vent, complain, or degrade others or our school. If questions or concerns arise, it is best to contact the appropriate person versus utilizing social media posts. Violation of this expectation may be grounds for the withdrawal of a student or family from St. James School.

The education of a student is a partnership between the parents and the school. Just as the parent has the right to withdraw a child if desired, the school administration reserves the right to require the withdrawal of a student if the administration determines that the partnership is irretrievably broken.

## **Admissions**

### **Admission & Non-Discrimination Policy**

No child shall be excluded from St. James School solely because of race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin, or ancestry.

Admission to St. James School will not be based solely on ability or achievement. A student with special needs seeking admission will be accepted if the school administration feels the school has the educational program capable of meeting the student's educational needs.

In accordance with the Ohio Revised Code (3321.01), a child must be five years of age on or before September 30 of the year of admittance to enter kindergarten. A child who turns five between October 1 and December 31 inclusive may be considered as an underage candidate for admission.

Incoming first graders must have successfully completed a state approved kindergarten program. Incoming first graders who did not complete kindergarten at St. James will be screened to determine readiness for first grade.

New students entering grades 2-8, as well as admission of any student after the start of the school year, is at the discretion of the school administration. Students entering St. James in grades 2-8 will be asked to provide academic, behavior, and attendance records from their previous school which include the last two report cards (including written comments) as well as appropriate standardized test scores.

Students entering St. James School in grades 2-8 will be placed on academic and behavioral probation for the first trimester of attendance before the acceptance is final. Student progress will be reviewed regularly during this time. The school administration reserves the right to establish the specific parameters of the probationary period.

St. James School maintains the right to refuse admission or terminate enrollment if false, inaccurate, or incomplete information is provided to the school.

### **Enrollment Priorities**

**First Priority:** All children currently enrolled at St. James School and their siblings will be accepted first for enrollment in the school. Families of currently enrolled students who are registered parishioners and who actively participate in the liturgical life of the parish will be eligible for "active parishioner" tuition. Note: Siblings of currently enrolled non-parishioners will be considered for enrollment to St. James School if sufficient seats are available at the close of the annual registration process.

**Second Priority:** Children of families registered at St. James Parish, who do not currently have children enrolled in the school, will have second priority for enrollment and will be eligible for the "active parishioner" tuition if they are registered parishioners who actively participate in the liturgical life of the parish.

**Third Priority:** Children of Catholic families who are not registered at St. James Parish will have third priority. These families would be charged the "non-parishioner" tuition rate until the family registers at St. James Parish and actively participates in the liturgical life of the parish.

**Fourth Priority:** Children of families who are not Catholic, regardless of where they live, will have fourth priority and will be charged the "non-parishioner" tuition rate.

### **Class Size Limits Policy**

1. The class size limit for kindergarten and first grades is 22 per classroom.
2. The class size limit for second and third grades is 24 per classroom.

3. The class size limit for fourth through eighth grades is 26 per homeroom.
4. In determining whether or not to add an additional section a variety of variables will be considered including wait list numbers and budgetary concerns.
5. At the discretion of the building principal, he/she is permitted to exceed the class size of any given grade level if the requesting party qualifies for enrollment at St. James School. Said decision of the principal is final and non-appealable.
6. Requests for enrollment in excess of a given limit as expressed in "1-5" above will be placed on a waiting list for the grade level(s) in question in descending order of the date of a request from a family. Said waiting lists will remain in effect through June 1 of a given school year and will apply to vacant positions as they become available during the school year prior to June 1 of that calendar year.
7. At the discretion of the school principal and when slots open up below the limit set for each grade level, students will be selected from a given waiting list starting from the top down.

## **Tuition & Financial Aide**

### **Tuition Policy**

St. James the Greater Church sponsors an elementary school as a ministry to its members. Its purpose is to educate the entire child, and especially to evangelize the child in the Catholic faith. Funding for the operation of the school comes from three sources. The parish subsidizes the operation of the school with a portion of the Sunday collection, which also must support the other needs of the parish. The school depends on assistance from the State of Ohio and the federal government to provide specialized services and mandated services required by the State. The third source is the tuition paid by the families of the students attending St. James School. Obviously, the full cost to educate a child at St. James is much higher than the tuition charged.

### **Determining Tuition Rates**

Each spring the school administration, after consultation with the School Advisory Commission, presents a budget to the parish Finance Council. This budget includes the proposed tuition rates for the following school year. After accepting the school budget, the Finance Council includes it in the full parish budget, which is then presented to the Pastoral Council. The Pastoral Council reviews the full parish budget and then makes a recommendation to the Pastor to accept or reject the budget. If the budget is accepted, the tuition rates are published for the following school year.

### **Parishioner and Non-Parishioner Rates**

It is expected that parishioner families with students in the parish school support the whole parish through regular contributions through the Sunday collection. Since it is presumed that parishioners are doing this, there is a reduced tuition rate for parishioners. To receive the parishioner rate, the following are required:

- The family is registered in the parish.
- At least one parent is Catholic.
- The child is baptized and is being raised as a Catholic.

Students who are not parishioners are invited to attend St. James School, but at the full tuition level.

There is a scale of adjusted tuition rates for parishioner families with multiple children in St. James



School. Children in kindergarten do not qualify for multiple child discounts. Non-parishioners are not eligible for multiple child discounts.

### **Tuition**

The tuition charges at St. James School for the 2021-2022 school year will be:

- 1 child = \$4,260.00
- 2 children = \$8,282.00
- 3 children = \$11,737.00
- 4 or more children = \$12,788.00
- Kindergarten Full Time = \$4,260.00
- Non-parishioners = \$5,830.00 per child

### **Other Fees/Incidental Billing**

There is registration fee of \$150.00 per family, of which \$50.00 will be applied to next year's tuition. This fee is not refundable if the family chooses another school. St. James School does not assess additional fees for textbooks, labs, art, etc. There is a \$50.00 per-family cafeteria fee which is added to the tuition amount.

FACTS will be utilized for incidental billing throughout the school year which may include field trip fees, students club fees, etc. As a requirement of enrollment, each family will need to join the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). PTO dues will be charged to each family's FACTS account.

### **Tuition Payments**

Tuition collection is handled through an online tuition management company, FACTS. A variety of tuition payment plans are available to meet the individual needs of our families. The options are:

1. Payment in full by August 1 (which entitles the family to a 2% discount)
2. Two semiannual payments
3. Four quarterly payments
4. Ten monthly payments
5. Twenty bi-monthly payments

Tuition can be paid with a credit card or through electronic withdrawals from a checking or savings account. The first tuition payment is due in August. FACTS will add a service charge depending on the payment plan chosen. If the tuition is paid in full, a \$20 service fee will be added per family. Most payment plans will include a \$46 service fee per family. FACTS will also be used for incidental billing (field trip fees, PTO dues, etc.).

The parish office and the school office do not process tuition payments.

### **Financial Aid from the Archdiocese of Cincinnati**

The Archdiocese of Cincinnati offers tuition assistance to any family wishing to attend a Catholic school. Eligible families can be awarded up to \$1,100 per student to attend St. James next year. Funds will be distributed based on the assessed financial need of families and will be without distinguishing

between families based on religion or parishioner status. For more information about this opportunity, please [click here](#).

### **Scholarships/Financial Aid from St. James Parish**

The parish does provide the opportunity for additional tuition reduction through a tuition assistance program. Parents can apply online by submitting the necessary information to an independent company (FACTS Grant & Aid Assessment) which evaluates the family's need and ability to pay. This information is submitted to the parish with suggestions for an additional reduction in tuition. The parish cannot meet all the requests for additional aid, but attempts to assist parishioners as much as possible. The deadline for applications for St. James tuition assistance is April 15 for the following school year. If a family does not have a student in high school next year, they can wait until after the first of the year to apply for St. James tuition assistance. The application can be completed by [clicking here](#). If you have any questions about tuition assistance or the application process, please contact Amy Klosterman, St. James Parish Business Manager, at 741-5320.

In addition to this financial aid provided from the parish budget, two \$750 scholarships from the John Merritt Scholarship Fund are awarded to students entering St. James. These are also based on need.

Tuition assistance is not applicable to non-parishioners.

### **Additional Stipulations**

If a family is delinquent in tuition payments, the child's report card will be held for that trimester.

All tuition must be paid in full for the transfer of school records to another school, including high schools. All tuition must be paid in full for the student to participate in the 8th grade graduation ceremonies. All tuition must be paid in full before the registration for the following school year is confirmed.

Registration to FACTS must be done before the registration for the following school year is confirmed.

If a student is withdrawn during the school year, the annual tuition will be divided by the number of school days in the year. A per day charge will be added for the number of school days the student was enrolled. An additional \$250 will be added to the balance to cover materials, administrative costs, licenses, etc. that have been accrued for the whole school year.

If a student withdraws after the first of April, no tuition refund will be granted in addition to the \$250 fee.

## **Attendance**

### **School Day**

The official school day for students is from 8:10 a.m. to 3:05 p.m. Students are to be dropped off at school between 7:50 and 8:05 a.m. Walkers and bicycle riders are not permitted to arrive at school before 7:50 a.m. Students are not permitted to remain on school property unsupervised before 7:50 a.m. The School Office closes at 3:45 p.m.; therefore, students/parents will not be permitted to return to classrooms for forgotten materials after 3:45 p.m.

## **Daily Attendance**

It is our expectation that students will be present in school as much as possible.

The maximum number of absences in each trimester without possible loss of credit is 8. Failing trimester grades may be issued for all classes when absences exceed 8 in any given trimester, unless for all but 8 of the absences:

1. written medical verification with the doctor's signature has been received;
2. absence is due to:
  - a. a death in the immediate family;
  - b. a required court appearance;
  - c. lack of school bus transportation due to inclement weather; and/or
3. special arrangements have been made with the principal.

All absences are considered unexcused unless medical verification is received in the school office.

Please note that, while it is not required that medical verification be submitted for each and every doctor's appointment on school time, absences which exceed 8 will need medical verification on file in order to be excused. It is the responsibility of the parent(s) to monitor their individual child's absences within a given trimester. Attendance information may be accessed using the Parent PlusPortals.

## **Absence from School**

Each day a child is absent from school, a parent or legal guardian must call the school office prior to 10:00 a.m. (741-5333). Follow the prompts on the attendance phone line. Please state your name, the student's name, grade and homeroom, the reason for absence, and the current date. St. James School must comply with the "Missing Child Act" which requires daily contacts with the parents of every absent child. When the child returns to school he/she is required to bring a note dated and signed by the parent or guardian, indicating the reason for the absence. A doctor's excuse may be required after three consecutive days of absence.

