School Handbook
2025-2026

St. Joseph School
105 Church Lane
Cockeysville, MD 21030-4998
PHONE: 410-683-0600
FAX: 410-628-6814

PASTOR
Rev. Msgr. Rick Hilgartner

PRINCIPAL
Mrs. Maggie Bellamy

ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL
Mrs. Janine Paetow

For additional information, please call 410-683-0600, Ext. 2200,
visit our website at www.sjpray.org
or write in care of:

St. Joseph School
105 Church Lane
Cockeysville, MD 21030-4998

Dear Parents and Guardians,

As we begin another school year at St. Joseph School, I am filled with gratitude that you have chosen to entrust your child's education and formation to our community. We view the relationship between school and home as a true partnership—one grounded in mutual respect, shared values, and a deep commitment to nurturing the faith, intellect, and character of every child.

In this spirit of partnership, we ask all families to support and uphold the following responsibilities as members of our school community:

● To be an active partner in the academic, spiritual, and social development of your child.
● To understand, support, and model the Catholic mission and identity of our school. ● To read and respond to school communications and seek clarification when needed. ● To know your child's teachers and participate in parent-teacher conferences and requested meetings.
● To address questions or concerns directly with the individuals most involved, beginning with your child's teacher.
● To be involved in the life of the school and volunteer when possible.
● To promote the school positively—in personal conversations and on social media.
● To meet financial commitments to the school in a timely manner and to support fundraising efforts when able.
● To value the gift of Catholic education and the Christ-centered environment it provides.
● To conduct yourself with respect and appropriateness at all school-related functions, including those off campus or outside school hours, such as sporting events. To follow all policies and procedures outlined in this Family Handbook, including expectations for non-academic matters like parking, arrival/dismissal, and respectful communication.
● To model courtesy and respect in all interactions—verbal, written, and electronic—with teachers, staff, administrators, and fellow members of the school community.

If questions or concerns arise at any time, please feel free to contact the school office at 410-683-0600, Ext. 2200, or reach out to schedule a meeting with the appropriate teacher or with me directly. I am eager to work with you in fostering a school culture rooted in the Gospel, where each student can grow in knowledge, faith, and service.

May God continue to bless our efforts as we live out the mission of Catholic education together. I look forward to the year ahead and all that we will accomplish as one school family.

In Christ,

Mrs. Bellamy

Principal
St. Joseph School

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St. Joseph School is a co-ed elementary school for grades Pre-Kindergarten through eighth grade. St. Joseph School reserves the right to amend the Parent/Student Handbook and parent(s)/legal guardian(s) will be notified of any changes made. This Parent/Student Handbook is an informative booklet for parents and students setting forth the rules and policies of the school and is not intended as an expressed or implied contract. (Policy ADM 6.0)

St. Joseph School is a co-ed elementary school for grades Pre-Kindergarten through Eighth. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, religion, age, disability or handicap, or protected activity (i.e., opposition to prohibited discrimination or participation in the complaint process). St. Joseph School is not required to adopt any rule, regulation, policy or personal accommodation that conflicts with its religious or moral teachings and we will always teach and act consistent with the tenets of the Catholic Church.

Overview

Archdiocese of Baltimore's Vision Statement

The Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Baltimore nurture and sustain the God-given gifts of every person, especially students, to be used in service to the Mission of Jesus.

Archdiocese of Baltimore's Mission Statement

Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Baltimore provide a Christ-centered education that is academically excellent and empowers students to reach their full potential - spiritually, intellectually, physically, socially, and morally. Fostered through robust collaboration among all stakeholders, the mission is accomplished through accountable leadership at all levels, ongoing and coordinated strategic planning, centralized efficiencies, and financial sustainability.

Mission Statement

St. Joseph School, an authentically Catholic community of diverse learners, prepares students to think critically, to work purposefully, and to live faithfully.

History of School

As our nation struggled in a great civil war, the residents of a small Baltimore County community were replacing their burned out one-room schoolhouse on the grounds of St. Joseph Parish. The church was located in an area eventually known as "Texas" because so many of the Irish quarrymen who settled here had served in Texas during the war. Local volunteers completed the foundation (of stone quarried nearby) in one day. The new facility opened in 1868 with two large classrooms for eight grades. To this day, this sturdy building remains a vital part of the school. Renovations over the years have included the installation of electricity and plumbing, a science lab and library, and enlargement that has doubled the usable space.

Although the church owned the building, the school was staffed and supported by Baltimore County. In 1926, when a new public school was constructed in Cockeysville, all desks and educational materials in the facility were donated to St. Joseph School. The Sisters of Mercy had been traveling from Mt. Washington to Texas by train for weekend religious education classes and they began their full-time mission. They continued to influence with true dedication and skill, setting the high standards of their faith for the entire school community. Their numbers have been augmented with the addition of a select group of dedicated lay teachers.

With the growth of "suburbia" throughout the 1950s and 60s, enrollment at the school climbed rapidly. During this time, the balconies of the church hall were partitioned to provide more classroom space and eventually the building was rebuilt to accommodate four classrooms as well as two church halls.

In October 1958 (exactly 90 years after the original school building was completed) a new, much larger, school building was occupied. Within two years, as the demand for education

within a total Christian atmosphere grew among local Catholic parents, it was necessary to build even more classrooms by adding a third level (with four classrooms) to the new building. Today, enrollment is approximately 375 children, with average class size at 20 for grades pre-kindergarten through eight. As a result of VISION 2002, a capital campaign has provided an expansion of parish facilities to include school classrooms, a new library and a large multi-purpose room for school/parish use.

For more than 150 years, St. Joseph Parish has provided something of great value for the parents of this community – the option to have their children educated in a religious atmosphere. St. Joseph School will continue to fulfill this role in the community by nurturing the intellectual, spiritual and physical growth of the child.

In response to the vision of the Catholic Schools Project for the Archdiocese of Baltimore, St. Joseph School also serves the Catholic Community of St. Francis Xavier in Hunt Valley and Our Lady of Grace Parish.

Accreditation

(Policy ADM 1.1) St. Joseph School is accredited by Cognia through June 2027. In accordance with standards set by the Archdiocese of Baltimore, St. Joseph School met the requirements established by the Cognia Accreditation Commission and Board of Trustees and was thereby accredited by the SACS Council on Accreditation and School Improvement.

National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA)

(Policy ADM 21.0) St. Joseph School is a member of the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA).

Awards & Accolades

National Blue Ribbon Award - 2024
PBIS Maryland State Gold Award & Badges
Maryland Top Workplace - 2024
Certified Maryland Kindness School

Administrative Team

St. Joseph School is a ministry of St. Joseph Parish in Cockeysville. This parish school is administered by the Principal, Mrs. Maggie Bellamy, through the authority of the Pastor, Msgr. Rick Hilgartner. The Principal and Assistant Principal, Mrs. Janine Paetow, are responsible for the day-to-day operation of the school.

Faculty and Staff

SJS Faculty and Staff

Pastoral Support

Monsignor Rick Hilgartner - Pastor
Rev. Lenin Suarez - Associate Pastor
Parish Staff

School Board Members

SJS School Board Members

School Calendar 2025-2026

(Policy ADM 13.1) The Archdiocese of Baltimore has a plan in case of inclement weather or unforeseen school closings:

Day 1: Closed
Day 2: Closed
Day 3: Closed
Day 4: Asynchronous Learning
Day 5: Asynchronous Learning
Day 6: Asynchronous Learning
Day 7 and Beyond: Add a day of instruction to the calendar

St. Joseph School has identified three (3) inclement weather days into the calendar. If the school does not close due to inclement weather or unforeseen events (Day 1, Day 2, Day 3), then the administrators have decided that school will NOT occur on these days: March 23, April 27, and May 4, 2026. Please note: For each inclement weather day that is used, one of the above planned days off will be removed, meaning the students and staff will be in school. Please check your school's newsletter for details.

Two asynchronous ½ days, Friday, November 14 and Friday, February 27, are planned for the students during the 2025-2026 school year. All teachers and staff will be working in person at the school. All students will be working on the assignments at home. Students will be responsible for completion of required work as the assignments will be graded.

SJS Calendar 25-26

School Schedule

Arrival 7:50 a.m. - 8:10 a.m
School begins (late bell) 8:10 a.m.
Classes begin 8:15 a.m.
Dismissal 3:10 p.m.

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Campus Map – Morning Drop-Off

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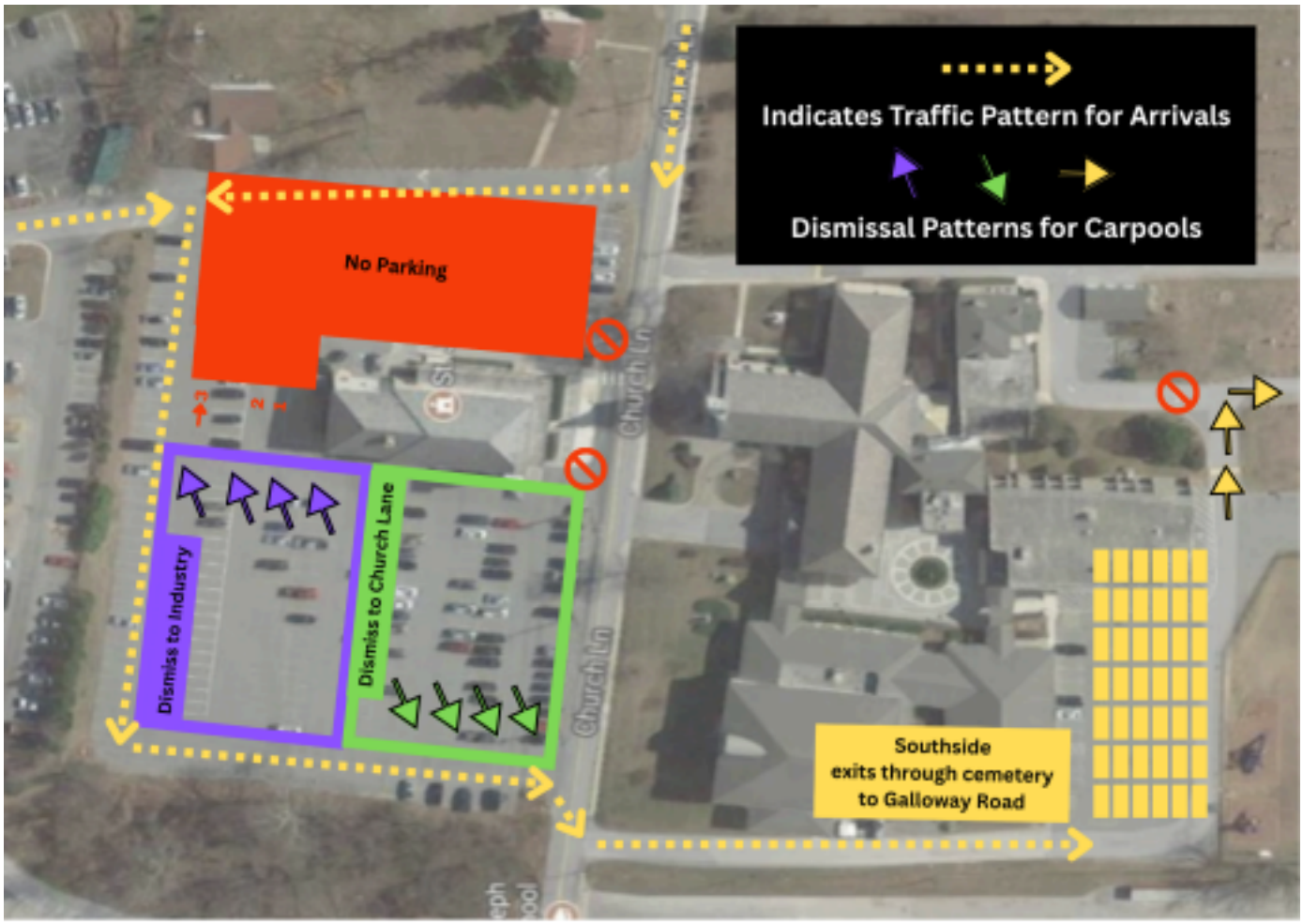
Campus Map – Afternoon Dismissal



Catholic Identity

(Policy INST 1.0; INST 1.2; INST 1.3; INST 1.6; INST 1.7) The official teachings of the Roman Catholic Church are taught in St. Joseph School. The faith formation program is under the jurisdiction of the Archbishop. The curriculum integrates the six tasks of catechesis and is developed in accord with the Archdiocesan faith formation curriculum guidelines published by the Institute for Evangelization. Students attend religion classes, participate in liturgical celebrations, and participate in the religious activities of the school. Parents receive information about the faith formation program in the school and the school's expectations of their child(ren) with regard to religion both as an academic discipline and as a lived faith.

<u>Advent</u>

Advent is a sacred season of joyful preparation and reflection as we await the coming of Christ at Christmas. At St. Joseph School, we honor this liturgical season through prayer, service,

and community celebration, helping students grow spiritually and deepen their understanding of the meaning of Advent.