Parents/students can retrieve information regarding homework when absent from school after 4:00 p.m. each day through each teacher's PlusPortals or Google Classroom postings. Appropriate textbooks and related materials will be gathered at the request of a parent. These requests should be directed to the student's homeroom teacher's voicemail or email before 10:00 a.m. Requests after 10:00 a.m. may not be able to be prepared. Do not leave such requests on the attendance phone line. Requests left on the attendance line cannot be forwarded to your child's teacher. Materials will be ready for pickup between 2:30 and 3:30 p.m. in the school office.

## **Excessive Absences**

Excessive absence is defined as absences exceeding 15 days for the entire school year. Students with excessive absences may be placed on a probationary contract. As a result of excessive absence, summer tutoring and/or retention may be required. Repeat offenders may be reported to the local truancy officer.

An exception could be made in the event of a student's hospitalization or chronic and prolonged illness following a conference between the parents, the school administration, and the student's teachers. In such an event, the student's physician must write a letter to the principal which documents the student's

absences from classes as a result of the illness. In any case, the school reserves the right to lower a student's grades significantly when absence from school is considered excessive.

### **Tardiness**

A student will be considered tardy if he/she arrives at school after 8:10 a.m. but before 9:40 a.m. The only excused tardies are those that are documented with an original note from a doctor verifying a medical appointment that particular morning. For all other tardies, the student must have a note from the parent/guardian stating why the student was tardy. Upon receipt of a fifth unexcused tardy in a school year, an advisory letter will be sent to the parents. Upon receipt of an eighth unexcused tardy in a school year, a meeting with the principal may be required. Students may be put on probationary contracts for excessive tardiness. Excessive tardiness may be referred to the appropriate authorities. Students arriving on a bus which is late will not be counted as tardy.

### **Incomplete Days**

When a student leaves school during the day for any reason for one and a half hours or less, his/her attendance will be marked as "incomplete" for that day. For example, if a student leaves at 10:30 for a doctor appointment and returns at 11:45, his attendance will be marked as incomplete for the day.

If a student is absent for 1.5 to 3.5 hours on any given day, he/she will be marked absent for one half day.

If a student is absent for more than 3.5 hours on any given day, he/she will be marked absent for one full day.

If it is necessary for your child to leave school early, please send a note to your child's homeroom teacher explaining the reason. This note will be sent to the office for review, approval, and recording. At the proper time, report to the main office and your child will be called for early dismissal. Do not go to the classroom to pick up your child. If you are called by the nurse to come to school to pick up your child, you must report to the school office before going to the nurse's office. A picture ID is required for all persons (other than parents) picking up a student. Please note that early dismissals will be recorded as an incomplete day or half-day absence per the above guidelines. All students being picked up must be signed out in the office.

### **Excused Absences and Make Up Work**

In all cases of excused absence, the number of consecutive days missed will equal the number of days given for completion of work. Tests (whether announced prior to an absence or during an absence) will be administered within five days (but no sooner than one day) after the student returns to school.

### **Unexcused Absences, Vacations, and Make Up Work**

Every effort needs to be made to have all children in attendance every day. It is understood that children will need to be taken out of school to attend family weddings, funerals, and for other serious or emergency reasons. Parents are asked not to take children out of school for family vacations and shadow days at the parent's place of employment. Students simply miss too much when not in school for extended periods of time. Missing class time has a negative effect on learning and may affect a student's performance. This also adds an extra burden on the teacher to find time to catch up a student on skills

missed. Every effort should be made to utilize the built-in extended weekends and breaks scheduled during the school year.

Parents should communicate student absences due to family functions/vacations to teachers well in advance. Parents who do take their children out of school for family functions/vacations may request assignments to be prepared in advance of the trip; however, teachers are under no obligation to do so. In addition, it is the student's responsibility to acquire and complete all work upon his/her return to school. Information regarding homework, etc. while on vacation can be obtained by way of each teacher's PlusPortals or Google Classroom postings.

It is at the discretion of the teacher to determine when make-up assignments are due. Tests and long term projects announced prior to the vacation will be made up and/or due upon the day a student returns. Tests and projects given while a student was on vacation will be made up and/or due within 5 days of the student's return to school.

## **Academic Information**

### **Academic Curriculum**

The curriculum of St. James School presented at a given grade level is governed by the Graded Course of Study which is published and continually updated by the Department of Educational Services at the Archdiocese of Cincinnati and approved by the Ohio Department of Education. Teachers use a variety of resources to implement the school curriculum.

Our curriculum includes religion, English, reading, handwriting, mathematics, science, health, social studies, technology, art, music, physical education, and Spanish.

### **Religious Education Program**

“Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, paragraph 2223.) Recognizing the obligation and responsibility of the parents for the total education of their child, one of the primary goals of St. James Parish is the assistance and support of the religious catechesis of the children of the parish. To accomplish this, a Department of Religious Education exists for the parish. Since the religious catechesis consists of doctrinal education, the nurturance of Christian community, the development of a lifestyle of service, and the encouragement of a covenantal prayer life with God, the Department strives for a quality religious program at all levels utilizing well-qualified instructors, the latest theological and scriptural research, an active service program, an integrated sacramental program, and age-appropriate worship and liturgical celebrations. Of special interest to parents is the school program which enables an in-depth exploration of the Catholic Faith and an increased opportunity for the lived experience of community as the Body of Christ with its implications for the 21st Century.

Essential to the success and quality of such a program is parental involvement. As the primary educators of their children, parents must be committed to their child's education through periodic parent-instructor meetings, parent instruction classes, and involvement in at-home projects and activities with the reception of the sacraments. “The preparation of the children for the reception of the sacraments is primarily a parental responsibility.” (Sixth Synod of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, WO 14). Parents will

receive further information concerning Reconciliation, First Eucharist, and Confirmation in advance of appropriate school catechesis or upon request to the Religious Education Department.

To assist each child in developing a full and ever-deepening faith life, all parents are expected to fully support the religion and spiritual development programs for their children by attending Sunday Mass as a family and by active participation in the many ministries of St. James Parish.

### **Grouping**

St. James School employs the practice of “ability grouping” for students in reading and math. The purpose of ability grouping allows our teachers to:

- Recognize that students may have strengths in one subject and may need more support in another subject.
- Provide better opportunities for individualized learning. With a smaller band of abilities in a class, a teacher can design and deliver content at a pace and level of rigor that best meets the students.
- Synchronize student learning speeds. Students do not learn at the same rate. However, when students are placed with students at similar achievement and ability levels, the teacher can better regulate the pace of the class. Our higher achieving students move at a faster pace and reach higher levels, often at above grade-level expectations.
- Avoid just teaching to the “middle”. Teachers can better provide enrichment and intervention for students who need it.

We structure grouping in the following manner:

- Teachers in kindergarten through second grade determine flexible reading groups within their classroom. Students are placed in small groups with the students who are most similar to them in their reading level and skill.
- Students in grades 3-8 are divided into three leveled reading classes. One class is an accelerated class, one class is an on-grade level class, and one class is an on-grade level class with some additional supports. (In grade 3 only, reading is taught along with English.)
- Additionally, some students may qualify for the Enrichment Reading class in 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> grade. These classes are reserved for advanced students typically scoring at a level of the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile or better on standardized testing in language arts areas.
- Students in grades 4-8 are divided into three leveled math classes. One class is an accelerated class, one class is an on-grade level class, and one class is an on-grade level class with some additional supports. The students in the accelerated class will take pre-algebra in 7<sup>th</sup> grade and algebra in 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

Each year an array of information on our students is used for grouping students for the following year. Students’ performance and achievement levels are reviewed annually and changes in ability levels can and do change. We use standardized data as much as possible to create an objective and nationally-normed set of comparison points. Data that is used include a student’s performance on the IOWA and CoGats tests, the STAR reading assessment, a cumulative math assessment, and a student’s performance in the class. Multiple data points help us get a true picture of each student. Additionally, we recognize that students will grow at different rates. The rate of growth a student experiences will vary from year to year and student to student. Growth rates are dependent on natural ability and a student’s work ethic.

A student’s study habits, effort, perseverance, behavior, and self-motivation also impact how they perform in these classes and on standardized measurements.

Based on data, we rank students in the grade and divide them into the groups that best fit them. At some point, a dividing line needs to be drawn. While this could feel like a negative, it can also allow that student to shine by being the top in their respective class. And, students will be challenged at each level according to their ability.

A great deal of time is spent making sure each child is assigned the math and reading classes that are best suited to the ability of the student and the constraints of class sizes. **Changes in ability grouping at the request of a parent will not be considered until after October 1.** If at that time, a parent feels that a change in grouping should be considered, he or she should contact the teacher of the particular subject area and thoroughly discuss the matter. **No changes will be considered after December 1.**

Toward the end of each school year, we review student placement for the following year using the data collected on each student. Most students will not move ability groups. Some students may be adjusted to a higher level and some may be adjusted to a level more appropriate for their performance in comparison to their peers. Sometimes students will be moved because other students have outperformed them or progressed at a higher rate. We ask that you respect our work in analyzing data and our expertise in reading and math education. We place students where the data dictates and where we feel they will be most successful. We want what is best for your child while also balancing what is best for all of our students.

Parents and students, please be aware that the accelerated groups for math and reading are accelerated programs. As such, the subject matter is covered faster and with greater depth, and requires greater amounts of effort and homework. Students and parents must be ready to accept the challenges associated with these accelerated classes.

### **Grading and Reporting**

St. James School operates on a three trimester system. Report cards for grades 5-8 will be posted to the Parent and Student PlusPortals approximately a week and a half after the end of the first two trimesters, and the final report card will be posted on the last day of school. Written progress reports will not be issued; however, current grades will be updated in PlusPortals no less than every two weeks. Report cards will not be posted if financial obligations are not met or if there are outstanding textbooks, library books, cafeteria fees, etc. Additionally, those families who have outstanding balances will be blocked from the use of PlusPortals accounts. If financial responsibilities are not met and the student is a graduating 8th grader, records will not be forwarded to the designated high school of choice until the obligation has been met.

Students in kindergarten, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> grades do not receive A-F grades. A standards-based report will be utilized to track and convey progress on skills learned and developed.

In grades 5 through 8, the traditional A-F grades are assigned along with an effort mark. The grading scale to be used is:

- 100-99-98=A+
- 97-96-95 = A
- 94-93 = A-
- 92-91-90 = B+
- 89-88-87 = B
- 86-85 = B-
- 84-83-82 = C+

- 81-80-79 = C
- 78-77 = C-
- 76-75-74 = D+
- 73-72-71 = D
- 70-69 = D-
- 68 or lower = F

Any requests for grade changes must be made in writing to the teacher and/or administrator within one week of the receipt of the grade.

### **Homework**

In general, if the student effectively uses the time provided during the school day, he/she should not have to spend amounts of time with homework that are significantly greater than the minutes listed for each grade:

- Kindergarten – 20
- 1<sup>st</sup> grade – 35
- 2<sup>nd</sup> grade – 45
- 3<sup>rd</sup> grade – 45
- 4<sup>th</sup> grade – 60
- 5<sup>th</sup> grade – 60
- 6<sup>th</sup> grade – 75
- 7<sup>th</sup> grade – 90
- 8<sup>th</sup> grade – 90

Students in advanced reading and math classes should expect to devote more time to homework.

Homework consists of unfinished classroom work, test preparation, written assignments, textbook reading assignments, novel reading assignments, and long-term projects (which may require additional time).

Other than make-up work due to absences and long term projects, homework will not be assigned over holidays or weekends. An exception may be made for accelerated classes.

### **Circle of Excellence**

St. James utilizes the Circle of Excellence to recognize the academic achievement of students in grades 5-8. Below is a description of what a student will need to achieve in order to be recognized with this honor:

- Gold Level: A student must earn a minimum grade point average of 3.8 in the subjects of religion, math, reading, English, social studies, and science/health.
- Silver Level: A student must earn a minimum grade point average of 3.0 in the subjects of religion, math, reading, English, social studies, and science/health.
- Students may not earn a B- or lower in any subject area, including specials classes, in order to qualify.
- A student who receives a detention or a suspension during the trimester will not be eligible.



## **Standardized Testing Program**

The testing program at St. James School is as follows:

- Three times each school year, the DIBELS Reading Assessment is administered to all students in grades K, 1, 2, and 3.
- Three times each school year, the STAR Assessment is administered to all students in grades 1-8.
- Spring testing consists of a cognitive abilities test administered in grades 2, 5, and 7, as well as, achievement tests administered in grades 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8.

## **Textbooks**

For the most part, textbooks are provided at no cost to the students. Students are to treat them with the utmost respect. All hard back textbooks should be covered with a proper fitting book cover. No self-adhering products are to be used when covering the books. St. James School keeps a small supply of extra textbooks on hand. Extra textbooks can be made available for use at home, only as long as they are available, and only with a doctor's note stating there is a medical reason for extra textbooks to be kept at home.

## **Academic Deficiency Procedures**

The purpose of the following information is to help families understand the steps which will be taken when a student is not making satisfactory academic progress.

### **Key Terms**

Promotion:	The student has the skills and knowledge necessary to be successful at the next level of learning.
Placement:	The student needs additional reinforcement of skills and/or acquisition of knowledge in order to be successful at the next level of learning. Tutoring is required to address skill/knowledge deficits.
Failure of Course:	The student does not have the skills and/or knowledge necessary to advance to the next level of learning. Failure of a course results when a student's average for the year is less than 69%. Significant tutoring is required.
Retention:	The student has a significant gap in skills and/or knowledge which will negatively impact learning at the next level. In order to bridge this gap, the student would benefit from another year in the current grade level. In grades K-4, this decision is based on progress towards skills needed for advancement. In grades 5-8, failure of three subject areas results in retention.
Tutoring:	Direct instruction provided by a certified teacher who has been approved by the principal. In addition to this direct instruction, a specified amount of independent practice must also take place.

## Grades K-4

If progress in basic, core skills as listed on the standards based report card is unsatisfactory, students may be identified as being at risk of placement or retention at the end of the school year. Students in K-4 will need to master core reading, language, and math skills in order to be successful at the next level of learning.

### Not on Target:

A student will be identified as *Not on Target* when it is determined that they are not acquiring the skills and/or knowledge necessary to progress to the next level of learning. Students not making significant progress toward grade level exit skills by the end of the first trimester are *Not on Target*.

The following actions will be taken:

1. The teacher will request a conference with the parent through a phone call.
2. The teacher will send home a copy of the *Not on Target* letter.
3. In a conference which includes the teacher, parent, any appropriate support staff, and a member of the administration, the teacher will share with the parent:
  - a. Identified areas of academic concern with regard to grade level exit skills
  - b. Classroom interventions which have been implemented up to this point including documented results of the classroom intervention and progress towards identified goals
4. During the conference, an action plan will be developed to further address the student's needs. At this time tutoring may be required.
5. A follow up conference will be set to discuss the student's progress at the end of the second trimester.

### At Risk:

When a student continues to not make progress toward mastery of grade level exit skills, they will be identified as *At Risk* for retention.

The following actions will be taken:

1. The teacher will request a conference with the parent through a phone call.
2. The teacher will send home a copy of the *At Risk* letter.
3. A follow up conference will be held with all members previously included in the initial *Not on Target* discussion.
  - a. A review of the action plan will take place. Information regarding progress will be shared.
  - b. Identification of skills which have not yet been mastered and are putting the student at risk of retention will be identified.
  - c. Discussion regarding retention and/or placement will take place.
4. Tutoring (to commence immediately and continue through the summer) will be required if consideration for placement is desired. The principal will send home the *Summer Tutoring Notice* letter.
5. A follow up conference, set for the mid-point of the third trimester and no later than May 10, will be scheduled.

## Grades 5-8

If academic progress is unsatisfactory, as documented by student grades, students may be identified as being on Academic Watch or Academic Probation.

#### Academic Watch:

A student will be identified as being placed on *Academic Watch* when they fail a subject for the first time in a given school year. This failure may occur during the first or second trimester of the school year.

The following actions will be taken:

1. The teacher will request a conference with the parent through a phone call.
2. The teacher will send home a copy of the *Academic Watch* letter.
3. Conference will be held with teacher, parent, student (if in grades 6-8), and any appropriate support staff.
4. The teacher will provide documentation of:
  - a. The reason for the failure and provide specific examples of issues which have led to the failure
  - b. Classroom interventions implemented within the classroom during the trimester and results of those classroom interventions
  - c. An action plan for the student which identifies the classroom interventions which will be implemented moving forward as well as the actions which will be taken by all parties—teachers, student, and parents.

#### Academic Probation:

A student will be identified as being placed on *Academic Probation* when they fail a subject for the second time in a given school year. This failure may occur during either the second or third trimester. In the event that the second failure of a given subject occurs during the third trimester, supplemental work may be required over the summer. The principal will send home a copy of the *Summer School* or *Summer Tutoring* letter.

Any student failing more than one subject during the first or second trimester will immediately be placed on *Academic Probation*.

The following actions will be taken if this occurs during the first or second trimester:

1. The teacher will request a conference with the parent through a phone call.
2. The teacher will send home a copy of the *Academic Probation* letter.
3. Conference will be held with the teacher, parent, student (if in grades 6-8), any appropriate support staff, and a member of the administration.
4. The teacher will provide documentation of:
  - a. The reason for the failure and provide specific examples of issues which have led to the failure
  - b. Classroom interventions implemented during the trimester and results of those interventions
  - c. Follow up regarding the action plan from the previous trimester's failure.
  - d. An action plan for the student which identifies the interventions which will be implemented moving forward as well as the actions which will be taken by all parties—teachers, student, and parents.
5. Student will be required to attend study tables for the next trimester.
6. Student will lose the ability to participate in school sponsored extracurricular activities for a minimum of two weeks. After two weeks, student must be making satisfactory academic performance in order to resume participation. Progress will be monitored throughout the trimester and if, at any time, a student once again begins to fail, the ability to participate in extracurricular activities will again be suspended.
7. Parents will be given a copy of the *Potential Failure* letter.

## **Students with IEPs/ISPs**

Students with IEPs/ISPs are given special consideration in light of their individualized plan. In general, students with IEPs/ISPs will not be subject to the provisions of this policy. However, in certain circumstances, a student with an IEP/ISP may be subject to the conditions listed in this document. If this is the case, upon consultation with the principal and any applicable support staff, documentation regarding the special circumstances, which are not a result of the child's disability, and have led to the failure will need to be provided. In all cases, the principal will serve as the final decision maker regarding a student's academic status.

## **Final Decision Making**

Decisions for promotion/placement/retention will be made on an individual student basis. Parents will be included in the discussion at all stages. The final decision regarding student promotion, placement, or retention rests with the principal.

## **Respect & Behavior**

St. James School students are expected to honor God through their words and actions in order to achieve academic and personal excellence. To create a Catholic learning environment, St. James students will show respect for their faith, for self, for others, and for the school environment. Some examples of respectful behavior are listed below.

Students may show respect for **faith** by:

- building a relationship with the Lord.
- giving thanks and praise to God.
- providing service to others.

Students may show respect for **self** by:

- presenting a neat and clean appearance.
- demonstrating an attitude that fosters learning.
- using their gifts and talents responsibly.

Students may show respect for **others** by:

- being understanding and thoughtful.
- using good manners.
- being tolerant and appreciative of others' differences.

Students may show respect for **environment** by:

- maintaining a safe and secure atmosphere.
- taking care of individuals' property, as well as school property.
- promoting a positive and productive educational setting.

Good discipline is a way of regulating one's life to be productive, goal oriented, and respectful of oneself and others. A self-disciplined school climate promotes learning, cooperative relationships, and a faith-filled community. St. James School students are expected to hold themselves to high standards of honor. Therefore, all students are expected to model respectful and responsible behavior whenever and wherever they represent St. James School.

In order to promote a respectful learning environment, it is necessary for expectations between home and school to be complementary. Students will benefit from this consistency and mutual support.

The following guidelines will be used within the school to promote the respectful and responsible behaviors and attitudes of our students.

The principal is the final recourse in disciplinary situations. The principal reserves the right to waive and/or deviate from any and all disciplinary regulations for just cause at his or her discretion.

### **Communication with Parents Regarding Student Behavior**

Communication with parents regarding behavioral concerns is extremely important.

Due to the self-contained nature of the primary grades, teachers in grades K-2 will establish discipline and communication methods within their individual classrooms, but be consistent at each grade level. Parents will be informed of these expectations and routines during their “Meet the Teacher” presentation.

Students and teachers in grades 3-8 will be using Conduct Cards as a form of home/school communication. Conduct Cards are used to help create a conducive learning environment for students. Behavior problems and lack of effort from a few students is not acceptable when it interferes with the education of those students who are working hard and behaving appropriately. Conduct cards have proven to be an effective way of both keeping track of minor problems a student is having and communicating these problems to parents on a regular basis. These cards are also used by teachers to emphasize and reward positive behavior and effort.