Our school-wide observance includes:

- Weekly Advent Prayer Services: Held each Monday in Advent in the school courtyard, these brief services gather our entire school community each week to reflect on the themes of hope, peace, joy, and love as we light the Advent wreath together and offer Scripture, prayer, and song.
- Sacrament of Reconciliation: Students in grades 3–8 have the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation, preparing their hearts for Christ's coming through reflection, repentance, and God's mercy.
- Feast of the Immaculate Conception Mass: As a holy day of obligation, the school celebrates Mass in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary's Immaculate Conception, recognizing her role in salvation history and as our model of faith and obedience.
- Service Projects: Students participate in age-appropriate service activities that promote generosity, compassion, and care for those in need, living out our call to serve Christ in others.
- Lessons and Carols: This beloved tradition features Scripture readings and Advent hymns presented by students, offering a prayerful and musical reflection on the story of Christ's coming.

Through these sacred traditions, our students grow in faith, community, and the true spirit of the season.

ROARing Buddy Program

At St. Joseph School, we believe in fostering a strong, faith-filled community across all grade levels. Our ROARing Buddy Program pairs older students with younger students to build meaningful relationships rooted in compassion, mentorship, and Christian fellowship.

Throughout the school year, buddy pairs participate in a variety of shared activities including:

- Attending Mass together, offering guidance and modeling reverence during liturgy
- Working on service projects that teach responsibility, empathy, and outreach to others
- Engaging in seasonal and classroom activities, such as reading together, creating art, and celebrating special events

This program strengthens our school family, builds leadership skills in older students, and helps younger students feel known, supported, and welcomed. It reflects our mission to grow

in faith and love together, as one body in Christ.

Catholic Schools Week

Catholic Schools Week is a cherished annual tradition at St. Joseph School, celebrated each year in late January. This special week highlights the value of Catholic education and our shared commitment to faith, knowledge, and service.

The celebration begins with an invitation to all students and their families to attend Sunday Mass at our parish, where we gather as a school and parish community to give thanks for the gift of Catholic education.

Throughout the week, our students, faculty, and families participate in a variety of activities and events that reflect our Catholic identity and the pillars of Catholic Schools Week—faith, excellence, and service. These may include community service projects, student appreciation events, themed dress days, academic challenges, and time for prayer and reflection.

We conclude the week with a special school-wide Mass and the announcement of our Teacher of the Year, recognizing a faculty member who exemplifies dedication, faith, and excellence in Catholic education.

Catholic Schools Week is a joyful and unifying time that celebrates all who make our school community strong—our students, families, faculty, parish, and supporters.

Daily Prayer

At St. Joseph School, daily prayer is an essential part of our faith life and school culture. Prayer nurtures our relationship with God, fosters a spirit of gratitude, and reminds us of our mission to live as disciples of Christ in all we do.

Students and staff participate in prayer throughout the day, including:

- School-wide prayer each morning and afternoon, led by students, to begin and end the day in God's presence
- Classroom prayer at the start of each subject, inviting the Holy Spirit into our learning
- Grace before snack and lunch, as we thank God for His blessings and nourishment

A special part of our prayer life is the Prayer to St. Joseph, written specifically for our school to reflect our mission and values. This prayer is recited each morning by students and staff, reminding us of St. Joseph's example of faith, humility, and service. Through these daily practices, we grow in faith together and create a school environment rooted in prayer, peace, and purpose.

House System

Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) is a comprehensive framework in which schools focus on our Christ-centered teachings and values to create nurturing, safe, positive, and supportive learning environments. St. Joseph School emphasizes the Catholic faith and values by implementing the PBIS framework through the House system. Consistent school-wide expectations are visible throughout the school and students' positive behavior is acknowledged and celebrated. The PBIS framework adopts behavioral interventions into an integrated continuum that is designed to enhance academic and behavioral outcomes for every student. The mission of the St. Joseph School House System is to form a strong faith filled community of students practicing Catholic virtues as they think critically and work purposefully.

We **ROAR** at SJS. We **ROAR** louder as Houses.

- We show **R**espect as Jesus did
- serve **O**thers as Jesus did
- have a positive **A**ttitude as Jesus did,
- and are **R**esponsible as Jesus was.

The House System is a way to influence behavior while also creating an all inclusive school culture. Implementing this system will provide students and families the opportunity for service, friendly competition, team building, leadership, and promoting school spirit. Implementing this system will encourage greater parent and community involvement in school activities.

<u>Lent</u>

Lent is a sacred season of prayer, penance, and preparation as we journey toward the celebration of Easter. At St. Joseph School, we observe Lent through prayerful experiences that help students and staff grow in faith, reflect on Christ's sacrifice, and renew their commitment to living the Gospel.

Our Lenten observances include:

- Ash Wednesday Mass: We begin the season with a school-wide Mass where students and staff receive ashes, marking our commitment to repentance and spiritual renewal. ● Weekly Stations of the Cross: Each week during Lent, students lead the school community in praying the Stations of the Cross, reflecting on Christ's Passion and deepening their understanding of His love and sacrifice.
- Sacrament of Reconciliation: Students in grades 2–8 have the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation, opening their hearts to God's mercy and grace. ● Faculty Lenten Retreat: Faculty and staff participate in a retreat designed to provide time for prayer, reflection, and spiritual nourishment, supporting their personal faith and ministry as Catholic educators.

These Lenten practices help our entire school community prepare spiritually for the joy of the Resurrection and keep Christ at the center of our hearts and lives.

Living Rosary

The Living Rosary brings our school community together in prayer and devotion to Mary, the Mother of God. Held during the months of October (Month of the Rosary) or May (Month of Mary), this special event allows students to actively participate in praying the Rosary in a meaningful and visual way.

In the Living Rosary, each student represents a bead of the Rosary and helps lead the prayer by standing in place to form the shape of the Rosary. As the prayers are recited—decade by decade—we meditate together on the life of Christ and the love of His Blessed Mother.

This prayer experience encourages reverence, unity, and a deeper appreciation for this beautiful Catholic tradition. It also reinforces our school's commitment to nurturing a strong devotion to Mary and to growing in faith through prayer.

May Procession & Crowning

May Crowning is a beloved annual tradition at St. Joseph School, honoring Mary, the Mother of God, during the month dedicated to her. This prayerful celebration invites our school community to reflect on Mary's faith, humility, and motherly love, and to seek her intercession as we strive to follow her example. As part of this special event:

- Second grade students, newly received into the Sacrament of First Holy Communion, process reverently and present flowers to Mary, offering their prayers and devotion in a public act of faith.
- Eighth grade students lead the celebration and have the honor of crowning the statue of Mary, symbolizing her queenship as Mother of Jesus and Queen of Heaven. They also offer personal tributes to their own mothers, expressing gratitude for the love and guidance they receive at home.

May Crowning is a beautiful expression of our Catholic identity, highlighting the innocence of our younger students, the leadership of our oldest students, and the special role of Mary as a spiritual mother to us all.

Pastor’s Contact Information & Short Biography

Since 2015, Msgr. Hilgartner has served as pastor of St. Joseph Parish Msgr. Richard Hilgartner, a 1990 graduate of Mount St. Mary’s University, was ordained to the priesthood for the Archdiocese of Baltimore in 1995 after earning his Master of Divinity from St. Mary’s Seminary and University. He holds a Licentiate in Sacred Theology (S.T.L.) from the Pontificio Ateneo Sant’Anselmo in Rome, with a specialization in sacramental theology, and has done

work towards his Doctorate in Sacred Theology with a focus on sacramental and liturgical theology.

In October 2011, he was named Chaplain to His Holiness with the title Monsignor by Pope Benedict XVI. Prior to his current role, he served in three other parishes in the Archdiocese of Baltimore and held national leadership positions as Associate Director and then Executive Director of the Secretariat of Divine Worship for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (2007–2014).

Msgr. Hilgartner served at Mount St. Mary's University earlier in his ministry as Director of Campus Ministry and Chaplain and he also taught theology. He continues his commitment to theological education as an adjunct professor at St. Mary's Seminary & University. In addition, he has served as President and CEO of the National Association of Pastoral Musicians and currently serves on the boards of the Catholic Community Foundation for the Archdiocese of Baltimore, the University of Maryland St. Joseph Medical Center, and Mount St. Mary's University. Please contact the parish office (410-683-0600) if you want to reach Fr. Rick.

Prayer Services

Prayer services are a vital part of our faith life at St. Joseph School, offering students, faculty, and staff meaningful opportunities to come together in reflection, worship, and community. These services help nurture a deeper relationship with God and one another, and they reinforce our shared mission to live out the Gospel each day.

While prayer is woven into the daily rhythm of our school, we hold **special school-wide prayer services** throughout the liturgical year—especially during the seasons of **Advent and Lent**. These sacred gatherings allow us to pause, prepare our hearts, and focus on the spiritual significance of these holy seasons. Through Scripture, song, silence, and reflection, students are encouraged to actively engage in the richness of our Catholic tradition. Many of our prayer services are student-led, helping children grow in leadership, reverence, and confidence in expressing their faith. These shared moments of prayer strengthen our school community and remind us that Christ is at the center of all we do.

Religion Curriculum

At St. Joseph School, faith formation is at the heart of our mission. Our Religion Curriculum is provided by the Archdiocese of Baltimore and is designed to help students grow in their knowledge of Catholic teaching, develop a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, and live out their faith in daily life.

The curriculum is developmentally appropriate for each grade level and includes instruction in:

- Sacred Scripture

- Church Teachings and Traditions
- The Sacraments
- Prayer and Worship
- Moral Decision-Making
- Catholic Social Teaching

In addition to core religious instruction, students also participate in the Family Life curriculum, which is provided through the Growing with God program. This program emphasizes the dignity of the human person, healthy relationships, personal safety, and God's plan for family and life. Lessons are age-appropriate and taught in a manner consistent with our Catholic values.

Each year, families are given the opportunity to review the Growing with God materials prior to instruction and may choose to opt their child out of the program if they wish. Open communication and parental partnership are important components of our approach to Family Life education.

Together, these programs form a comprehensive religious education that nurtures both the spiritual and moral development of our students, preparing them to live faithfully and responsibly as children of God. (Policy INST 1.4; INST 1.5)

Retreat (Eighth Grade)

The Eighth Grade Overnight Spring Retreat is a special spiritual experience designed to help our students deepen their faith, build community, and prepare for the transition to high school. This retreat offers a focused time away from the regular school routine to reflect on their personal relationship with God, explore their Catholic identity, and strengthen bonds with their classmates and faculty mentors.

Over the course of the retreat, students engage in prayer, faith-sharing, small group discussions, team-building activities, and moments of quiet reflection. The retreat fosters a supportive and prayerful environment where students can grow in self-awareness, leadership, and spiritual maturity.

Led by faculty and trained retreat leaders, this overnight experience is an important milestone in the eighth grade journey, providing lasting memories and a renewed sense of purpose as young disciples of Christ.

Sacraments (First Eucharist, Reconciliation, Confirmation)

In the Archdiocese of Baltimore, sacramental preparation for Reconciliation, Eucharist, and Confirmation at St. Joseph School is coordinated through St. Joseph Parish. The parish staff leads the formal preparation process for students and their families to receive these important

sacraments in the Catholic faith.

Classroom teachers play a vital supportive role by reinforcing the parish preparation in the school setting. They integrate faith formation, prayer, and catechesis into daily lessons to help students understand and live out the grace and responsibilities these sacraments bring. This collaboration between parish and school ensures that students receive a comprehensive faith formation experience, rooted in both family and community.

School Liturgy Schedule

At St. Joseph School, the celebration of the Eucharist is central to our faith life. Students attend school-wide Masses each month, which are thoughtfully planned and led by students, fostering active participation and leadership in our liturgical celebrations. In addition, individual classes attend daily Masses periodically throughout the month, allowing students to deepen their prayer life and connection to the Church's sacramental presence. All school-wide Mass dates and details are posted on the online school calendar and shared in the Office Notes to keep families informed. We warmly invite all families to join us in these celebrations, welcoming the broader school community to worship together.

Service Projects

Throughout the year, students and families at St. Joseph School are invited to participate in a variety of service projects that embody our commitment to living out the Gospel call to love and serve others. These projects provide meaningful opportunities to put faith into action by helping those in need within our local community and beyond.

Service projects are thoughtfully coordinated by our Spiritual Committee, which ensures a diverse range of activities that are age-appropriate and aligned with our Catholic values. Participation in these projects nurtures compassion, generosity, and a spirit of solidarity among our students and their families.

Engaging in service is a vital part of our faith formation, reminding us that through service, we follow Christ's example and grow as disciples.

Stations of the Cross and/or Living Stations – Please refer to Lent information.

Academics

Curriculum

(Policy INST 2.0; INST 2.2; INST 2.3; INST 2.4) St. Joseph School follows the Archdiocesan Curriculum standards, instructional minutes and the regulations of the Maryland State

Department of Education for non-public schools. Courses are updated on a rotating basis.

https://sites.google.com/archbaltschools.org/curriculum-parent-portal?usp=sharing

Academic Integrity Policy

The Academic Integrity Policy includes consequences for cheating and plagiarism (including work that used Generative AI/ChatGPT to plagiarize).