Students in Grades 3-8 will carry Conduct Cards on which marks will be recorded for missing assignments or inappropriate behavior and consequences will be administered separately for these two categories. All students’ Conduct Cards will be collected and recorded by the homeroom teachers each Tuesday afternoon. In order to promote communication between school and home, Conduct Cards will be sent home weekly in the Wednesday Envelope. Students are expected to be sure their parents review and sign their Conduct Card each Wednesday night and return it to school on Thursday. Unsigned Conduct Cards will result in a behavior checkmark being issued. A new Conduct Card will be issued at the beginning of each trimester.

It is our policy not to discuss disciplinary actions except with the parent/guardian of the child being disciplined.

### **Missing Assignments (Grades 3-8)**

Students are expected to complete all assignments with thought and care per the teacher’s guidelines. In order to receive full credit for an assignment, directions must be followed, work must be shown, and the assignment must be complete. Students are not to complete homework during homeroom on the day it is due without the teacher’s permission.

In addition to missing assignments, conduct cards may also be marked for chronic lack of preparedness for class. As an initial step during the first trimester, teachers will take other steps such as developing a plan to help the student (homeroom buddy, check list in locker, reminders, notes in planners/on board, etc.) After the completion of first trimester, marks of this nature will be left to the teacher’s discretion. Missing and incomplete assignments will be recorded on the conduct card per the following guidelines.

Grade 3 (1<sup>st</sup> Trimester only):

- 15<sup>th</sup> Assignment Mark = 30 Minute Detention & Referral to Office
- 20<sup>th</sup> Assignment Mark = 30 Minute Detention, Referral to Office, and Conference with Parents
- 25<sup>th</sup> Assignment Mark = Attend WEEKLY 30 Minute detention for the remainder of the trimester

Grade 4 (1<sup>st</sup> Trimester only) & Grade 3 (2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Trimester only – 30 Minute Detentions)

- 10<sup>th</sup> Assignment Mark = Detention & Referral to Office
- 15<sup>th</sup> Assignment Mark = Detention, Referral to Office, and Conference with Parents
- 20<sup>th</sup> Assignment Mark = Attend WEEKLY detention for the remainder of the trimester

Grade 4 (2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Trimester); Grades 5-8 (all year):

- 5<sup>th</sup> Assignment Mark = Detention & Referral to Office
- 10<sup>th</sup> Assignment Mark = Detention, Referral to Office, and Teacher Conference with Parents
- 15<sup>th</sup> Assignment Mark = Attend WEEKLY detention for the remainder of the trimester

Note: Continued excessive missing or incomplete assignments will not be tolerated and could result in suspension or expulsion.

### **Behavior (Grades 3-8)**

Individual marks may be issued for, but are not limited to, the following inappropriate behaviors:

- Uniform Violations
- Misuse of Technology
- Talking
- Disturbing Class
- Not Following Directions
- Intentional lack of preparedness for class
- Eating/Chewing Gum
- Passing/Sending Inappropriate Messages
- Disorderly Behavior
- Tardy to Class
- Unsigned/Lost Conduct Card

Grade 3 (All year - 30 Minute Detentions)

- 10<sup>th</sup> Behavior Mark = Detention & Referral to Office
- 15<sup>th</sup> Behavior Mark = Detention, Referral to Office, and Conference with Parents
- 20<sup>th</sup> Behavior Mark = Attend WEEKLY detention for the remainder of the trimester

Grades 4-8 In order to teach students that they need to be accountable for their actions, the following consequences will be utilized:

- 5<sup>th</sup> Behavior Mark = Detention and Conduct Referral to Office
- 10<sup>th</sup> Behavior Mark = Detention, Conduct Referral to Office, and Conference with Parents
- 15<sup>th</sup> Behavior Mark = 1 Day Out-of-School Suspension

### **Multiple Marks & Automatic Detentions**

Behaviors of a more serious nature may result in multiple marks on the Conduct Card or an *Automatic Detention* depending upon the severity of the misconduct. Examples of such behaviors may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Cheating
- Damage to Others'/School Property

- Forgery
- Plagiarism
- Disrespect/Defiance
- Unsafe Behavior
- Bullying
- Use of Electronic Devices
- Use of Obscenity (verbal/written)
- Deception/Lying
- Skipping Detention
- Misuse of Technology

### **Cheating/Forgery/Plagiarism**

In order to promote high personal and academic expectations within our students, cheating, in any form, is unacceptable. Cheating includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Copying another student's work.
- Allowing your work to be copied by another student.
- Verbally sharing answers for assignments/assessments.
- Telling another student what is on an upcoming test/quiz.
- Using a "cheat sheet" in any form or accessing the electronic resources during an assessment without permission.
- Turning in an assignment that is written or prepared (in whole or in part) by another person; this includes information obtained (in whole or in part) over the internet.

Incidents involving cheating or forgery may result in the reduction of the student's grade and could lead to zero credit being given for the assignment, quiz, test, project, etc. until that assignment is completed satisfactorily to the teacher's standards. In addition, a detention may be issued.

Incidents involving plagiarism may result in an automatic detention. Zero credit will be given for the assignment until it is completed correctly. The student will have one week to complete the assignment. If the assignment is not completed in that time, daily detentions will be required Monday-Thursday until the assignment is completed satisfactorily.

### **Cell Phone & Other Electronic Devices**

Many parents utilize cell phones as a means of safety and communication for their children. While students are permitted to have cell phones and other electronic devices at school, such devices must be stored in the student's backpack and be turned OFF during the course of the school day (7:50 a.m.–3:20 p.m. - this includes the arrival and dismissal timeframes). Parents who need to contact their child or students who need to contact their parents should do so through the school office personnel.

Students are not permitted to wear smart watches and similar devices during the school day. These may not be used to access texting, send or receive messages, make phone calls, etc. Such devices must be stored in the student's backpack and be turned OFF during the course of the school day (7:50 a.m.–3:20 p.m. - this includes the arrival and dismissal timeframes).

Students are not permitted to use air pods and similar devices during the school day. All headsets must be wired to the Chromebook/iPad.

E-readers may be used but only in a way as to support classroom learning, not hinder it. Such devices may not be used to communicate, access the internet, etc.

If a student is suspected of using these devices in this manner during the school day, discipline may be issued as listed below.

Note: The school is not responsible for damaged, lost, or stolen cell phones or electronic devices.

Violation of this policy will result in the following disciplinary action:

- An automatic detention will be issued.
- Confiscation of the device (even if it belongs to someone other than the user).
- The device will be held locked up in the school office for 48 hours, and must be picked up by the PARENT.
- If the 2<sup>nd</sup> day falls on a weekend or a day when school is not in session, the device may be picked up by the PARENT on Monday or the first day that school resumes.
- Parents who are unable to retrieve the device may designate another person to do so, by calling the school office.
- NO EXCEPTIONS will be made to this policy. A student will be suspended if this policy is not followed.

### **Electronic Postings**

All information that is posted to a social networking site, blog, or chat must be respectful to St. James School and its members. St. James students do NOT have permission to post pictures of any St. James staff member as this is a violation of the Acceptable Usage Policy. Students who post such items are subject to disciplinary consequences including detentions, suspensions, and/or revocation of technology privileges.

### **Email, Google Suite, and Online Activity**

Using the most current research and best practices as a guide, St. James School will be providing students, as appropriate to grade level, a Google account. The Google accounts will allow students to access documents and other work from the cloud, making it accessible on any internet-connected device. Students will then be able to use this cloud connectivity from the classroom and home.

Email will be provided for a Google account identifier and for use in the St. James domain. Email use is a privilege; in order to maintain this privilege each student must abide by the following guidelines:

- Email and the Google Drive are the property of St. James School and all student email and items in the drive can be read by school officials at any time.
- Email and Google Drive items should be used for school-related communication and use only.
- Email and Google Drive should not be used for distribution of advertising, jokes, or any other non-school/non-educational purpose.

The Google accounts are intended for educational use. Any use of this privilege contrary to the mission of St. James School will lead to disciplinary action as set forth in the student handbook. As such, the items below are strictly prohibited.

- Submitting, publishing, and/or displaying any defamatory, inaccurate, abusive, obscene, profane, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, racially offensive, or otherwise illegal material, on or off school property.
- Damaging computers, computer systems, or computer networks.
- Violating copyright laws, including multimedia content.
- Employing the network for non-educational and/or commercial purposes.



Parents are asked not to utilize email to communicate with students during the school day. Email can be a distraction from the learning process.

St. James School is not responsible for activity on a student's device or school accounts while at school or at home. It is the student's responsibility to follow expectations. While the school monitors student's school accounts and online activity while at school, the school is not responsible for monitoring all activity and is not responsible for students who violate the technology policies set forth by the school.

Parents can request access to a student's email/drive account at any time.

### **Detention Procedures**

All detentions in grades 4-8 will be held after school on Tuesdays (generally) until 4:15 p.m. 3<sup>rd</sup> grade detentions will be held after school on Tuesdays (generally) until 3:45 p.m. Parents are responsible to pick up their child promptly at 3:45 or 4:15 p.m. in front of school. If your child is not picked up by 4:25 p.m., he/she will be escorted to the After School Child Care in the cafeteria. Parents who pick up their children from the Child Care Program should be prepared to pay \$1 per minute late (minimum \$5). The only reasons a detention will be rescheduled are student absence or a verifiable medical appointment. Failure by a student to stay for the assigned detention will result in an additional detention being assigned.

### **Suspensions**

In order to ensure a safe environment, certain behaviors may result in suspension and could lead to expulsion. Examples of such behaviors include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Abusive/Aggressive Behavior
- Inappropriate Physical Contact
- Vandalism
- Theft
- Immoral Behavior
- Fighting
- Disrespect
- Bullying
- Discrimination
- Drugs/Alcohol/Smoking/E-Cigarettes
- Weapons
- Leaving School Without Permission
- Complete Disregard for School Assignments/Rules
- Lying
- Defiance
- Repeated Behaviors of Any Sort
- Misuse of Technology

Suspensions will be served in or out of school depending on the violation. The length of the suspension may vary in accordance with the seriousness of the offense.

In the case of out of school suspension:

- It is the suspended student's responsibility to take home all textbooks and materials, to check their Student Portal or Google Classroom, and complete that day's homework in order to stay current with class material.
- Students will be expected to make up assignments, quizzes, tests, etc. missed due to suspension on the day he/she returns.