Plagiarism and Cheating - Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) Guidance for Students

Plagiarism is the act of copying words, music, ideas, or images from a source without giving credit to that source. When a student presents someone else's work as his/her own, it is an act of plagiarism. Examples of plagiarism may include, but are not limited to: copying word-for-word without giving proper acknowledgement of the source, submitting work written by another student, copying images without properly citing their source. Changing answers is also cheating. Students at St. Joseph School are taught a progression of age-appropriate skills that enable them to understand the concept of plagiarism and avoid engaging in acts of plagiarism. Students who either give or receive information will receive no credit for the assignment and need to redo the work. There may also be disciplinary action for these situations as deemed appropriate by the administration.

Our school community strives to uphold the standards of integrity, respect and responsibility. These standards are supported by intellectual and interpersonal honesty. These values remind our students of the importance of hard work. They serve as a foundation for academic success at St. Joseph School and beyond.

At St. Joseph School, we recognize the importance of preparing students to navigate emerging technologies with responsibility and integrity. Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools may be introduced to middle school students (grades 6–8) as part of instruction when appropriate and at the discretion of the classroom teacher.

Middle school students may only use generative AI tools when explicitly permitted and guided by their teacher for a specific assignment or learning activity. Use of these tools will always be framed within the context of critical thinking, ethical responsibility, and academic honesty, in alignment with our Catholic values.

Students in lower grades will not use AI tools as part of their schoolwork at this time.

Misuse of AI—including unauthorized access, plagiarism, or bypassing teacher instructions—will be treated as a violation of the school’s academic integrity and technology use policies.

Academic Integrity Consequences

Cheating involves the unauthorized use of information, materials, devices, sources, or practices in completing academic activities.

Plagiarism is a type of cheating in which someone uses the ideas or work of another person or persons as if they were one's own without giving proper credit to the source.

Northern Illinois University. (n.d.). Academic Integrity Tutorials. Retrieved from https://www.niu.edu/academic-integrity/faculty/types/index.shtml

In the event of academic dishonesty, the following consequences are in place for **cheating and plagiarism** **(This includes work submitted using any generative artificial intelligence* to plagiarize.)**:	
1st Offense:	Zero Credit + Detention + Redo of assignment at teacher discretion
2nd Offense:	Zero Credit +Detention + Conference with administration and family of student + Redo of assignment for the completion of academic content at the teacher discretion

**Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) describes algorithms (such as ChatGPT, Stable Diffusion, Midj Journey, etc) that can be used to create new content, including audio, code, images, text, simulations, and videos.*

Textbooks and Resources by Subject

Reading/ELA:
Grade:PK World of Wonders
Really Great Reading
K Wonders (McGraw-Hill) Reading and Writing Companions
IMSE Red Word Booklet
1-3 Wonders (McGraw-Hill) Textbooks, Reading & Writing Companions plus digital learning platform
2-3 Novels (determined by the teachers)
4-8 Easy Grammar (Easy Grammar Systems) Student Companion Workbooks Sadlier Vocabulary (Sadlier) Student Companion Workbook plus digital platform Novels (determined by the teachers)

Handwriting:
Grade: 1 Handbook for Beginning Writers (Curriculum Associates) Student Book 1-5
Zaner-Bloser Handwriting (Zaner-Bloser) Student Companion Workbook plus digital platform

Math:
Grade:PK Building Blocks: PreK Math
K-8 Envisions (Savvas) Textbook, student workbook and digital platform
Successmaker (Savvas) Digital learning platform

Social Studies:
Grade: PK My Big BackYard (Scholastic) Paper consumables
K Let's Find Out (Scholastic) Paper consumables
1-2 Studies Weekly (Studies Weekly) Paper consumables
3-4 My World Interactive (Savvas) Workbook and Digital Platform
4 Maryland Adventure: The New Maryland (Gibbs-Smith) textbook 5 My World Interactive: World History (Savvas) textbook and digital e platform 6 World History (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt) textbook and digital platform 7 My World Interactive: American History (Savvas) textbook and digital platform 8 United States History (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt) textbook and digital platform

Science:
Grade: PK My Big BackYard (Scholastic) Paper consumables
K Let's Find Out (Scholastic) Paper consumables
3-5 Studies Weekly (Studies Weekly) Paper consumables
6-8 Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (HMH) Digital Platforms

Religion:

Grade:PK Catechesis of the Good Shepherd
K Stories of God's Love (RCL Benziger)
K-8 Blest Are We (RCL Benzinger) Textbooks and student workbooks
Growing with God (Loyola Press)

Grading Policy

(Policy INST 2.0; INST 3.9; INST 4.0) All Archdiocesan K-8 schools shall follow this grading policy to ensure consistent, transparent, and fair grading of students' academic performance. The purpose is to ensure consistent, transparent grading practices that accurately reflect students' academic performance and mastery of the curriculum.

Overview of Grading and Reporting

Grades serve as a tool to measure and communicate a student's academic performance and mastery of the curriculum. They provide valuable feedback to students, parents, and educators about the student's understanding of the material, areas of strength, and areas needing improvement. Grades help guide instructional decisions, support student learning, and ensure accountability in the educational process. By reflecting academic achievement, grades aim to motivate students to strive for excellence and foster a culture of continuous learning and growth.

Kindergarten - Grade 2

In Kindergarten through Grade 2, grading is standards-based and reflects students' developmental readiness and progression toward mastery. The focus is on growth, skill acquisition, and demonstration of understanding through developmentally appropriate learning experiences. Progress is reported using performance levels. (Consistently Developing, Making Progress, Support Needed, and Not Assessed at this time).

Assessment Practices

Assessment methods may include: teacher observation, classwork and student discussions, work samples and portfolios, checklists and rubrics aligned to standards, formal quizzes and tests. Formal quizzes and tests may be administered in developmentally appropriate ways to assess student understanding. While traditional numerical weighting is not applied in Grades K-2, assessment results are used to inform instructional decisions and report progress toward grade-level students.

If a student is absent, it is his/her responsibility to make up missed work and/or assignments.

Parents who take vacation time with their children over and above what is provided in the school calendar must assume responsibility for the work that is missed. Teachers are not able

to compile work ahead of time for the student. Work/tests must be completed in the same amount of time as the days missed regardless of the reason for the absence. 24

Special Subjects

Participation, engagement, and skill demonstration are used to assess subjects like Art, Library, Music, Physical Education, and Spanish (gr. 1-2).

Behavior

Behavior is reported separately and is not factored into academic performance indicators.

Grades 3-8

Components of Grading

Grades should primarily reflect the student's academic mastery of the subject content. Schools will determine the category weighting within these ranges and will communicate school-specific grading practices.

Content Knowledge (60%)

This category will represent the student's mastery of core subject content.

- Classwork: Assignments completed during class that show understanding of the material. These assignments should be graded for accuracy, comprehension, and depth of thought.

- Practice Activities: These include tasks that help reinforce learning, such as drills, exercises, and review activities. These activities should be integrated with class content and help students solidify their understanding.

- Tests and Quizzes: Frequent quizzes and formal tests will assess student retention and comprehension of key concepts. Quizzes assess smaller chunks of content, while tests cover larger units or major concepts. Tests will weigh heavily in this category, given their comprehensive nature.

Assessment of Learning (20%)

This category includes more formal assessments such as larger tests and projects that evaluate how well students have mastered the material.

- Projects: Assignments that require students to apply learned concepts in more complex, real-world situations. These projects should be assessed on both the process (e.g., research, organization) and the final product (e.g., depth of analysis, creativity).
- Major Tests: These will account for a significant portion of this category, reflecting a student's overall understanding of unit content.

Skills Application and Critical Thinking (15%)

This category assesses how students apply their learning in complex or real-world contexts. It encourages critical thinking and problem-solving, going beyond simple recall of facts.

- Problem-Solving Assignments: These include tasks where students need to analyze, synthesize, and apply learned concepts to new or unfamiliar situations. Examples include science experiments, math problems requiring creative solutions, or essay questions that ask students to analyze a situation.
- Critical Thinking Projects: These might include essays, presentations, or research projects that require students to demonstrate higher-order thinking skills, such as analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information.

Homework and Practice (5%)

Homework and in-class activities should provide students with opportunities to reinforce and apply skills and concepts that have already been taught. Homework completed outside of school should be purposeful, developmentally appropriate, and should not introduce new content.

Homework may be available on the Google classroom/teacher website, but parents should check what is in your child's planner. Assigned homework must be completed, and it is the parent's responsibility to supervise the homework. As the student becomes older, the major responsibility should shift to the student. Yet, even with older students, some parental supervision is expected. Emphasis should be placed on study as well as written work. Each grade level establishes its own expectations and rules regarding homework. Individual teachers define their expectations in September. Homework includes written work and studying and the time to complete the expected work will vary depending on the work being done in the classroom and the expectations of the class.

Practice activities, completed during the school day, such as exit tickets, fluency drills, or review exercises, support ongoing learning and skill development. Both contribute to a deeper understanding of the material.

Homework assignments will be graded for completion and may be graded for accuracy if the learning concepts are previously taught concepts. These assignments should provide students with opportunities to practice and review the content discussed in class.

Practice assignments are structured tasks completed during class that reinforce previously taught concepts. These may include exit tickets, spelling tests, math fact drills, or other review activities that support skill development and content retention.

Behavior

Behavior should not be included in academic grades. It is essential that grades accurately reflect a student's academic performance, rather than their behavior.

Subjects and Activities Requiring Participation

There are courses and activities in which demonstration of mastery through participation is the only way to assess skills and application. These include, but are not limited to:

- **Music**: Participation in performances, rehearsals, and practice sessions is essential to demonstrate mastery of musical skills.
- **Art**: Active participation in art projects, critiques, and exhibitions is necessary to showcase artistic abilities.
- **Class Discussion**: Engaging in class discussions helps demonstrate understanding and the ability to articulate thoughts clearly.
- **Physical Education**: Participating in physical activities, sports, and fitness assessments is crucial for demonstrating physical skills and fitness levels.

Participation in these activities may be graded according to expectations for the course or activity. This ensures that students are actively engaged and effectively demonstrate their level of mastery.

Weighting of Grading Categories

Category	Weighting (%)
Content Knowledge (Classwork, Practice Activities, Tests, Quizzes)	60%
Assessments of Learning (Major Tests, Projects)	20%
Skills Application and Critical Thinking (Projects, Problem-Solving)	15%

Homework/Practice Activities (Practice Activities, Review)	**5%**

Trimester Report Card Grade Keys

Trimester Grade Key **Grades 3-8**	
A+	**97-100**
A	**93-96**
B+	**89-92**
B	**85-88**
C+ **C** **D**	**80-84** **75-79** **70-74**
E	**69 and below**

Trimester Grade Key **Grades K-2**	
Consistently Developing	**93-100**
Making Progress	**75-92**
Support Needed	**74 and below**

NA	**Not Assessed at this time**

Trimester Grade Key Special 3-8	
Consistently Developing	**93-100**
Making Progress	**75-92**
Needs Improvement	**74 and below**
NA	**Not Assessed at this time**

Report Cards and Progress Reports

In the Archdiocese of Baltimore, students in pre-kindergarten through grade 8 will receive report cards three times a year, at the conclusion of each trimester. In addition, the school will send progress reports home for grades 3-8 during the middle of each trimester.

Trimester 1 ends - November 14
Trimester 2 ends - February 27
Trimester 3 ends (except attendance) - June 9

Reports Cards will be sent home electronically each trimester and the dates for each distribution will be listed in Office Notes.

Honor Roll Policy

All Archdiocesan schools shall honor academic achievement with an Honor Roll based on specific criteria. The purpose is to recognize and encourage high academic achievement and positive contributions to the learning environment in accordance with the values of the Catholic archdiocese.

All Archdiocesan K-8 Schools that recognize Honor Roll students each trimester for students in grades must follow the minimum requirements below:

Students in grades 6-8 who demonstrate high academic achievement and who positively impact the learning environment are placed on Honor Roll based on the following criteria:

- **Principal's Honor Roll –** All A's and Satisfactory or better in all special classes, standards, effort, and conduct including unstructured time
- **Second Honors –** All A's and B's (more A's than B's) and Satisfactory or better in all special classes, standards, effort, and conduct including unstructured time.

Promotion Requirements

Students are promoted to the next grade upon successful completion of all subjects each year.

Retention

Policy INST 5.0) Students who do not successfully complete the required educational program may be retained at the current grade level. This decision is made by the Principal in consultation with the parents after following the timeline described below.

Teachers should communicate with parents on a regular basis regarding the child's progress. By mid-February, the teacher, principal, parents, (and student) review the student's work performance to date and discuss his/her educational needs for the remainder of the year and the possibility of failure and/or retention. This meeting is followed by a written communication to the parents reviewing the content of the meeting, including the educational plan. Students may also be retained for severe attendance and tardy issues during the school year, as determined by the school in consultation with the Department of Catholic Schools.

Graduation Requirements

Students in eighth grade who successfully complete the course of study as outlined by the Archdiocese of Baltimore, will be awarded a diploma at the end of the school year. An eighth-grade student must be in good academic, financial and behavior standing to participate in the end of the year graduation activities.

Power School Access

(Policy INST 4.0) It is also the parents' responsibility to obtain their passwords for PowerSchool and to monitor grades for their children in grades 3-8. Parents will be contacted by the teacher by mid-trimester with an interim report. In some cases, where there is a significant drop in grades or performance, a conference may be required.

Communication

In the best interest of students, the school welcomes and encourages communication between parents and teachers. Whenever a situation occurs that causes concern, the concern should be addressed first at the level at which the situation arose. Teachers are seen by appointment. Please contact them directly by email to schedule a mutually convenient time to meet.

Parents whose phone numbers are unlisted must give the school either the unlisted number or a number where the parent(s) can be reached. It is essential that the school have this information in case of an emergency. It will be kept in the strictest confidence. Any change of phone number or home address is to be given to the school office and homeroom teacher immediately.

The Archdiocese of Baltimore (AOB) will be using **Bright Arrow**, a reliable student information system fully embedded within PowerSchool. Parents will be able to customize and update their emergency/contact subscriber information once logged into PowerSchool. Parents can also select preferences as to how they would like to receive important information from St. Joseph School via email, text message or voice mail.

The youngest or only child in your family attending St. Joseph School will act as the carrier for all school notices. The school calendar, principal's notes, as well as news from the teachers and nurses will be sent electronically. Please be certain all telephone numbers and e-mail addresses are up to date through Parent Access. We ask that you also check the school's website regularly. Parents may also be notified of coming events, schedule changes, etc., via phone calls or emails.

<u>Other Student Services</u>
At St. Joseph School, we are committed to supporting the diverse learning needs of our students. We offer a range of services to help every child thrive academically.

- Speech Services: Students who qualify to receive speech services through Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS) are able to receive those services on-site at St. Joseph School, in coordination with BCPS specialists.

- Reading Support: Our Reading Specialist works with students beginning in **Kindergarten** to provide targeted reading instruction and support. This may include small-group or one-on-one sessions, depending on student needs.

These services reflect our commitment to nurturing the whole child and helping all learners reach their God-given potential.

Learning Support and the Student Advocacy Team (SAT) Process

If a child is not progressing academically, the school may ask the parents/guardians to initiate, or the parents/guardians may initiate on their own, the process to request a professional consultation and/or evaluation through the local public school system.

In the public school system, the evaluative process is generally called the IEP Process (Individual Educational Plan) and begins when a parent/guardian calls 'Child Find'. Following the initial phone call to the Local Educational Agency (LEA) Child Find, parents/guardians are given an initial meeting date within 30 days.

(Policy INST 4.1) At this initial meeting, parents/guardians and school faculty are invited to share their concerns, present information, and discuss whether an evaluation will take place. Student Advocacy Team members and particularly the student's teacher, are a vital part of the process.

If an evaluation is deemed warranted and takes place, recommendations and an academic plan are developed by the Student Advocacy Team and given to the parents/guardians at the summative meeting following the academic evaluation. If such a plan is developed and the test results determine that there is a need for accommodations and/or modifications within a student's learning environment, the school administrator will consult with the parents/guardians to determine what accommodations, resources, plans, and school placements may be implemented. When appropriate, a Student Accommodation Plan is developed at your child's Catholic School.

Field Trips

(Policy ADM 26.0) Field trips are considered an integral part of the school's educational program and a valuable learning experience for students. Field trips are scheduled at various times during the school year. In advance of the trip, a permission form, required by the Archdiocesan Department of Catholic Schools, is sent home. A student will be permitted to attend the trip only if the permission form is signed by the parent/guardian and returned to the teacher by the specified date along with any fee. For field trips, uniform guidelines for uniform/dress code will be outlined on the permission slip.

If, for some extraordinary reason, a student is unable to participate, the student is expected to attend school on that day and fees must still be paid since the rates we are quoted reflect total participation.

Work will be supplied by the teacher(s) and the student will be assigned a classroom in which to work under the supervision of a staff member. If a student is unable to attend because of illness, we cannot promise a refund. Parents must notify the teacher if a child will not participate in the field trip experience. Students who are kept home from the trip will be marked absent. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are encouraged to participate as chaperones on field

trips as the need arises. However, because of safety and liability factors, pre-school siblings and other school-age siblings are not allowed. The school does not permit parents who are not selected as chaperones to join the group at the trip destination as this creates confusion. All students are required to travel to and from the field trip using the transportation that is provided. All chaperones are required to comply with the school's policies, to adhere to the Archdiocesan Child and Youth Protection policies, and to complete VIRTUS training in advance of the field trip. Any parents who are driving on field trips will have additional requirements.

Exams

Students in middle school take exams twice a year. These exams are cumulative in nature. In order to assist students in preparation, each teacher prepares and disseminates a study guide which provides information on content and format. Students will also have in-class review days as well as outside of class review work to assist them in their preparation. Exams are given in the following subjects: Foreign Language, Language Arts, Math, Religion, Science, and Social Studies. Exams are included in the grade for the trimester when it is taken.

Summer Work

Requirements for mandatory summer work in various subject areas are given to the students in June. This work is to be completed by the student and submitted to the teacher by the date indicated. Continuity in skills prepares the child for the beginning of the school year. Students new to SJS in grades 3-8 are also to complete cursive work they receive.

Summer School

In May, written communication will be forwarded to families of students needing to attend summer school. Students who are required to attend because of failure must have official records of summer school achievement forwarded to St. Joseph School no later than August 15. Any student who fails to succeed in completing summer school requirements for promotion to the next grade or fails to submit the necessary records by August 15 will be retained.

Tutoring

Parents should notify the classroom teacher if their child is being tutored outside of St. Joseph School. Tutoring will be most effective when the tutor communicates frequently not only with the parent but also with the child's teacher.

Admissions

Application Process

(Policy ADM 3.0; ADM 3.1; ADM 3.2; ADM 4.0) Students must be in good standing (financial,

academic, and behavioral) to be accepted into a Catholic school. Parents or guardians must provide pertinent information, including required forms for admission as well as additional information that may assist the school staff with your child(ren).

Re-Registration of Current Students

Families of students intending to return to St. Joseph School for the next school year must complete the online re-registration process including a payment of $500 per student for the intent to enroll deposit during the registration period. Placements will not be held for students not re-registered during this time. Families who have completed the re-registration process and applied for tuition assistance through FACTS will be considered for SJS tuition assistance.

Re-registrations are accepted contingent upon fulfillment of the present year's financial obligations; student's satisfactory academic records, acceptable conduct and attendance/tardiness records; family's compliance with school policies; and appropriate behavior (parents/guardians and children) in the school setting and at school sponsored activities.

Payment of the re-registration holds placement until the first tuition payment is due. Thereafter, places will not be held unless tuition payments are received as scheduled. Re-registration/Registration fees are non-refundable.

Students Applying to St. Joseph School for the First Time

New families complete the application form and submit it with the appropriate fee and copies of the required records online through Finalsite (accessible through the school website). All registration paperwork is due for each student to be enrolled. Screening in math and reading will be conducted for students applying to Kindergarten – Grade 8. Families may be requested to interview with a member of the Administration as part of the admission process, and students may be invited to "shadow" at St. Joseph School for a day. Once all paperwork is submitted and the student has been screened, an admissions decision will be rendered within two two weeks. Families are then given the next steps for enrollment. Applications are accepted beginning September 1 for the next school year.

Placement and Probationary Period

New students are initially placed using the following: School administered placement tests, teacher recommendation form (from the sending school), progress reports, and standardized test results.

In order to make sure that the school is a good fit for the student, all new students are given a one-year probationary period. Parents will be notified throughout the year if the student's actions and academics are not meeting expectations. Each student's academic and behavioral

progress is evaluated to determine if the student should remain at St. Joseph School. The probationary period is a time for review and observation of a student's behavior and academic qualifications. To properly satisfy the behavioral and academic needs of all students, the needs of new students must be compatible with the currently available resources of the school. The Administrative Team reserves the power to extend this probationary period if necessary.

If space is available, students are accepted according to the following priorities:

1. Children applying to kindergarten must be 5 years old by September 1st 2. Siblings of students currently enrolled
3. Children of parents who are enrolled and active parishioners of St. Joseph Parish, the Catholic Community of St. Francis Xavier, Our Lady of Grace Parish, or other Catholic parishes
4. All other children

(Policy INST 3.0) Students are initially placed using the results of the following:

- School administered placement test
- Teacher recommendation (from sending school)
- Report cards
- Standardized test results

Extenuating Needs of Students

St. Joseph School makes every effort to meet each student's individual instructional needs. However, we recognize that some students require resources that are outside the scope of those available at St. Joseph School. If the psychological, emotional or other needs of the student are beyond the professional expertise of the faculty, or adversely affect the learning environment, the administration will require that the student undergo an appropriate evaluation by a qualified professional. The professional will be expected to provide the school with a diagnosis, recommendations, and a projected treatment plan.

The administration, in its sole discretion, reserves the right to require any student to transfer to a more appropriate educational school setting, if the administration deems it to be in the best interests of the student and/or St. Joseph School. The administration also has the right to require the withdrawal of any student who is unable to comply with St. Joseph School standards. Please refer to the Finance section for information regarding refund of tuition.

Waiting List

This written statement should be shared with prospective families during the admission

process. St. Joseph School must omit social security numbers and bank account information prior to sharing information.

"I authorize the St. Joseph School to share my information with other Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Baltimore if my child is denied admission or waitlisted due to space/capacity limits and authorize other Archdiocesan schools to contact me."

High School Admissions and Visitation Policy

Eighth grade students are allowed up to 3 days for shadow visits to local area Catholic High Schools. While these days are the only excused days off, students will be marked absent since they will not be in the building.

Non-Discrimination Statement

(Policy: ADM 1.0; ADM 2.0) The State of Maryland requires the following statement in the Student Handbook:

"*It is the policy of the State of Maryland that all public and publicly funded schools and school programs operate in compliance with:*

> *(1) Title VI of the Federal Civil Rights Act of 1964; and*
>
> *(2) Title 26, Subtitle 7 of the Education Article of the Maryland Code, which states that public and publicly funded schools and programs may not:*
>
> > *(i) Discriminate against a current student, a prospective student, or the parent or guardian of a current or prospective student on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability.*
> >
> > *(ii) Refuse enrollment of a prospective student, expel a current student, or withhold privileges from a current student, a prospective student, or the parent or guardian of a current or prospective student because of an individual's race, ethnicity, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability; or*
> >
> > *(iii) Discipline, invoke a penalty against, or take any other retaliatory action against a student or parent or guardian of a student who files a complaint alleging that the program or school discriminated against the student, regardless of the outcome of the complaint."*

The State of Maryland does not require a nonpublic school that is religiously affiliated to

enroll, retain, or extend privileges to a student or prospective student who does not meet the usual and regular qualifications, requirements, and standards of the program or school or to adopt any rule, regulation, or policy that conflicts with the program or school's religious or moral teachings provided that the denial, rule, regulation, or policy is not based on discrimination on the grounds of race, ethnicity, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability.

Requests for reasonable accommodations for a student with a disability may be directed to the School Counselor or the Assistant Principal.

Religion is required for each year a student attends St. Joseph School. All students enrolled in St. Joseph School must attend religion classes and services. We will always teach and act consistent with the tenets of the Catholic Church.

The school reserves the right to deny attendance to anyone whose behavior is contrary to the teachings and ideals of the school or whose behavior or attitude is disruptive to the functioning of the student body.

Transfers/Withdrawals

In case of transfer/withdrawal of a student from the school, parents should contact the Enrollment Manager (enrollment@sjpray.org) to assist with the process.

St. Joseph School reserves the right to refuse to provide any official school record, including report cards and certificates to a parent or other educational institution until all tuition, fees, and other obligations to St. Joseph School are satisfied in full.

Parents of eighth grade students are required to sign a release form so that scholastic and health records may be forwarded when requested by the new school. When families enroll in a new school, that school will send SJS a signed release for us to release records. Records will be sent via first class mail and will not be released unless proper forms are signed. Records will not be sent via email. Records will not be released to parents/guardians. If a fourth or subsequent request is made, families will be assessed a $20 fee for each request.

For grades Pre-K through 7, there is a $30.00 fee for transcripts, recommendations, and/or evaluations. This fee is assessed for each request and must be paid at the time of the request for transcript, recommendation, and/or evaluation requested. The fee is to be paid in cash or check at the time of the request. If a fee is paid by check, additional time will be required for processing. Processing of transfers and withdrawals takes 10 business days once all necessary paperwork and fees have been received.

Assessment Program

Standardized Testing

(Policy INST 3.1) All Archdiocesan schools administer the achievement test designated by the Department of Catholic Schools in prescribed grades.