Parents will be notified of the suspension by the principal or assistant principal and a letter concerning the suspension will be provided. A conference involving school representatives and the family may be scheduled before or during the suspension. A behavior plan may be written for the student. This plan will outline additional rules and/or guidelines the student must follow in order to remain in school. The

plan will be signed and a copy will be given to the parent(s) as well as to any teachers whom instruct the student.

### **Expulsion from School**

Based on the severity of the inappropriate behavior, a student may be a candidate for expulsion. A student will also be a candidate for expulsion if there is a consistent pattern of behavior unacceptable to St. James School. A student will be considered for immediate expulsion if caught selling, dispensing and/or passing drugs, alcohol, weapons and/or other contraband on parish/school property. Threats of acts of violence (shooting, bombing, etc.) against the school, students, or staff will be grounds for expulsion. Automatic suspensions are cumulative from year to year and may result in expulsion.

Expulsion from St. James School is permanent. Once a student has been expelled, he/she will not, under any circumstances, be considered for readmission.

### **Student Property Inspection**

School personnel may inspect any student's property at any time for any reason without prior notice. This property includes, but is not limited to, desks, computers, and lockers. Additionally, any personal items are subject to inspection at any time for any reason without prior notice, as a condition of bringing them onto or taking them from the school premises. Such items include, but are not limited to, packages, lunch boxes or lunch bags, containers, backpacks, duffel bags, book bags, purses, cell phones, portable storage devices/flashdrives, coats, and pockets.

An inspection does not imply wrongdoing by the student being inspected. A student and his or her parent or guardian's consent to the inspection of a personal item is a condition of enrollment and attendance at St. James School. Refusal to consent may result in disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion, even for a first refusal.

### **Athletics Participation**

In congruence with the St. James Athletic Club policies, a student who is suspended from St. James School will face a suspension from athletic programs according to the Athletic Club's policies. It is the responsibility of the parent to notify the student's coach about the suspension. Additionally, the school administration will notify the President of the Athletic Club of any suspensions.

### **Off-Campus Misconduct**

The student is a St. James School student at all times. A student who engages in conduct, whether inside or outside the school, that is detrimental to the reputation of the school, may be disciplined by school officials. Examples of such conduct include, but are not limited to: illegal activity, threats of violence, use of alcohol or drugs, harassment, and misuse of technology.

### **Pregnancy Policy**

If a student becomes pregnant or caused another to become pregnant, the parents are expected to notify the pastor and/or principal in order to arrange a conference. Giving consideration to church teaching and the range of ages present in our parish school, the pregnant student and/or the father may be dismissed

from St. James School. Every consideration will be given in order to assist with guidance, counsel, and continuing education.

## **Harassment, Intimidation, & Bullying Policy**

### **General**

It is the policy of St. James School (the "School") that any form of harassment, intimidation, bullying, or discrimination, regardless of where, how, or when it takes place, is expressly forbidden.

The School's internet and computer system may not be used to engage in harassment, intimidation, bullying, or discrimination. The "Student Responsible Use of Technology" form must be signed by each student and on file with the School.

The School reserves the right to impose discipline for harassing, intimidating, bullying, discrimination, and other inappropriate behavior that takes place off School grounds and outside School hours.

### **Definition of Terms**

"Electronic act" means an act committed through the use of a cellular telephone, computer, pager, personal communication device, or other electronic communication device.

"Harassment, intimidation, or bullying" means either of the following:

- Any intentional written, verbal, electronic, or physical act that a student has exhibited toward another particular student more than once and the behavior both:
  - Causes mental or physical harm to the other student; and
  - Is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for the other student.
- Violence within a dating relationship.

"Harassment, intimidation, or bullying" also means electronically transmitted acts i.e., by Internet, social media/network, blog, cell phone, personal digital assistance (PDA), wireless hand-held device, or other electronic communication device, that a student has exhibited toward another particular student more than once and the behavior both:

- Causes mental or physical harm to the other student; and
- Is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for the other student.

In evaluating whether conduct constitutes harassment, intimidation, bullying, or discrimination, special attention should be paid to the words chosen and the actions taken, whether such conduct occurred in front of others or was communicated to others, how the offender interacted with the victim, and the motivation, either admitted or appropriately inferred. Accordingly, what may constitute harassment, intimidation, bullying, or discrimination in one circumstance might not constitute such in another. As in all disciplinary matters, the School will make this determination utilizing its sole and absolute educational discretion and judgment.

### **Types of Conduct**

Harassment, intimidation, and bullying can include many different behaviors including, but not limited to, overt intent to ridicule, humiliate, or intimidate another student. Social networks should never be used for harassment, intimidation, or threats, nor should they be used to criticize or ridicule other schools.

Examples of conduct that could constitute prohibited behaviors include:

- Engaging in unsolicited and offensive or insulting behavior;
- Physical violence and/or attacks;
- Threats, taunts, and intimidation through words and/or gestures;
- Extortion, damage, or stealing of money and/or possessions;
- Acts of discrimination;
- Exclusion from the peer group or spreading rumors; and
- Repetitive and hostile behavior with the intent to harm others through the use of information and communication technologies, computers, cell phones, other electronic devices, the Internet, online websites, blogs, or social media/networks (also known as “cyber-bullying”). Examples of cyber-bullying include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - Posting slurs on the Internet, websites, blogs, or social media/networks;
  - Sending abusive or threatening instant messages, text messages, emails, or other communications through the Internet, websites, blogs, or social media/networks;
  - Taking embarrassing photographs of students and posting them online or otherwise distributing them; and
  - Using the Internet, websites, blogs, social media/networks, or electronic communication devices to impersonate another individual or circulate gossip or rumors to other students.

## **Complaints**

**Formal Complaints:** Students and/or their parents/guardians may file reports regarding suspected harassment, intimidation, bullying, or discrimination. Such written reports shall be reasonably specific including persons involved, number of times and places of the alleged conduct, the target of the suspected harassment, intimidation, bullying, or discrimination and the names of any potential witnesses. Such reports may be filed with any School staff member or administrator, and they shall be promptly forwarded to the principal or his/her designee.

**Informal Complaints:** Students and/or their parents/guardians may make informal complaints of conduct that they consider to be harassment, intimidation, bullying, or discrimination by verbal report to a teacher, School administrator, or other School personnel. Such informal complaints shall be reasonably specific as to the actions giving rise to the suspicion of harassment, intimidation, bullying, or discrimination, including persons involved, number of times and places of the alleged conduct, the target of the prohibited behavior, and the names of any potential witnesses. A school staff member or administrator who receives an informal complaint shall promptly document the complaint in writing, including the above information. This written report by the School staff member and/or administrator shall be promptly forwarded to the principal or his/her designee.

**Anonymous Complaints:** Students who make informal complaints as set forth above may request that their name be maintained in confidence by the School staff member or administrator who receives the complaint. The anonymous complaints shall be reviewed and reasonable action will be taken to address the situation, to the extent such action may be taken that (1) does not disclose the source of the complaint, and (2) is consistent with the concept of fairness to the student alleged to have committed acts of harassment, intimidation, bullying, or discrimination.

## **School Personnel Responsibilities**

### Teachers and Other School Staff Responsibilities:

- Teachers and other School staff who witness acts of harassment, intimidation, bullying, or discrimination, as defined above, shall promptly notify the principal or his/her designee of the event observed, and shall promptly document the events witnessed. Teachers and other School staff who receive student or parent reports of suspected harassment, intimidation, bullying, or discrimination shall promptly notify the principal or his/her designee of such reports. If the report is a formal, written complaint, such complaint shall be forwarded promptly to the principal or his/her designee. If the report is an informal complaint by a student that is received by a teacher or other staff member, he or she shall document the informal complaint and promptly forward it to the principal or his/her designee.
- In addition to addressing both informal and formal complaints, School personnel are encouraged to address the issue of harassment, intimidation, bullying, or discrimination in other interactions with students. School personnel may find opportunities to educate students about harassment, intimidation, bullying, and discrimination and help eliminate such prohibited behaviors through class discussions, counseling, and reinforcement of socially appropriate behavior. School personnel should intervene promptly whenever they observe student conduct that has the purpose or effect of ridiculing, humiliating, or intimidating another student or individual, even if such conduct does not meet the formal definition of harassment, intimidation, or bullying set forth above.

### Administrator Responsibilities:

- Investigation:
  - The principal or his/her designee shall be promptly notified of any formal or informal complaint of suspected harassment, intimidation, bullying, or discrimination. Under the direction of the principal or his/her designee, all such complaints shall be investigated promptly. The principal or his/her designee shall document the investigation, including any conversations with the alleged offender, victim, students, or other witnesses. Written statements may also be obtained from these individuals.
  - Notwithstanding the foregoing, when a student making an informal complaint has requested anonymity, the investigation of such complaint shall be limited as is appropriate in view of the anonymity of the complaint. Such limitation of investigation may include restricting action to a simple review of the complaint (with or without discussing it with the alleged offender), subject to receipt of further information and/or the withdrawal by the complaining student of the condition that his/her report be anonymous.
- Response:
  - Verified acts of harassment, intimidation, bullying, or discrimination shall result in an intervention by the principal or his/her designee. The intention of such intervention is to ensure that the prohibition against harassment, intimidation, bullying, and discrimination, is enforced, with the goal that any such prohibited behavior will end.
  - When acts of harassment, intimidation, bullying, or discrimination are verified and a disciplinary response is warranted, students are subject to the full range of disciplinary consequences, including suspension and expulsion. Anonymous complaints that are not otherwise verified, however, shall not be the basis for disciplinary action.
  - Harassment, intimidation, bullying behavior, and discrimination can take many forms and can vary dramatically in seriousness and impact on the victim and other students. Accordingly, there is no one prescribed response or discipline to verified acts of

harassment, intimidation, bullying, and discrimination. The forms of discipline listed in this Handbook are guidelines, and the School may use other disciplinary measures as the situation warrants. The decision whether to impose discipline and, if so, to what extent, is left to the professional and educational discretion of the principal or his/her designee.