Pre-Kindergarten 4 and Kindergarten Students

(Policy ADM 3.1) Pre-kindergarten 4 and Kindergarten students are administered the BRIGANCE developmental screening in the fall and/or spring. Maryland State Department of Education states all children attending regulated care and early childhood educational programs must have a developmental screening conducted within ninety days of enrollment. SJS will utilize the Brigance Early Childhood screening. In addition to the Brigance, parents will complete the parent feedback form, All About Me, regarding your child's skills and behaviors. This form is distributed at the beginning of the year. The teacher will also complete progress reports, which are distributed three times per school year. The skills assessed reflect sound growth and developmental expectations of each age as determined by the Archdiocese of Baltimore. Observations are conducted on students throughout the year. These observations, be they narrative, anecdotal, and/or checklists, are used in conjunction with each child's progress report to help with lesson planning.

Elementary Students

(Policy INST 3.2) Elementary school students in grades 2-8 are administered the NWEA MAP Assessment three times a year to measure growth. Grades 3,5 and 7 also take the Science Assessment each Spring. Parents are given feedback about their child's performance at the end of each trimester.

Assessment of Child/Youth Religious Education (ACRE)

(Policy INST 3.3) All students in grades 5 and 8 are given the ACRE (Assessment of Child/Youth Religious Education) the spring of each school year. This assessment gives information for growth to each school as it assesses how well the religious education program is forming Christian disciples. ACRE is a school assessment; therefore no individual student scores are obtained from the assessment.

Attendance and Student Records

Arrival and Dismissal

School is in session from 8:10 a.m. to 3:10 p.m. for pre-kindergarten through 8th grade. Students will be allowed in school buildings beginning at 7:50 a.m. Parents, please be aware that there is no adult supervision for your children prior to 7:50 a.m. and therefore, no student may be dropped off at school before 7:50 a.m. Any student who is not in their homeroom by 8:10 a.m. is considered late and must report to the office before going to their homeroom in order to receive a late slip.

Students are only to be released to custodial parents or those adults listed on emergency contact forms. Students are never allowed to leave school in an UBER, Lyft, or any private transportation company.

All pre-kindergarten, kindergarten and first grade students will arrive and be dismissed on Southside. Staff are available to assist with drop off and pick up. Dismissal for all students is to the designated lot. Carpools are to pick up at the location of the youngest student in the carpool.

- PK, K and 1st – Dismiss to Southside
- 2nd- 8th – Dismiss to Quarry

Parents are required to follow the times stipulated when dropping off or picking up students. The school is not responsible for supervision of students before or after the times stated above. The school is not liable for any injuries or accidents which may occur before or after the times stated above. If the student is participating in a scheduled, supervised activity before or after the hours noted above, specific arrangements must be made for drop-off and/or pick-up at the designated times. If children are participating in before or after school care, parents must comply with the rules established by the program for drop-off and pick-up.

Absences

(Policy ADM 1.0) Regular attendance is considered essential for learning at St. Joseph School.

Students need to develop the work habits and responsibilities required of all of us as we go through life. When a student is absent from school, a parent/legal guardian must report the absence to the school through the website (Report an Absence) by 8:30am to report the reason for absence. All absences and tardiness become part of a student's permanent record.

There are regularly scheduled vacations and holidays in the school calendar, which is based on mandated instructional days by the State of Maryland and the Archdiocese of Baltimore. Please check these ahead of time when scheduling trips or doctor's appointments. Permission may not be given by any teacher or administrator for students to be absent for extra vacations or holidays. These decisions are the responsibility of the parents.

Prolonged unauthorized absences can and will affect students' grades and academic standing. The school cannot be responsible for the consequences of these absences. The teacher's instruction cannot be replicated. Missed work and assignments may only be obtained upon return and provided that missed work assignments may not be available for all absences, as they are dependent upon the nature of the work. Teachers are not responsible for creating alternative assignments or experiences for absent students.

Tardiness (arriving at school late or leaving school early) is another action that affects a student's readiness to learn. Coming in and/or leaving early, not only disrupts the educational learning for your child, but also those of other students in the class. Parents will be notified in writing for 5 or more tardies (arriving at school late or leaving school early) and a conference may be requested by the administrative team to address the issue and consequences.

Students who are absent from school may not participate in any after school or evening school sponsored events such as sports, dances, and possibly field trips. After 7 student absences in a trimester, a parent, teacher and administrator conference needs to take place to discuss the potential educational impact on the students academic standing.

After an absence and he/she returns to school, the student must bring a written note to his/her homeroom teacher signed by a parent/legal guardian stating the reason for absence. The school reserves the right to require a doctor's note for absences due to illness or injury or need for assessment/evaluation. A child may not return to school until he/she is well enough to participate in all school activities including recess.

If a student will be out of school for an extended period, whether continuous or intermittent, parents should consult with the administration regarding appropriate support of the student in fulfilling the school curriculum or alternative arrangements such as home and hospital services through the local public school district.

Per the AOB policy, a student marked absent for more than 20 instructional days in one school year is considered excessively absent and may result in the student being retained.

The administration reserves the right to request a conference with parents of the student with excessive absences and tardies at any point during the school year to make parents and students aware of the possible consequences of not attending school on a consistent basis. Child Protective Services (CPS) may be called due to excessive absences.

Truancy

(Policy SS 1.0; SS 1.1) Students in Catholic Schools must comply with Maryland State law concerning compulsory attendance. The law requires regular attendance during the entire school year. Students are held accountable for time(s) they are absent from school. A principal may excuse a student for a necessary absence.

Regular school attendance is expected in order for students to achieve their academic potential. Each student's attendance is carefully recorded and permanently retained. Therefore, absence for reasons such as a vacation is strongly discouraged. Excessive absence has a serious impact on the student's academic performance. The purpose of compulsory attendance is to ensure the continuous development and progress of the child's education. Unlawful absences are considered truant. The school informs parents that if truancy persists, the public authorities will be notified.

Truancy is defined as a student absenting him/herself from school without parent/legal guardian permission or leaving school grounds without permission during the school day. Truancy may result in disciplinary action up to and including suspension or expulsion and may be reported to the Maryland State Department of Education.

Lateness & Assignments

Students may enter their homerooms at 7:50 am. The school day begins at 8:10 am. Any student who is not in their homeroom by 8:10 am is considered late and must report to the office for a late slip. Tardiness is entered on a student's permanent record. It is the responsibility of the student to check with the homeroom teacher to receive the necessary communication or work that may have been missed due to lateness.

Early Departure & Late Arrivals

The school discourages early departures and requests that families arrange medical and dental appointments, etc. after school hours, on early dismissal days**,** or during vacation periods. Check the calendar for days when school is not in session. Students that arrive after 8:10 a.m. but prior to 9 a.m. will be marked tardy for the day. Students who arrive between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. will be marked a half day absence even if a student leaves and returns. Students who leave between 2 – 2:30 p.m. will be marked as early dismissal. **Students will not be called to the office for dismissal until the parent/guardian arrives and signs them out**. **Students may not be picked up for early dismissal after 2:30 pm on full days and 11:30 am on half-days. Students will not be dismissed after 2:10 p.m. on Mass practice**

days. Students will not be dismissed during prayer services or school Mass once their class has transitioned to the church. Times for any late arrival or early dismissal even if the student returns will be recorded in PowerSchool for official attendance purposes.

Regular Dismissal

The homeroom teachers will dismiss beginning at 3:10 p.m. daily (12 p.m. on half days), according to carpool lines. If you wish your child to be dismissed at another time or with a different carpool his/her homeroom teacher must have a written note or email. We strive for maximum security and safety for you, the children, safeties and faculty. Dismissal is under the supervision of teachers, safeties, and a crossing guard. All are expected to cooperate with them at all times.

Depending on the number of cars picking up on Southside in the afternoon, a second wave for pick-up may be necessary. Please stay in your cars behind the cones and wait for the direction of the staff for pick-up. Pets must stay in the vehicle for the safety of all.

No cars will be permitted to move/exit any lot until directed to do so by the staff. Any student whose carpool has not arrived must report to the designated waiting area until the parking lot has been cleared. We ask that all drivers always maintain a very minimal speed and exercise extreme caution when driving on the parish and school property. Please be considerate of the people who are ensuring the safety of your children. Please drop off and pick up your child only at the designated areas.

Location & Access to Student's Records

(Policy ADM 5.1) Student's records are maintained in the school office or a designated administrative area. Access to records is governed by the Records Policy.

Records Policy (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act)

(Policy ADM 5.0) St. Joseph School *complies with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), which is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. In general, FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to education records. (The rights granted to parents under FERPA automatically pass to the student when the student turns 18 or enrolls in college.) These rights and related procedures of [school name] are as follows:*

Parents have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the School. Parents should submit to [insert title of appropriate school official] a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The School will make arrangements for access and notify the parent of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

Parents have the right to request that the School correct records they believe are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights. Parents who wish to request

an amendment of the student's records should write to the Principal and clearly identify the part of the record they believe is inaccurate or misleading and the information they believe should be included in a corrected record. If the School decides not to amend the record as requested, the School will notify the parent of the decision and the parent's right to request a hearing.

Parents generally have the right to consent in writing to disclosures of information from a student's education record. However, there are certain exceptions to the consent requirement, including disclosures under the following conditions:

To School officials who have a legitimate educational interest in the information. A school official is a person employed by the School or the Archdiocese as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff); a person or company 42 *with whom the School has contracted to provide a service (e.g., attorney); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his/her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his/her professional responsibilities or duties to the School.*

- *To other schools to which a student is transferring.*
- *In connection with financial aid under certain circumstances.*
- *To specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes.*
- *To organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school.*
- *To accrediting organizations.*
- *In order to comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena.*
- *To appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies.*

The School also may disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without written consent unless a parent objects in writing. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow the School to include this type of information in certain publications. Examples of such publications include a playbill, showing the student's role in a drama production; the annual yearbook; honor roll or other recognition lists; graduation programs; and sports activity sheets. The School has designated the following as directory information:

- *Student's name*
- *Participation in officially recognized activities and sports*
- *Address*
- *Telephone listing*
- *Electronic mail address*
- *Photograph*
- *Honors and awards received*
- *Dates of attendance*
- *Grade level*

Parents who do not want the School to disclose the above directory information without their prior written consent must notify the School Secretary in writing by September 1st.

- *A log must be maintained of each request for access to and each disclosure of educational record information other than disclosure to parents or students 18 or older or school officials. The log should contain the name of the person(s), the date, and the legitimate interests the person had in requesting or obtaining the information.*
- *Parents have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by St. Joseph School to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are: Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202-8520.*

Recommendation, Transcript, and Referral Request Policy (All Grades) All requests for teacher referrals (electronic or hard copy), letters of recommendation, or transcripts must originate with the Enrollment Office. Please notify the Enrollment Office, (enrollment@sjpray.org), if you have received a request. Recommendation letters, referrals, and transcripts are only released after the parent completes a request form and submits the applicable fee ($30). These documents will be released directly to the school and not released to / shared with the parent. This is all tracked by the Enrollment Office. This does not apply to documentation associated with the guidance office or Student Accommodation Plan.

Discipline

Statement on Philosophy of Discipline

St. Joseph School strives to develop responsible, courteous, self-disciplined boys and girls whose pride in themselves, their parents, their school, and their community is reflected in their behavior. The development of such young people requires a consistent practice of thoughtful, responsible behavior during these formative years. Students are made aware that they are an

integral part of the faith community and that their actions affect themselves as well as the entire community. The ultimate purpose is to develop true Christian character and a sense of responsibility: to establish an atmosphere conducive to academic excellence; and to protect the welfare of the individual, as well as the school community.

Students may be disciplined for conduct that occurs on school premises or at school-sponsored events, or for other conduct that adversely affects the interests or reputation of the school regardless of where the conduct occurs.

Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS)

The Archdiocese of Baltimore has implemented an evidence and research-based anti-bullying Program, Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS). PBIS is a comprehensive framework in which schools focus on our Christ-centered teachings and values to create nurturing, safe, positive, and supportive learning environments. Consistent school-wide expectations are visible throughout the school and students' positive behavior is acknowledged and celebrated. The PBIS framework adopts behavioral interventions into an integrated continuum that is designed to enhance academic and behavioral outcomes for every student. PBIS is an approach for assisting school personnel in adopting and organizing evidence-based behavioral interventions that enhance academic and social behavior outcomes for all students. PBIS is a prevention-oriented way for school personnel to organize evidence-based practices, improve their implementation of those practices, and maximize academic and social behavior outcomes for students. Effective classroom management and preventative school discipline are essential pieces for supporting teaching and learning. PBIS works to create a positive and safe school environment to maximize the success of all our students. Positive and preventative strategies are emphasized for all students.

Consequences based on strategies for misbehavior are reviewed to understand why the problem behavior is occurring. These strategies will enable us to identify and remove triggers that are causing the problem behavior while instituting consequences that will maintain acceptable behaviors. Positive and preventative strategies are emphasized for all students.

Students and staff at SJS are expected to ROAR in all that they do.

We show ***R***espect as Jesus did.
We serve ***O***thers as Jesus did.
We have a positive ***A***ttitude as Jesus did.
We are ***R***esponsible as Jesus was.