- Once harassment, intimidation, bullying, or discrimination has been verified, the principal or his/her designee should monitor the situation to determine whether there have been additional incidents of harassment, intimidation, bullying, discrimination, or retaliation from the offender or other parties. Additionally, the principal or his/her designee may inform School personnel of the incident and instruct them to monitor the victim and the offender for indications of harassing, intimidating, bullying, discrimination, or retaliatory behavior. School personnel are to intervene when prohibited behaviors are witnessed.
- Reporting:
  - Report to the Parent or Guardian of the Offender: If after investigation, an act of harassment, intimidation, bullying, or discrimination by a specific student is verified, the principal or his/her designee shall notify the Offender's parent/guardian of that finding. The parent/guardian shall also be notified of any disciplinary consequences imposed against that student.
  - Report to the Parent or Guardian of the Victim: If after investigation, an act of harassment, intimidation, bullying, or discrimination against a specific student is verified, the principal or his/her designee shall notify the victim's parent/guardian of such finding.
  - Police and Child Protective Services: Allegations of criminal misconduct will be reported to law enforcement, and suspected child abuse will be reported to Child Protective Services, consistent with the Archdiocese Decree on Child Protection and Ohio law. All School personnel must cooperate with investigations by outside agencies.

### **Miscellaneous**

No discipline issued pursuant to any Handbook shall bind the School to issue the same, or even comparable, discipline to other students in the future. Nor will any form or extent of discipline be construed as a precedent for how discipline will be imposed moving forward. Rather, the School reserves sole judgment and discretion in disciplining students based on the particular circumstances of each incident, including but not limited to the respective age(s) of the student(s) involved, the student(s)' perceived maturity level, the conduct at issue, the student(s)' attitude and degree of cooperation, the student(s)' disciplinary history, and any other aggravating or mitigating circumstances the School deems present. Nothing in this section, or anywhere else in this Handbook, limits or otherwise constrains the School's authority, discretion, judgment, or responsibility in any student disciplinary matters.

## **Uniform Policy**

### **General**

The St. James School uniform policy emphasizes modesty, cleanliness, and good grooming. It has been instituted as a symbol of pride in our school and as a way of demonstrating self-discipline and respect among our students. St. James School considers the development of good grooming habits to be part of the learning process. Student conduct and disposition for learning correlate highly with dress and grooming. In school, cleanliness and neatness enable students to form good attitudes about themselves. This will help the student adapt to an atmosphere dedicated to self-discipline and learning. Students are expected to be good representatives of St. James School.

Parents should be aware of appropriate apparel and overall appearance and should see that their children leave for school properly attired. As students outgrow their uniform clothing, parents are encouraged to send uniform items in good condition to school for the PTO Uniform Exchange.

**If an item is not included in the descriptions below, it is not permitted.** The uniform jumper and the uniform skirt/kilt-style skirt must be purchased at Schoolbelles School Uniforms or Educational Outfitters. The official school sweatshirt may only be purchased through the PTO. All other items may be purchased at the store of choice as long as they are in full compliance with the St. James School Uniform Policy.

The school administration reserves the right to determine compliance and noncompliance with the above policy. The school principal and/or his/her designee will make final determination of the appropriateness of any student's apparel or appearance. The uniform policy and the policy regarding personal appearance and grooming will be reviewed again during the 2022-2023 school year, however, the school administration may review the items relating to personal grooming and appearance on an as needed basis and/or ask for a review of the policy at any point in time.

**Please mark all items of clothing with the student's name.**

### **All Grades**

#### **Shirts**

- Buttoned short or long sleeve solid white shirt/blouse with collar. No logos are permitted.
- Grades K-5: Short or long sleeve solid white pullover knit shirt with collar. May have St. James logo on left chest.
- Grades 6-8: Short or long sleeve solid white or red pullover knit shirt with collar. May have St. James logo on left chest.
- Shirts must be tucked in at all times.
- Students may wear a solid white long sleeve turtleneck or crew neck shirt under the uniform shirt. Logos should not be visible.
- Two of the three buttons on the Polo shirts must be buttoned.

#### **Sweatshirts**

- A uniform sweatshirt sold only through St. James PTO may be worn over a uniform shirt. Students must wear a uniform shirt under the sweatshirt.
- Sweatshirt must match the body size of the student – no over-sizing.

#### **Sweaters (Optional)**

- Solid button down cardigan sweater (uniform style) plain or cable knit in red, white, gray or navy blue. No logos.
- Sweater must match the body size of the student – no over-sizing.

#### **Pants**

- Grades K-5: Solid navy blue dress pants.
- Grades 6-8: Solid navy blue or khaki dress pants.
- No logos, exposed brand names, symbols, decorations, studs, extra or oversized pockets.
- Pants must be worn on the waist.

**Shorts**

- Grades K-5: Solid navy blue shorts are permitted from the first day of school until October 31st and then again from April 1st through the last day of school.
- Grades 6-8: Solid navy blue or khaki shorts are permitted from the first day of school until October 31st and then again from April 1st through the last day of school.
- Shorts must follow the same guidelines as the above pants and may be no shorter than three inches above the knee.

**Socks**

- Socks must be worn at all times.
- Sock colors may be solid white, navy blue, gray, or black and are permitted to have a small logo (ex. Nike swoosh) on the top.
- No Nike Elite socks, or similar style socks, may be worn.

**Shoes**

- Dress shoes or gym shoes with closed toes and closed heels must be worn.
- Shoes must have laces and must always be tied securely due to safety concerns.
- No boots or moccasins may be worn.

**Belts**

- Belts must be worn with all pants/shorts with belt loops.
- Belts must be solid black, brown, or navy blue.

**Girls Uniform****Jumper/Skirt**

- Grades K-4: Standard uniform plaid jumper purchased from Schoolbelles School Uniforms ([www.schoolbelles.com](http://www.schoolbelles.com)), Educational Outfitters, or acquired through the uniform exchange program.
- Grade 5-8: Regular uniform plaid skirt or uniform plaid kilt-style skirt purchased from Schoolbelles School Uniforms ([www.schoolbelles.com](http://www.schoolbelles.com)), Educational Outfitters, or acquired through the uniform exchange program.
- Length must be no shorter than three inches above the knee.
- Shorts should be worn under the jumper. This is required for P.E. days.
- White, navy blue, or black footed ankle-length tights/leggings may be worn with the uniform jumper/skirt.

**Personal Grooming and Appearance**

- No clothing with tears/holes.
- Nail polish, acrylic nails, and make up are not permitted.
- For girls: One earring may be worn in the lobe of each ear. No hoop earrings that fall below the ear lobe.
- For boys: Earrings are not permitted.
- Other body piercings are not permitted.
- Temporary or permanent tattoos are not permitted.



- Hair must be clean, neatly groomed, and of a natural color. Hair cannot have shaved designs or patterns. Hairstyles and hair accessories which cause safety concerns and/or are disruptive to the educational process are not permitted.
- For boys: Hair must be trimmed so it is above the eyebrows, no more than half the way down the ear, and above the shirt collar.
- Facial hair is not permitted on boys.
- Students may wear small religious medals and small crosses on a thin chain.
- Students may also wear a wristwatch. Smart watches may not be worn during the school day.
- No other forms of jewelry, necklaces, rings, wristbands, etc. are permitted unless school sponsored.

### **Dress Code for Christian Service Spirit Days**

The following dress code will be in effect for all Christian Service Spirit Days throughout the year.

#### **Shirts**

- Tee shirts must feature St. James School colors. Solid red, black, or white tee shirts or a tee shirt combining these colors. No other colors, logos, words, pictures, imprints, or writing (including handwritten items) are permitted on them.
- Any piece of Spirit Wear sold by the PTO
- Olympic Day tee shirts
- St. James athletic tee shirts which feature school colors
- St. James School Club tee shirts
- Official St. James Scouts tee shirts
- All shirts/tops must have sleeves.
- No athletic jerseys of any sort, except for St. James sports related shirts or sweatshirts such as basketball, volleyball, track, etc. purchased when on the St. James team.
- No cheerleading uniforms of any sort.
- No handwritten words, pictures, or drawings on any tee shirt.

#### **Pants/Shorts**

- Shorts can be worn in August, September, October, April, May and June only. Absolutely no short shorts. Shorts must extend to mid-thigh and must have at least a five-inch inseam.
- Jeans and sweat pants are permitted.
- Pants should be school appropriate. No overly tight-fitting pants (examples include, but are not limited to, leggings and yoga pants) are allowed unless shorts are worn over the top of them. If you are unsure if the pants are too tight, choose another option.
- No holes, rips, tears, or patches are permitted on all forms of pants worn.
- No writing should appear on the backside of any pants.

#### **Shoes/Socks**

- In addition to those items listed in the St. James dress code, St. James socks sold by the PTO or through sports teams may be worn on Christian Service Spirit Days only.

#### **Headwear**

- No hats, caps, scarves, or bandannas of any sort.

Other than the above, all other aspects of the regular St. James dress code are to be followed on a designated Christian Service Spirit Days.

### **Dress Code for Out of Uniform Days**

The following dress code will be in effect for all out of uniform days throughout the year. Student Picture Days and Student Appreciation Day during Catholic School's Week are out of uniform days. Students are expected to wear school appropriate attire.

Pants should be school appropriate. No overly tight-fitting pants (examples include, but are not limited to, leggings and yoga pants) are allowed unless shorts are worn over the top of them. If you are unsure if the pants are too tight, choose another option.

Students still need to wear dress shoes or gym shoes on these days and should make note if they have gym class on that day. No boots or moccasins may be worn.

### **Dress Code for Graduation**

First and foremost, St. James is a Catholic school. We ask that parents and students keep this in mind as they choose clothing for our celebration. Your sons' and daughters' clothing should be both modest and keep with the rich liturgical atmosphere of the St. James Graduation Ceremony.

#### **Girls:**

- "Sunday Best" dresses.
- Modest dresses please. No off the shoulder, no strapless, and no bare back dresses.
- Dress length should be at or below the knee.
- Girls must wear a sweater or shawl if the dress has thin straps, leaves the shoulder bare, or has openings on the back for both pictures and Mass/Graduation Ceremony.
- Dress shoes (small heels or flats) should be worn. No gym shoes, flip-flops, clogs, or high heels. Please make sure that girls can walk in the shoes they choose to wear.

#### **Boys:**

- "Sunday Best" attire.
- Nice dress slacks, dress shirt, and a tie should be worn.
- Suits or sports coats are optional.
- Dress shoes should be worn. No gym shoes or sandals.

## **Health Information**

### **Accidents**

Serious accidents are to be reported to the school office. Teachers send injured children to the nurse. Parents are informed of injuries as deemed necessary by the nurse. This is determined by the severity of the injury, need for possible further evaluation by medical personnel and/or continued monitoring by the parents, and the child's overall reports of discomfort and reaction to the injury. In an extreme emergency if all attempts to reach the parents and/or designated emergency contact have been unsuccessful, the parent's signature on the Emergency Medical Authorization Form assists the principal and the nurse in admitting a child to the emergency room. Therefore, it is important that the entire form, including any medication a child is taking, is completed in order to assist emergency room staff in providing the best care possible to a child.