At the beginning of the school year, expectations concerning acceptable behaviors in the classrooms, hallways, during lunch and recess as well as the uniform code guidelines will be discussed in each classroom. Students can earn individual rewards for modeling appropriate behavior. There will also be times throughout the school year when the students work towards a positive grade level or school-wide reward for behavior. Consequences for inappropriate behaviors will be issued and tracked by the administration to understand what may be causing the occurrence of such behaviors and ways to prevent them.

PBIS focuses on positive reinforcement, however if a student chooses to disregard or fails to comply with the school rules, consequences will be issued. When a student initially does not comply with the school rules teachers will utilize strategies within the classroom to address the misbehavior. If the behavior continues or is deemed significant, an office referral will be made. Documentation will then be sent home by the administration for parent/guardian signatures and is to be returned the next school day. Teachers may also communicate with families regarding behavior.

To maintain a positive learning environment and standards that are consistent with our Christian philosophy, it is essential that students exhibit a sense of responsibility and respect for themselves as well as others (Listed below are some behaviors that are unacceptable:

Disrespect in manner and/or language to each other, including peers, teachers, faculty and staff

- Rowdiness
- Using the property of others without permission
- Dishonesty
- Disruptive Behavior
- Failure to have necessary supplies for class work
- Dangerous play, actions, or behaviors
- Rudeness
- Vulgarity
- Dress code violations.
- Gum
- Harassment of any kind by word or action including but not limited to digital harassment
- Possession or consumption of any drug or look-alike drug while at school or while attending a school function

- Possession or consumption of alcohol while at school or while attending a school function
- Possession of knives/weapons or look-alike knives/weapons
- Possession of pornographic material(s) including distribution of both physical and digital

- Smoking/using matches/vaping/gummies or possession of any of these items
- Destruction of school property
- Leaving school property without permission
- Theft or extortion
- Fighting or threats of violence
- Public displays of affection
- Harassment

After school activities, while riding on buses to sports games or other school or parish sponsored activities are included in the definition of on-campus conduct.

Students may be disciplined for conduct that occurs on school premises or at school-sponsored events, or for other conduct that adversely affects the interests or reputation of the school regardless of where the conduct occurs.

When it comes to social media, whether posted during school hours, and on school property, or while occurring outside of the school property, if it creates a substantial disruption, the school can take action to support the school environment.

Generally, the teacher will deal with infractions. Should circumstances warrant, the parent and/or the Administration involved will be consulted. In cases of serious or repeated violations, students may be subject to disciplinary suspension or expulsion.

The school's fair procedure to be used in cases of possible suspension or expulsion is as outlined in Policy SS 2.0; SS 2.1; SS 2.2. The Principal will exercise his/her discretion whether the suspension should be served in-school or at home.

While on suspension, the student is still responsible for missed work. After the specified amount of time for suspension, which shall not exceed three consecutive school days, (unless approved in consultation with the superintendent) the student and the parent(s)/guardian(s) will meet with the Administration for reinstatement. The Administration reserves the right to determine the conditions for reinstatement.

An expelled student forfeits all privileges of the St. Joseph School student. The Administrator reserves the right not to re-admit an expelled student later. If a student is expelled, the student is entitled to a prompt review procedure established by the Department of Catholic Schools.

A written request for review must be submitted to the Superintendent of Catholic Schools within 10 working days of the notice of intent to expel. In some cases, parents are given the option to withdraw the student in lieu of expulsion.

The school reserves the right to deny attendance to anyone whose behavior is contrary to the teachings and ideals of the school or whose behavior or attitude is disruptive to the functioning of the student body. Generally, the teacher will deal with infractions and any other types of behavior, not specifically stated in this handbook, but which the Administration considers to be acts of serious disruptive behavior. Should circumstances warrant, the parent and/or the Administration involved will be consulted.

After receiving three school-home notes in a trimester, a detention will be given. Three or more detentions in a trimester will result in a suspension.

An immediate detention is warranted for:

- Physical actions that present a physical danger to oneself or others - bullying/harassment
- Cheating, plagiarism, stealing
- Destruction of property belonging to the school or any individual
- Threatening behavior or words or those deemed as possibly threatening by the Administration
- Violation of cell phone or technology policy
- Other behavior deemed serious by the Administration.

Detentions will be served during recess the week following the issue of the detention or as scheduled by the Assistant Principal. All detention slips must be signed by the parent. Students will have a writing assignment and spend the time in silence and reflection. If a student fails to report for detention, an additional detention will be issued. Students may *not* miss detention for any extra-curricular activity. Students will serve detention on numerous days to serve the full time requirement of 60 minutes.

In all disciplinary actions, circumstances relating to an offense may influence the action taken by the school. Therefore, no action described in a discipline code is absolute. It is the responsibility of the Administrator/teacher to make judgments in extenuating circumstances. The goal is to be fair and reasonable as we teach children to be responsible for their actions. Parents need to support this policy in order for it to be successful and consistent.

Search and Seizure

(Policy ADM 18.1) St. Joseph School reserves the right to search school property (e.g.,

lockers, desks), a student's belongings, and areas under the student's control to enforce school policies, rules and regulations or otherwise to preserve a safe and orderly learning environment.

Conflict Situations

Conflicts are a normal and healthy part of living and growing. The Administration will implement acceptable conflict resolution techniques to work towards a solution.

Bullying Policy

(Policy ADM 2.0; SS 6.0) *Bullying, harassment, or intimidation (as defined below) of any student is prohibited in all Archdiocese of Baltimore Schools. Retaliation or reprisal against anyone who reports such behaviors or participates in an investigation of a report is also prohibited. Such behaviors are contrary to school life in a Christ-centered community, which respects the dignity and uniqueness of all of God's children. To foster a school environment where all students are educated in a safe and caring atmosphere, all Archdiocesan schools will follow established procedures for bullying prevention, intervention, and response.*

Harassment of students on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, religion, disability or handicap, gender identity or expression, and sexual orientation are also addressed under the Archdiocesan Student Harassment Policy in the Code of Conduct. Suspected abuse or neglect of students is addressed under the Policy for the Protection of Children and Youth.

"Bullying, harassment, or intimidation" means intentional conduct, including written, verbal, or physical conduct or an intentional electronic communication, that:

a. Creates a hostile educational environment by substantially interfering with a student's educational benefits, opportunities, or performance or with a student's physical or psychological well-being and:

i. Is motivated by an actual or a perceived personal characteristic including race, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, ancestry, physical attributes, socioeconomic status, familial status, or physical or mental ability or disability; or

ii. Is sexual in nature; or

iii. Is threatening or seriously intimidating; and

b. Occurs on school property, at a school activity or event, or on a school bus, or substantially disrupts the orderly operation of the school.

Electronic technology means a communication transmitted by means of an electronic device,

including a telephone, cellular phone, computer, pager, gaming device, tablet, etc.

Retaliation means an act of reprisal or revenge, i.e., getting back at a person for an act he/she committed (such as reporting misconduct).

The Principal or designee will notify the parent/guardian of the alleged victim of a report of bullying, harassment or intimidation within three (3) business days after the incident is reported. The principal or designee will notify the parent/guardian of the alleged perpetrator of a report of bullying, harassment or intimidation within five (5) business days after the incident is reported

Reporting forms are located in the main office and on the school's website.

Harassment Policy

(Policy ADM 2.0) *It is the policy of the Archdiocese to prohibit harassment on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, religion, age, disability or handicap, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, or protected activity (i.e., opposition to prohibited discrimination or participation in the complaint process) in its education programs and activities. Each Catholic school shall adhere to this policy with respect to students. (Employees are similarly protected from harassment by a separate Archdiocesan policy.) A school is not required to adopt any rule, regulation, or policy that conflicts with its religious or moral teachings.*

A. Scope

This policy applies to all students in Archdiocesan elementary, middle and secondary schools. The Archdiocese neither condones nor tolerates harassment of students at school, at school-related activities or functions, or in any school-related setting. Harassment of students, whether engaged in by other students, teachers, administrators, or others, is prohibited. Violation of this Policy is grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment or suspension or expulsion from school, depending on the nature and severity of the offense and the individual's disciplinary record.

B. <u>Prohibited Conduct</u>

a. For purposes of this Policy, "harassment" means verbal or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of his or her race, color, sex, national origin, religion, age, disability or handicap, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, or protected activity, that:

i. Has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.

ii. Has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's academic performance;

iii. Otherwise adversely affects an individual's educational opportunities. b. Harassing conduct includes, but is not limited to, epithets, slurs, negative stereotyping, or threatening, intimidating or hostile acts that relate to race, color, sex, national origin, religion, age, handicap or disability, gender identity or expression, or sexual orientation. "Sexual" harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for educational decisions or has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.

C. <u>Procedure</u>

a. Any person who believes that a student is being subjected to harassment should immediately report the harassment to any one or more of the following individuals: the student's teacher, the Principal of the school, the Superintendent of Catholic Schools. A bullying/harassment form should be filled out.

b. Individuals are encouraged to report harassment early, before it becomes severe or pervasive, so that preventive action can be taken. All complaints will be investigated promptly, thoroughly and impartially, and will remain confidential to the extent possible.

c. Any retaliation, reprisals, or intimidation, whether by the alleged harasser or from another source, directed toward the complaining party or anyone else as a result of the filing or investigation of a harassment complaint is considered a serious violation of this Policy and should be reported immediately.

d. Once the investigation is complete, the school will take immediate and appropriate corrective action when it determines that this Policy has been violated. The complaining party and the complained-of party will be advised of the investigation's findings and conclusions. A report of the findings will be forwarded to the Department of Catholic Schools.

Financial Obligations

104.10 Financial: Release of Tuition Obligation/Tuition Refund

All schools, both elementary and secondary must have a release of tuition obligation or a tuition refund policy that is detailed on the Tuition & Fees page of the website as well as in the parent handbook and tuition contract.

Procedures

Should a family enroll in an AOB school, and later decide to withdraw, responsibility for tuition payment may remain with the family to compensate the school for expenses already incurred as well as the potential lost opportunity to fill that seat with another student. The amount of tuition obligation is dependent on the date of withdrawal. Please note that enrollment deposits, whether applied against tuition or charged as a separate fee and made at the time of contract signing are non-refundable and non-transferable regardless of the date of withdrawal.

Elementary School Release or Refunds

- Date of Withdrawal after June 1st: Family Tuition Obligation is 25% of annual tuition and fees
- Date of Withdrawal after First Day of School: Family Tuition Obligation is 50% of annual tuition and fees
- Date of Withdrawal after start of Second Trimester: Family Tuition Obligation is 100% of annual tuition and fees

The basis for the refund policies above is the following:

- Billed vs. Paid - The refund should be calculated based on the amount billed for the school year not the amount already paid. That is why the term release of obligation is used in addition to tuition refund. If the amount is calculated based on what has been paid to date, families who withdraw on the same date will be responsible for a different tuition than those who are on a different payment schedule.
- 25% - School purchased textbooks and supplies as well as completed other administrative tasks based on completed registration. Retaining 25% of the billed tuition is to cover these costs incurred. Since school has not yet started there is the potential that another student can be found to fill the seat, but the closer the withdrawal occurs to the first day of school the less likely that becomes, therefore that risk has also been factored into the obligation percentage.
- 100% – The teacher and the classroom are fixed costs and therefore sunk costs even when a student leaves early.

Registration Policy/Fees

(Policy FIN 1.0) When families enroll/re-enroll, the $500/per student fee is to be paid through Finalsite. That fee is applied in its entirety to the tuition balance for the student. This fee is non-refundable and non-transferrable, even within a family. Current families are asked to complete an intent to enroll and pay the fee in November. After that new families are able to complete their intent to enroll to secure a spot for their child.

Activity Fees

(Policy FIN 1.0) St. Joseph School does not have a general activity fee that is assessed to families.

Other Fees

(Policy FIN 1.0) St. Joseph School does not assess other fees to families.

Payment Schedule

(Policy FIN 1.0) All families must be enrolled with the FACTS Tuition Management Company and select from one of a variety of payment options. Tuition payments begin in August and may be made through March of the following year if needed. Tuition must be up to date in August in order for a student to begin the new school year. Should unforeseen circumstances interfere with the timely payment of tuition, it is necessary to communicate with the Finance Manager immediately (either in writing or by telephone) to prevent an interruption in a student's education.

Tuition Assistance, Tuition Grants, BOOST

(Policy FIN 2.0) Tuition assistance is available for students at St. Joseph School through the Archdiocese of Baltimore Tuition Assistance Program and through St. Joseph School. Information regarding participation and application will become available in the fall for the upcoming school year. The application deadline is usually mid to late February. These specific dates will be communicated to parents through the weekly Thursday email.

Delinquent Tuition

(Policy FIN 7.1) If a student transfers without having fulfilled all financial obligations, the school is only required to release health records and grade level to the new school. Copies of academic records will be released once all financial obligations are met. St. Joseph School reserves the right to exclude students from school if financial obligations, including, but not limited to, tuition payments, fundraising, or before and after care obligations are not met.

Withdrawal from School

(Policy FIN 7.0) A family with outstanding financial obligations to the current school is not to be accepted at another Catholic school within the Archdiocese of Baltimore. 53

Health

Maryland School Immunization Requirements

(Policy HE 2.0) All students in Catholic schools must be immunized in accordance with Maryland State Law. A child may not enter school unless he/she has submitted an official immunization record or other appropriate documentation of immunization status. The immunization record must have the month, day and year of each vaccination and be signed by a physician or health department official. In the case of religious objection or medical contra-indication, form DHMH 89, must be submitted and kept on file and be approved by the school. Exempted students are to be excluded from school if there is an outbreak of the disease for which they are not immunized.

Dispensing of Medication

(Policy HE 5.0) The administration of medication in school is discouraged. However, if a student's physician recommends that the student receive prescription or over-the-counter medication during the school day, a written order from the student's doctor is required. Medication can only be dispensed with a written order from the student's physician, specifying start and stop date. The original medication container or box for inhalers must be brought to the school. These containers or boxes should include the following: name of medication, directions for use, time for dispensing, name of doctor ordering the medication, date of prescription, expiration date as stated by the pharmacist, strength of medication/dosage, and student's name and grade.

An Over-the-Counter (OTC) medication form is required to be completed each year for EVERY student. This list of optional, discretionary medications are for occasional use only to alleviate your child's minor discomforts and avoid early dismissals when possible.

All OTC medication will be dispensed by the school nurse based on their clinical assessment. This form must be signed by a physician and parents are required to supply the school nurses with the medication. Families with multiple students in the school may supply one bag of stock medication, but one form will need to be completed for each student. If you do not want your child to receive OTC medications, indicate that option on the required form. No OTC or prescribed medication will be administered to a child without proper documentation on file in the Health Office.

A student is not permitted to possess, administer, or distribute medication, whether prescription

or non-prescription. Under special circumstances, individual students may be authorized by their physician to carry and self-administer emergency medications (e.g. inhalers, epi-pens). In this case, the school nurse must be consulted. All medication must be delivered to school by a parent/guardian.

Communicable Diseases

Parents must call the school if their child is diagnosed with a communicable disease. The school must notify their county Health Department. All reports are confidential. Reportable diseases include the following:

Measles – regular or German (Rubella) Tuberculosis
Meningitis Whooping Cough (Pertussis) Hepatitis Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever
Food Poisoning Human Immune Deficiency Mumps Virus Infection (AIDS and all
Adverse reactions to Pertussis Vaccine other symptomatic infections) Lyme disease
Animal bites / Rabies Chicken Pox (varicella) Influenza
Covid 19

Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)

Any student with drainage from the eyes associated with conjunctivitis (pink eye) must be kept at home until under treatment from a doctor. A doctor's note will be required for readmission to school.

Varicella (Chicken Pox)

Students who have chicken pox are excluded from school until all lesions are scabbed over.

CDC Guidelines - When to Keep Your Child at Home

The following guidelines compiled from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) may help you decide when to keep your child at home**.** The school nurse also uses these guidelines to determine when you will be called to pick your child up from school. This information applies to all school-aged children, including adolescents. It is *not* intended to be inclusive of all illnesses or conditions that may indicate the need for your child to stay home from school. This information does not take the place of a consultation with your medical provider.

COMMON COLD: The common cold is a contagious upper respiratory infection caused by a variety of cold viruses. It is the most frequent childhood illness. Symptoms can last 7 to 14 days. A child with no fever, mild symptoms, and who is otherwise feeling well may be fine at school.

WHEN TO KEEP A CHILD HOME FROM SCHOOL: A child with cold symptoms such as deep or uncontrollable coughing and or a significant lack of energy should stay at

home, even without a fever.

COUGH: A mild hacking cough often starts after the first few days of a common cold. A child with mild symptoms, no fever, and who is otherwise feeling well may be fine at school.

WHEN TO KEEP A CHILD HOME FROM SCHOOL: A child with deep or uncontrollable coughing should stay at home, even without a fever. A child who is coughing *and* has a fever must stay home from school until they have been fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicine.

COVID-19: People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Possible symptoms include, but are not limited to: fever or chills; cough; shortness of breath or difficulty breathing; fatigue; muscle or body aches; headaches; new loss of taste or smell; sore throat; congestion or runny nose; nausea or vomiting; and/or diarrhea. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. Anyone can have mild to severe symptoms. If your child or anyone in your home has been diagnosed with COVID-19, you must notify the School Nurse as soon as possible. The School Nurse in consultation with the School Administration will provide the family with directions about the student's eligibility to be in school and their return to school based on the guidelines provided by the CDC. The nurse will provide exact information for your child based on the specifics of the situation, symptoms, onset, return to school, and masking.

EYE REDNESS: Redness of the eye(s) can be caused by many different things, including allergies, dryness, dust or other particles in the eye, viral illness, and bacterial infection. A child with eye redness but no discomfort, swelling, vision change, discharge, or drainage may be fine at school.

WHEN TO KEEP A CHILD HOME FROM SCHOOL: A child who has eye redness as well as swelling, thick drainage, crusting on the eyelids, eyelids matted shut, vision changes, and/or eye discomfort should not attend school and should be evaluated by a medical provider. A child diagnosed with conjunctivitis (pink eye) **must remain at home until they have received at least 24 hours of antibiotic treatment, and a doctor's note is required for readmission to school**.

FEVER: A fever is defined as a temperature of 100°F or higher. Fevers are a symptom of a viral or bacterial infection. Children are likely to be contagious to others when they have a fever. If you do not have a thermometer and your child feels hot to your touch, they may have a fever. Please do not give your child fever-reducing medicine and then send them to school. Most likely, the medicine will wear off; the fever will probably return; and you will be contacted by the Nurse to pick up your child.

WHEN TO KEEP A CHILD HOME FROM SCHOOL: Any child with a fever of 100°F or

higher should not attend school and **should not return until they have been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicine.**

FLU (INFLUENZA): The flu is a highly contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses, which can result in mild to severe illness. A person with influenza can be contagious for up to one week after symptoms appear. Children are one of the biggest sources for spreading the flu.

> **WHEN TO KEEP A CHILD HOME FROM SCHOOL**: A child with flu-like illness (fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills, tiredness, and or vomiting and diarrhea) **must stay home from school for at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever, without the use of fever-reducing medicine.** If symptoms occur while at school, the nurse will call the parent/guardian and the student must be picked within one hour to go home. Contact a medical provider with severe symptoms, such as difficulty breathing, dehydration, and extreme lethargy.

HEAD LICE (PEDICULOSIS): Head lice are small grayish-tan, wingless insects that take up residence in the hair and lay eggs called nits. They do not jump or fly and do not transmit any diseases, but are highly transferable from one person to another, mostly through direct head-to-head contact. Infestation with head lice may cause persistent itching of the head or a rash on head or neck, most often from scratching.

> **WHEN TO KEEP A CHILD HOME FROM SCHOOL**: A child found to have live head lice must remain home until they have received treatment and are free of any live lice. The child must be examined by the school nurse before (s)he can return to class, and will be screened every morning for at least 1 week for increasing nits or the presence of live lice.

SORE THROAT: A child with a mild sore throat, no fever, and who is otherwise feeling well may be fine to attend school. A significantly sore throat could be strep throat, a contagious illness. Other symptoms may include fever, headache, and upset stomach. Untreated strep throat can lead to serious complications.

> **WHEN TO KEEP A CHILD HOME FROM SCHOOL**: Keep your child home from school if they have a severe sore throat. Contact your medical provider if they also have a fever, headache, or upset stomach as this could indicate strep throat. **Children diagnosed with strep throat are no longer infectious and can return to school 24 hours after antibiotic treatment has been started.**

VOMITING/DIARRHEA: Vomiting and diarrhea are usually caused by a stomach virus. It is often called the “stomach flu” even though it is not caused by influenza viruses. Vomiting may last for 12-24 hours and diarrhea may take several days to completely resolve.

WHEN TO KEEP A CHILD HOME FROM SCHOOL: Children who have vomited more than once in 24 hours, have had 2 or more watery stools, and/or who have been sent home from school for vomiting/diarrhea should be kept at home and should return to school only **after being symptom-free for 24 hours**. Consult with your medical provider if your child has a stomachache that is persistent or severe enough to limit activity.

Upon returning to school after an absence, a student must present a note to the homeroom teacher. Notes from parents/guardians are generally acceptable for up to two (2) consecutive days. Notes should include the student's name, reason for the absence, date or dates of absence, and the signature of the parent. An absence of three (3) days or more requires a physician's note with the same information. Please submit any testing results and physician documentation to the Nurse.

Health Records

(Policy HE 1.0) The school maintains a health file for each student for the duration of enrollment. Parents are required to complete a Health Form listing any allergies, serious medical conditions, medications, and emergency contact information. The school must be notified of any changes that occur during the school year.

Health Inventory Parts I and II are required annually for all new and returning students. Parents are required to complete Health Inventory Part I listing any allergies, serious medical conditions, medications and emergency contact information. The school must be notified of changes that occur during the school year.

Any student with a medical condition requiring an Emergency Action plan, must upload a completed, corresponding action plan located on the Health and Wellness section of the SJS website.

Health Inventory Part II needs to be completed by a medical provider and uploaded to SchoolAdmin. An annual wellness exam affords the pediatrician an opportunity to conduct a complete physical, emotional, developmental, and psychosocial exam. The physical needs to be completed between September 1st and July 31st of each year.

Head Injury

If any injury to the head or any other serious injury occurs to a student, then the nurse will call

the parent and send home a report. The report is to be signed by the parent/guardian and returned to school. If the parent/guardian or alternative contact person cannot be reached in an emergency, the school will contact police/ambulance for assistance.

Insurance

The Office of Risk Management, on behalf of the Archdiocese of Baltimore, offers a voluntary student accident plan for school families to purchase. This coverage is an inexpensive way for families to cover co-pays, high deductibles, and may even provide accident coverage in the event that no other health coverage is available. If a family declines this coverage please be aware that any injuries sustained while at school or during school activities may not be covered by any Archdiocesan insurance policy. For more details regarding purchasing student accident insurance, please visit www.archbalt.org/risk.

Allergies

Parents must notify the school of their child's allergies including food allergies. School medication orders must be renewed each year by the physician and the order must be signed on or after July 1. If the student carries an EPIPEN with them, the physician must state this requirement on the order. Due to the life-threatening nature of certain food allergies, it may be necessary to establish a classroom as nut/peanut/other food-free. A letter outlining the specific protocol will be sent to parents of the involved homeroom at the beginning of the school year. Full cooperation is expected to ensure the safety of children with life-threatening food allergies.

Bloodborne Pathogens

(Policy ADM 16.0) A complete Bloodborne Pathogens Standard Exposure Control Plan has been established by the school and can be found in each Faculty Handbook and on file in the Office.

Vision & Hearing Screening

(Policy HE 4.0) The school follows the directives of Baltimore County Health Department and responds to parent's requests for individual testing.

This testing is usually done for:

1. All new students who have not provided documentation for screening in the past year;
2. All students the year they enter the school in Grades PreK, kindergarten, 1, and 8 3. Grade 3 or Grade 4 if funding is available;
4. Any student with a suspected hearing or vision problem as reported by school staff or parents/guardians.

Birthdays

Students will receive an out-of-uniform pass for their birthday from their homeroom teacher for

a designated date. Food and other items to share are not permitted to be brought into school. Along with a dress down day, this year students are invited to celebrate their birthday by making a Birthday Pack for a family in need through the Baltimore Hunger Project. The Birthday Pack should include a 9 x 13 disposable cake pan with lid, a box of cake mix (any flavor), Funfetti icing, 8-pack plasticware, 8-pack party plates, birthday candles, 20 party napkins, 16 oz bottle vegetable oil and a handmade or store bought birthday card. 59
The Birthday Pack should be wrapped in plastic wrap and brought to the office on the student's birthday. **Click HERE** to see a flier with more details and instructions.

General Use Epipens

St. Joseph School has adopted a policy allowing the availability of stock epinephrine in the health suite for use in the event of an anaphylactic emergency. This epinephrine is for emergency use during normal school days and is not dependent on allergy history. It is not available outside of normal school hours or on field trips. Students with a known history of severe allergies are still expected to maintain emergency action plans, medical orders, and their own supply of emergency medication.

Physical Education Excuses

1. Excuse from gym classes requires a physician's note.
2. Notes should state the nature of the disability and anticipated restriction time. 3. Notes are to be emailed to both the PE Teacher (pe@sjpray.org) and the school nurse (nurse@sjpray.org) for review and documentation.

Partnership and Communication with Parents

Responsibilities

In enrolling your child in a Catholic School, you agree to certain important responsibilities and conduct which include:

- To be a partner with the school in the education of your child
- To understand and support the Catholic mission and identity 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 ● 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 include, but not limited to, social media platforms.