## **Medication at School**

Medication in a school environment must be handled with care and caution. The school contains a number of young people who are not yet aware that while medication helps many live a healthier, fuller life, taken in the wrong dosage or by the wrong person, it can have negative impacts on a person's health. Many children confuse medications with candy due to similar shapes and colors.

All medication, both prescription and over-the-counter (non-prescription i.e. Tylenol, Ibuprophen, Cough Syrups) will only be administered by school personnel if accompanied by a physician's order. The "Medication Order" form must be completed and signed by the licensed prescriber and the parent/guardian before any medication can be given during the school day. The order is only able to be utilized for one school year. However, if there is a change in dosage or the number of times a day a dose is administered, a new order will be required. Additionally, a new order is required for each school year, even if the medication remains the same. Additional forms are available from the nurse as needed.

As mandated by the Ohio Revised Code 3313.718, students are allowed to carry and self-administer Epi-pens and asthma inhalers. There must be a current medication order on file in the health office. The parents and physician must sign off on the medication orders that the student is capable of administering the medication, identifying the need for administration, and safely transporting said medication. The student must also be knowledgeable in how to notify a staff member to alert the nurse should further assistance be needed.

All medication must be brought to the school office by the parent or guardian in the original container. Do not send medication to school with your child. While at school or on the bus, any child found with medication, prescription or over-the-counter, will be subject to disciplinary action. The only exception is for Epi-pens and inhalers where a current order is in the nurse's office.

At the end of the year, all unused medication will be available for pick up by a parent or designated adult. No medication will be stored at school over the summer months. Any medication which remains at the end of the school year will be destroyed.

We appreciate the help of our parents in providing a safe learning environment for our children. If you have any questions, please contact the school nurse, Connie Lanter (385-0830).

## **Cough Drops**

Cough drops containing no medication are permitted to be brought and used during the school day. They must be accompanied by a note from the parent. Please be sure to write a new note for each episode in which children need the cough drops. Children are asked to bring both the note and the cough drops to the health office in the morning. Please only send the number of cough drops needed for the day. Like other medications, the overuse of cough drops can leave children not feeling well.

## **Special Health Concerns**

If your child is allergic to any medication, food, bee stings, etc., or has anything we should know about such as a heart condition, a hearing problem, diabetes, etc., please notify the nurse at the beginning of each school year so necessary precautions can be taken. This information will be kept on file so that we can pass it on to teachers.

If there is any reason your child should not be permitted to take part in physical education classes, whether this is occasionally or on a regular basis, please notify your child's physical education teacher promptly in writing. A doctor's note will be necessary to exclude a child from physical education classes for any period over three school days.

### **Food Allergy Management Prevention Plan**

The following guidelines will be used to help students with allergies and their families manage the risk or reactions. It is recognized by all staff at St. James School that food allergies are a serious and potentially life threatening condition that need to be managed through coordinated communication between school families, school staff members, and the child's health care provider. These guidelines are designed to outline the responsibilities of all involved parties.

#### **Responsibilities of School Staff**

- Attend annual training regarding food (and other) allergy management
- Attend annual training with regard to epi-pen administration
- Develop individualized plans of care for students including emergency plans of care
- Provide the safest environment possible by being aware of allergens and the potential reactions which may occur due to exposure
- Communicate with school families regarding individual needs

#### **Responsibilities of Parents**

- Provide documentation regarding child's needs and orders from health care providers as appropriate
- Provide safe snacks for students to have as an alternate to other treats
- Provide the homeroom teacher with a list of safe snacks to be shared with other parents in the homeroom
- Determine which foods from the cafeteria a student may purchase including items from the snack bar
- Educate children regarding their allergies and which foods are safe for them
- Communicate with school staff regarding individual student needs

#### **Responsibilities of Students**

- Be educated about their allergies
- Abide by the parent identified list of safe foods
- Understand the importance of not sharing food with other students

At St. James School, the school nurse will provide training to all school staff, including cafeteria staff, on an annual basis. Additionally, the school nurse will work to implement "alert" procedures within the cafeteria to assure that staff are aware of students with allergies and understand the management plans in regard to each individual student. The school nurse will maintain an up to date binder of food labels for parents to review and work with parents to create an approved foods list for their child.

If a question arises from a PTO sponsored event (grandparent event, classroom parties, etc.), the parent should communicate with the school nurse.

Note: St. James School is not a peanut/nut free facility.

## **Immunizations/Vaccinations**

St. James School complies with the minimum immunization requirements set forth by R.C. 3313.67 and 3313.671. Although St. James School complies with those minimum immunization requirements, it also retains discretion to enforce stricter requirements at any time, for instance, by requiring vaccination even over a guardian's conscience or religious conviction objection or by revoking a previous exception.

## **COVID-19 Acknowledgement of Risks**

We, the undersigned parent(s) and student, acknowledge and agree that, as a student at St. James School and as parent(s) of that student, entering in the school or being on the premises, having personal contact with teachers, classmates, and other St. James School staff, involves a certain degree of risk, namely of parent(s) and/or student acquiring a communicable disease, including COVID-19, and then potentially passing it on to others, including family members. Due to the highly contagious nature of COVID-19, the characteristics of the virus, and the close proximity of students, teachers, and staff at St. James School, there is an elevated risk of student contracting the disease simply by being in the building, on the premises, or at any St. James School function. The same is true for parent(s) of a student at St. James School.

By signing this Handbook below, we acknowledge and agree that after carefully considering the risks involved, and having the opportunity to discuss these risks with any healthcare professional(s) of our choosing, we voluntarily and willingly accept those risks and acknowledge that returning to in-person classes and other in-person St. James School functions is the choice of each family, including ours. If student or parent(s) who visit St. James School have underlying health concerns which may place them at greater risk of contracting any communicable disease, including COVID-19, we acknowledge and agree that we will consult with a health care professional before student or parent(s) return to St. James School, attend any St. James School function, or visit St. James School. Moreover, we acknowledge that while adherence to safety and precautionary measures (e.g., social distancing guidelines, facemasks, handwashing, etc.) may reduce possible exposure to the risk of contracting a communicable disease, the possibility of serious illness and death remains. We do hereby accept and assume sole responsibility for any illness acquired by student or parent(s) while at St. James School or any St. James School function, including possible infection with COVID-19.

We further acknowledge, understand, and agree that we have obligations to the school and parish, its employees/staff members, students, and others to take certain precautions and make certain disclosures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 as outlined by the State of Ohio and the applicable local public health department.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **Confidentiality Policy**

Student information is held in confidence by the staff of St. James School. All students' records are private and accessible only to the administration, teachers, and school staff who are working with the student, and the student's parents who make official requests. Written, verbal, and electronic information concerning a student will only be reviewed or discussed by staff members who are attending to the educational, health, and safety needs of a child. All student information will be protected and stored in a safe location at all times and accessed only by those with authorization.

## **Assignment Books**

All students in grades 2-8 will be provided an assignment book by St. James School. The assignment book is designed in such a manner that it will last the entire school year. Assignment books will be distributed to each student through the homerooms. All parents are encouraged to check the assignment book each night to ensure all work is being completed in a timely manner.

## **Calendar**

The school calendar is available on the school website and on PlusPortals.

All school days are full days, except for 2-hour early release days as noted on the calendar.

- Student School Day: 8:10 a.m. – 3:05 p.m.
- Student drop off times are 7:50 – 8:05 a.m.
- Tardy bell rings at 8:10 a.m.

## **Child Care**

St. James offers child care as part of the extended school day. For more information, please call the school office at 741-5333 and follow the prompts.

## **Custody/Records**

According to the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act, parents have the right of access to records. A parent needs to make a request in writing 24 hours in advance. An appointment will then be made to view the records the school retains for the student. St. James School abides by the provisions of the Buckley Amendment with respect to the rights of non-custodial parents. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, the school will provide the non-custodial parent with access to academic records and other school information regarding his or her child. If there is a court order specifying that there is to be no information given, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the school with a court-certified copy of the court order.

## **Emergency School Closing**

St. James will follow Northwest School District's decision when closing, delaying school, or early dismissal due to weather. If the weather is severe enough that you feel school may be closed, listen to the radio or television for school closing information. Listen for Northwest School District. Additionally, parents will receive a phone call, email, or text message via our AP Notify notification system informing them of any changes to the school schedule due to inclement weather. When school is closed for emergency purposes, all after school activities are canceled.

## **Field Trips**

Field trips are an important and valuable extension to the school curriculum. Field trips that relate to specific units of study or provide enrichment for the students will be arranged by the teacher in consultation with the principal. The teacher will make arrangements in the event that chaperones are needed to assist with supervision. No other children, other than the students, are permitted to go on the field trip. No adults, other than those selected by the sponsoring teachers as official chaperones, may go

on the field trip, ride on the bus, and/or be present at the field trip destination(s). Due to space limitations some chaperones may have to provide their own transportation.

Informational letters and permission slips will be sent to parents prior to all scheduled trips. Students will only be permitted to go on school sponsored field trips provided all necessary forms are completed in advance of the date of the trip. All students are to go to and from the field trip destination via the transportation arranged by the school. No child will be permitted to leave the school grounds without first submitting a permission slip to the teacher bearing a parent's or legal guardian's signature. Only the official school permission slip will be accepted. Parent generated notes and/or phone calls will not be accepted in place of the official permission slip. Students who fail to submit a properly signed official permission slip will be excluded from the trip.

Field trips are privileges afforded to students; no student has an absolute right to attend a field trip. Students can be denied participation for failure to meet academic or behavioral standards.

Field trip fees will be assessed to a family's FACTS account on an as needed basis.

### **Gender Identity**

In Catholic schools, all curricular and extra-curricular activity is rooted in and consistent with the principles of Catholic doctrine. Catholic schools:

- Support students with gender dysphoria by treating them with sensitivity, respect, mercy, and compassion.
- Require that participation on school teams be according to biological sex.
- Require that names and pronouns be in accordance with the person's biological sex.
- Designate Catholic sex education, uniforms and gender appropriate dress, bathrooms, locker rooms, showers, and sleeping accommodations on trips according to biological sex.
- Maintain names in school records according to the student's biological sex.
- Provide reasonable accommodation to a private bathroom for use by any student who desires increased privacy.
- In case of a specific request, consider in a compassionate way, on a case-by-case basis, the physical and psychological needs of a student based on the following questions:
  - What is the specific request of the student and/or the parents?
  - Is the request in keeping with the teaching of the Catholic Church?
  - Is the school reasonably able to accommodate the request?

### **Library**

All students in grades K-3 go to the library to "sign out" and "return" books every week at an appointed time and day. Students in grades 4-6 will attend the library on a rotating schedule. Classes are reminded the day before they are to visit the library. The fine for overdue books is .05 a day for each book. Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays are not counted. If a child is absent on library day, there is no fine provided the books are returned the first day the child returns to school. All books that are lost or damaged must be paid for: the amount is the replacement cost.

### **Lost and Found**

Lost articles are kept on a shelf on the basement level so that children can claim them. Each child's valuables should be marked with his or her name in permanent marker. Items still in the Lost and Found at the end of the year will be donated to charity.

## **Lunch Program**

### **General Information**

Cafeteria fees are charged at \$50.00 per family. This fee is payable through FACTS and will be added to your tuition account. Lunch money is collected each day in homeroom and sent to the cafeteria.

The cost of lunch this year will be \$3.25 and milk is included. Extras of the main dish are \$1.25. Several "ala carte" items are available: carrots with ranch dip - \$.50, bowl of chili - \$1.25, tater tots - \$1.25 (available only for 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grade students on Fridays and any day that it is included in the menu). Every student will have a debit card which will be kept in their homeroom. Money must be loaded on the card for it to work. Lunch cards do not expire. Students are not permitted to use their debit card for the snack bar. In order to load the card, please put a check or money order in an envelope. Checks should be made payable to: St. James Cafeteria. Clearly, write the student's name, homeroom, and amount for each child on the outside of the envelope. Please do not send in a check or money order without this information as it is difficult to try to identify the child who needs to be credited. It is recommended to have funds to cover at least two lunches on your child's debit card.

Students will be permitted to charge two lunches in order to give parents an opportunity to reload their child's card. Parents will be notified after the first charge. Any child charging more than two lunches will be given either a peanut butter and jelly or cheese sandwich along with milk. If you are not sure how much credit your child(ren) has on his or her lunch card, or if you have any questions about the cafeteria, email or call Mrs. Oliverio ([moliverio@stjameswo.org](mailto:moliverio@stjameswo.org) or 741-5338).

St. James cafeteria provides a hot lunch and salad bar for students daily. Policies of the federal government are strictly observed. Facilities and menus are inspected by government officials, as well as county and state Boards of Health. In our efforts to promote healthy eating habits, St. James does not allow fast food to be brought into the cafeteria.

A student may bring a packed lunch into the cafeteria. Students may purchase milk (\$0.50) or other drinks from the snack bar if so desired. Students are not permitted to bring soft drinks in their lunch. Students are not permitted to have fast food at lunch.

The lunchroom is supervised by members of the St. James staff. Students are expected to be respectful and use good manners. Students are responsible for leaving the table and floor where they were seated in good order for others who use the area.

### **Cafeteria Volunteers**

Before volunteering in the cafeteria, each person must have completed the child protection training and a background check through selection.com.

When you arrive at school, check in at the main office and pick up your volunteer badge. Plan to arrive at the cafeteria by 10:30. If you are unable to work when assigned, please trade with another volunteer or find a substitute. Let us know of any changes so that the main office expects the right person and can prepare correct name tags. Wear close-toed comfortable shoes. Long hair needs to be pulled back when serving food. Please return to the main office to sign out before leaving the building.



### **Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)**

The St. James PTO is a vital part of our school community. The PTO supports the educational program of our school in countless ways. Families are strongly encouraged to volunteer for PTO events and tasks and support their fundraisers.

As a requirement of enrollment, each family will need to join the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). PTO dues will be charged to each family's FACTS account.

### **Parties**

Classroom parties serve a valuable purpose and will be held in conjunction with some of the major holidays and events of the school year. Homeroom parties will be held for all grades K-8 for Halloween, Christmas, and the end of the year. Valentine's Day parties will be held for grades K-3 and will be optional for grades 4-8. In addition, treats will be provided by PTO homeroom parents for grade 2 the day after First Communion and for grade 7 the day after Confirmation. The date of the parties will be scheduled by the school office. PTO homeroom parents will plan the classroom parties and may include a treat and fun activity for the class. Up to five homeroom parents may attend the party. Approval for classroom parties, in addition to those described above, must be obtained from the principal well in advance of the function.

### **Playground Information**

Please dress your child according to the weather. Students will go outside for recess as long as the "feels like" temperature on the cell phone of the school administration is 25° or higher. When the temperature "feels like" it is below 25°, teachers have the option of taking students on a short walk around campus. Students who are well enough to come to school are well enough to go out for recess. However, we will make an exception for a day or two if the child brings a note from his/her parents. If there is any reason why a child must stay in more than a few days, it will be necessary for us to have a doctor's excuse.

### **School Advisory Commission**

The School Advisory Commission of St. James School has the responsibility to the school community of serving in an advisory capacity with relation to the initiation and evaluation of policies and programs concerning Catholic education for the children of St. James School. The committee will consider the academic and spiritual needs of each student and support their development of talents, opportunities, and personal growth.

Working in close collaboration with the pastor and school administrator(s) and hearing its many constituents, this Commission shall assist in enabling the St. James School community to reach its educational goals.

### **Telephones**

An office telephone will be made available for student use to ensure a student has a safe way home after school.

## **Transportation**

### **Walkers**

Christian principles of love of neighbor and respect for property should guide parents to direct their children concerning conduct while walking to and from school. Pushing, fighting, intimidation of other students, and cutting through private yards or private property reflects lack of concern for the rights of others. Children should periodically be made aware of their obligations and responsibilities by parents. Once a child leaves school property, he/she is no longer the responsibility of St. James School.

### **Bicycle Riders**

It is imperative for children who ride bicycles to school to enter the school building by way of Cheviot Road next to the Credit Union. Bicycles must be walked on school property.

### **Bus Riders - School Bus Conduct**

Students who ride Northwest School District buses to and from school are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that will not endanger their own health and safety as well as the health and safety of others who are riding the buses. Students are subject to the Northwest School Board's Student Code of Conduct and bus riding regulations while physically riding the bus and when the student is at or near a school bus stop. In order to ensure the safe operation of school buses, the administration shall develop procedures to be followed for disciplinary action because of misconduct on school buses.

Pupil Transportation Management Policies 3301 83 08\* - Pupil management and safety instruction policies shall include the following:

1. Pupils shall arrive at the bus stop before the bus is scheduled to arrive.
2. Pupils must wait in a location clear of traffic and away from the bus stops.
3. Behavior at the school bus stop must not threaten life, limb or property of any individual.
4. Pupils must go directly to an available or assigned seat so the bus may safely resume motion.
5. Pupils must remain seated keeping aisles and exits clear.
6. Pupils must observe classroom conduct and obey the driver promptly and respectfully.
7. Pupils must not use profane language.
8. Pupils must refrain from eating and drinking on the bus except as required for medical reasons.
9. Pupils must not use tobacco on the bus.
10. Pupils must not have alcohol or drugs in their possession on the bus, except for prescription medication required for a student.
11. Pupils must not throw or pass objects on, from or into the bus.
12. Pupils may carry on the bus only objects that can be held in their laps.
13. Pupils must leave or board the bus at locations to which they have been assigned unless they have parental and administrative authorization to do otherwise.
14. Pupils must not place head or arms out of the bus windows.
15. Guidelines will be formulated for the use and storage of equipment and other means of assistance required by preschool and special needs children.
16. Drivers and bus aides must have access to appropriate information about the child to the degree that such information might affect safe transportation and medical well-being. This information must be available in the vehicle or readily accessible in the transportation office. All such information is strictly confidential.

17. School projects may not be transported if they are too large or too fragile to be held by the students on their laps. No glass objects or aerosol products are permitted on the school bus.

\*Taken from the Northwest Local Schools' bus conduct policies.

Upon exiting from the bus, each child is directed to go straight home and not to visit with any other children without parental permission. Students are not permitted to ride a different bus or get off at a different stop. Special transportation requests require a written form which may be secured from the Northwest Transportation Department or our school office. If a child is a continual disturbance on the bus, the child can be removed from the bus, and it becomes the responsibility of the parents to get the child to and from school.

### **Car Riders**

Parents who bring children to school by automobile or who visit St. James School are asked to be extremely cautious when dropping the students off in front of school. Parents are to heed the no parking signs posted around the school. Please be sure the parking areas on all sides of the school are clear of cars by 2:40 p.m. to make way for school buses. No one is permitted to pick up children in the front or the rear of school between 2:45 p.m. and 3:25 p.m. No student drop offs or pick-ups are permitted on Hubble Road. Parking is permitted only in designated spaces. Parking in unmarked areas inhibits the safe evacuation of the building and access to the building by emergency equipment. Parents should not park in the parking lot between the Parish Center and Church for afternoon pick up. Parents should park in the large Church parking lot and may opt to meet their child on the other side of the crosswalk once school dismisses.

### **Visitors/Volunteers**

All persons, other than students and staff, coming to St. James School on a school day during the hours of 7:50 a.m. to 3:05 p.m., must report to the school office prior to going to any other part of the building.

St. James utilizes volunteers throughout the school. Because of liability considerations, siblings or other young children not enrolled at St. James may not be brought to school when you are volunteering your services. All regular volunteers must have completed all phases of the Child Protection Decree training, and must complete a background check via selection.com before they can serve as a volunteer.

It is Archdiocesan policy that no employee or volunteer may have contact with children until a clear background check on the individual has been received. There are no exceptions to this policy. This means that volunteers may not begin their service until this process has been completed. If you have any questions about this policy, please contact the Archdiocesan Office at (513) 421-3131.

St. James School requires that strict confidentiality be maintained with respect to all information obtained by volunteers concerning St. James School as well as the students we serve. Volunteers may be exposed to confidential information about students as a natural part of volunteering. All such information is to be treated confidentially and discussed only within the boundaries of the volunteer role at St. James School. A breach of this agreement shall constitute grounds for and may result in termination of a volunteer's status as such. Volunteers also agree not to discuss these same matters after the volunteer has left the volunteer role or position at St. James School except where such disclosure is consistent with stated policy and relevant legislation.

### **Water Bottles**

Students may carry water bottles with them from classroom to classroom during the school day. Only plain water may be in the bottle—no additives, sports drinks, or flavored water. It is recommended that the bottle have a secure sports type pop top cap and have the student's name on it.

### **Withdrawals from School**

When withdrawing your child from school, please notify the principal several days in advance. Inform the school office of your new address and new school. A parent must sign a release form for records (obtained from the school the student will be attending). The scholastic and health records will be mailed. No records will be released if there is any outstanding tuition and/or other school fees and charges.