- To meet your financial obligations in a timely manner and to support the fundraising efforts of the school when possible
- To appreciate Catholic education and the benefits of attending a school in a Christ centered environment.
- To behave appropriately at all school related functions, both inside and outside of the school hours, and whether on school property or third-party sites, and including sporting events.
- To follow the guidelines of this handbook including non-academic standards and expectations, including related to parking, drop-off, pick-up, and communication with teachers and staff.
- To demonstrate appropriate behavior and respect to all teachers, staff, and administrators, this includes verbal, written or electronic exchanges.

Support, Partnership, and Compliance by Families

In cases of disregard of the direction of staff members, threats or threatening behavior, serious or repeated noncompliance with school policies or procedures, or other demonstrated lack of support or cooperation, whether by parent, child or other family member, the administration reserves the right to withdraw a child(ren) from the school. Parents, or other family members may be prohibited from entering the campus depending on the severity of the breach of partnership with the school.

Communication

In the best interest of students, the school welcomes and encourages communication between parents and teachers. Whenever a situation occurs that causes concern, the concern should be addressed first at the level at which the situation arose. Please contact your child's teacher directly by email or phone to schedule a mutually convenient time to meet. Due to instructional time with their students, teachers may respond to emails and calls up to 48 hours on business days. Teachers typically do not respond to emails and calls during the evening or over the weekend.

Emergency Contact Information

Emergency contact information must be provided for each student during registration for the upcoming school year. Adults authorized to assume responsibility for a child must be noted. Emergency contact information for each child is to be kept current. **It is imperative that we have complete and current emergency contact information for each child and the**

school is informed immediately of any change in address, telephone number, or e-mail. Children will only be released to the person(s) designated on the emergency form, unless otherwise instructed by the custodial parent/guardian.

Non-Custodial Parent

(Policy ADM 4.1; ADM 5.3; ADM 5.4) Emergency contact information for each child is to be kept current in School Admin. It is the parent's responsibility for keeping that information current. Children will only be released to the person(s) designated on the emergency card, unless otherwise instructed by the custodial parent/guardian.

Non-custodial parents are welcome to review their child's records unless there is a court order or legal agreement prohibiting such access. The school may notify the custodial parent of a request to review records.

St. Joseph School does not allow a non-custodial parent physical access to his/her child during school hours or on school premises unless the custodial parent has consented, or the school has a court order permitting access.

Change in Name, Family Status, and Custody

(Policy ADM 4.1) If there is a change in the family status/or the change of a child's name, or a change in custody arrangement, it is important that the school be informed promptly of the change. In case of a change of custody, a copy of the portion of the court order that describes the custody arrangements must be on file with the school. The parent also needs to notify the Principal.

Change in Address, Telephone Number, and Email Address

(Policy ADM 4.1) When there is a change in address, phone number or email address, parents need to update school admin immediately.

Bright Arrow

St. Joseph School uses Bright Arrow, an integrated emergency communication tool that is part of our PowerSchool student information system, to quickly and efficiently notify families of urgent updates.

BrightArrow enables the school to send voice calls, text messages, and emails to parents and guardians in the event of school closings, delays, emergencies, or other important announcements.

To ensure the successful delivery of these communications, it is essential that families keep

their contact information in PowerSchool current. This includes updating phone numbers and email addresses whenever there are changes.

Accurate contact information helps ensure that parents and guardians receive timely and critical messages that support the safety and well-being of our school community.

Parent Teacher Conferences

Parent/Teacher Conferences are mandatory at least once in the fall. All families will receive electronic information to sign up for a conference with your child's teacher. Parents are strongly encouraged to attend conferences in the fall. Conferences can also be arranged between parents and teachers by either of these procedures:

1. An email may be sent to the teacher. It will then be the responsibility of the teacher to contact the parent. If the teacher does not make contact within 48 hours, the Principal should be notified.
2. Teachers and/or parents/guardians may request a conference via the progress report.

At the beginning of the school year, PK parents complete an "*All About Me*" form which recognizes the child's likes and dislikes as well as strengths and weaknesses. During conferences, updates may be made to these forms in addition to discussing student progress. Ongoing assessment both formally and informally is completed and the information is compiled to assist with planning as well as student observations. PK parents also attend spring conferences to discuss the progress and expectations for their child.

Home & School Association (HSA)

(Policy ADM 11.0) The purpose of a Home and School Association (HSA) is to partner with the school in providing support for both the academic and social aspects of the school. The HSA exists as a strong support of the school in fundraising efforts to enhance and augment programs and activities that otherwise would not be available to students and teachers. 63

Your membership assures the children and staff of St. Joseph School of your support, and offers you an opportunity to be an active, participating parent/guardian. The purpose of the HSA is to partner with the school in providing support for both the academic and social aspects of the school. Our HSA sponsors the fundraising efforts and events for the year. Proceeds from school fundraisers are directed to the school operating budget. Proceeds from HSA events help to fund many programs at St. Joseph that enrich the school program.

The HSA is based on the philosophy that the partnership between parents and school professionals is essential in the development of values consistent with and reflective of Christian principles. It believes that the development and nurturing of the school community is based and accomplished in an atmosphere of trust and cooperation which respects the distinctive qualities, talents, abilities, and needs of each person. By providing a means of service, social, and fund raising activities in support of the school the HSA recognizes its role in affirming the school community and its members as living expressions of God's love. Mindful

of Gospel values, the HSA seeks to model service, promote goodwill, and foster a sincere appreciation for the ideals of a Catholic school education. The HSA is a vital means of support to the School and an important channel of communication between the Parents and the School.

The executive committee of the HSA is:

- President – Sarah Sebeck
- Vice President – Michele Krueger
- Secretary – Catherine Busch
- Treasurer – Courtney Murphy
- Coordinator - Caitlin Cech

Link to the AoB HSA Manual:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ULei_pUjrFF-g9VCPcFjGRBr-E7XyU8K/view?usp=sharing

Homeroom Parents

Each class will have a room parent. His/her role in assisting the teacher will vary according to grade level. If a parent is interested in offering to be a room parent, please contact the Home School Association Secretary.

Directory - Online

We invite all families to join the SJS School Directory on the **A to Z Connect** online platform. Parents are responsible for verifying and editing their own directory listings. Also, being included in the A to Z directory is the only way room parents and other families will be able to communicate with your family. The St. Joseph School Handbook and Directory are the proprietary information and property of St. Joseph School.

In exchange for receiving this information, you agree to keep the information confidential and not to disseminate the Handbook or Directory information contained within to any other persons, businesses, or other third parties without the express written permission of St. Joseph School. The unauthorized dissemination of information in violation of this privacy policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including withdrawal of your child and possible criminal and/or legal action against you.

Forgotten Items

If your child forgets something at home, please have them bring it to school the next day. The only exception is for a lunch to be dropped off at the school office. The student will be able to pick up the lunch from the office during lunchtime. We request that no hot lunches from area restaurants be dropped off.

Photo/Video Release

Photographs and videos of students may be used periodically throughout the year in newspapers, parent communications, interviews, advertising, newsletters, brochures, the school website, social media, and other media. Parents who wish **not** to have their children's photos/images used must give **written notice** annually indicating this to the Principal by September 1st.

Helpful Information About SJS:

Arrival in the Morning/Drop-Off: Carpools with pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, and first grades students should enter the drive next to (just past) the Multipurpose Room and drive around the back of the school. This is the Southside of the school. After dropping off all children (even those in different grades), exit to Galloway Road (toward Lowes). Vehicles may not exit by the rectory back on to Church Lane.

All other carpools should enter the first parking lot on the right from Church Lane (at the parish south entrance). Drive around the parish office and pull next to the parish office into the drop off lane. All children should be dropped off here and then they walk across Church Lane to the school. All drop off should be done via the drop off lane and not by parking and having students exit the car. Use of the drop off lane by all ensures the safety of all students and cars during drop off. This is the Quarry Side. Exit at the far end of the parking lot on Church lane.

Please do not stop or park on the Flagpole Side since 8:30 a.m. Mass attendees will be parked there. A crossing guard will see that the children cross the street safely. ***If students are not in their homeroom by 8:10 a.m., parents must park in the school parking lot across the street and accompany their children into the front office.***

Christmas Program: The SJS Christmas program includes students from first through fifth grade. The school band program is also highlighted during this festive event. This event is held in the Multipurpose Room and is a great way to get into the holiday spirit. Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten have their own special Christmas Program. Families are encouraged to attend.

Directory: A directory of SJS students and family information is available on A to Z Connect.

Dismissal: There are two parking lots for pick-up: Quarry side exits to Church Lane (from the front) or Industry Lane (from the back of the lot) and South Side exits through the cemetery to Galloway Avenue to York Road. The procedures to follow at each dismissal location are as

follows:

- **Quarry Side**: From Church Lane, enter the first parish parking lot on the right. From Industry Lane, enter the parking lot and turn to the right to Quarry Side. To exit to Church Lane, park in the front lanes. If planning to exit to Industry Lane, please park in the rear lanes. Follow the directions of the teachers and safeties for exiting the lot.
- **Southside**: Enter the road next to the Multipurpose Room, park in the lines facing the cemetery, and exit through the cemetery to York Road. Please do not go out by the rectory.

Pre-K, Kindergarten and 1st Grade must be dismissed to South Side only.

First Day of School: Children in Kindergarten, 1st, 2nd and 3rd grade will arrive and gather in the Multipurpose Room (MPR). Their assigned teachers will lead them to their respective classrooms. Students in Grades 4-8 will report directly to their classroom.

NOTE: Students in Pre-Kindergarten will receive their homeroom information at Orientation. All other students may receive this information at *Meet the Teacher* prior to the first day of school.

HSA: Home/School Association is the equivalent of a PTA.

Instrumental Music: St. Joseph School partners with the Instrumental Music program to provide weekly instrumental lessons for students in grades 4-8. The band performs throughout the year including the Christmas and Spring performances. More information will be sent home in September.

MealMode Lunch Program: SJS partners with MealMode to provide lunch on scheduled days. MealMode requires parents to pre-order to receive lunch on select days. Lunch orders can be made online.

Multipurpose Room: The Multipurpose Room is often referred to as

MPR.

Parish Office: Building across Church Lane from the school

ROARing Buddies: St. Joseph School is always encouraging the older grades in the school to set an example for the younger grades. These Buddies are assigned at the beginning of the year. Older grade children are matched with younger grade children for the entire school year. Buddies accompany one another to mass each month and also work together on various projects and events throughout the year.

Special Celebrations:

- 2nd Grade First Eucharist Luncheon (coordinated by 2nd grade room parents with approval of 2nd grade teachers and administration)
- Christmas and Spring Concerts
- 8th Grade Graduation Luncheon coordinated by Alumni Association/8th Grade Teachers
- 8th Grade Graduation Reception coordinated and hosted by 6th and 7th Grade Parents

School Day:

Full Day

- School is officially in session from **8:10 a.m. to 3:10 p.m.**
- Parents may drop children off as early as **7:50 a.m**. (no earlier unless you are signed up for before care).
- The first bell rings at **7:50 a.m**. At this time, children are permitted to enter the building and classrooms. Children are encouraged to arrive no later than **8:10 a.m.** as they use this time to settle-in and copy down their homework assignments.
- Students not in the homeroom by 8:10 a.m. will report to the office to be signed in and receive a late slip.
- The 2nd bell rings at **8:15 a.m.** and classroom learning begins at this time.

Half Day

- School is in session from 8:10 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
- No lunch required on these days
- A dry, working snack may be sent in for PK-grade 5.

Special Days:

- **Meet the Teacher:** This special drop-in event happens the Friday before school starts. This is an opportunity to meet your child's homeroom teacher and drop off supplies prior to the first day of school.
- **Back-to-School Night:** An important evening where you not only meet your child's teacher in a more formal setting, but also receive important information regarding the upcoming school year.
- **Parent Visit Day**

- **Scholastic Book Fair**
- **All Saints Celebration**: (1st grade only) ALL 1st grade students are asked to wear a "saint" costume. Parents will be notified with the details by the teacher.
- **Jingle Bell Shop**
- **Catholic Schools Week (CSW):** A special week in late January/early February which celebrates our Catholic School.
- **Grandparents Day**: A special day for extended family and friends to come and enjoy your child and catch a glimpse of their St. Joseph School experience.

- **Science Fair:** Students in grades 3-8 will participate in a STEM/Science Fair. Science teachers will share more information about the process and the showcase event. Parents are encouraged to attend the Fair.
- **Field Day:** Every spring, the students participate in a school-wide competition in which students participate in various athletic events.
- **Snowball Dance:** Annual Father-Daughter Dance
- **Bingo with Boys:** Annual event for the Mothers and Sons
- **Race for Education:** Race for Education is our school's biggest and most important fundraiser supporting safety and technology upgrades. Donors sponsor students as they participate in a jog-a-thon around the SJS campus and compete for various prizes.

Teacher Gifts/Donations:

- Christmas ONLY - organized by and under auspices of HSA
- End of year gifts for Teachers are on an individual basis ONLY. There is no authorized or organized monetary collection through Room Parents; however, Room Parents may wish and are encouraged to coordinate a gift of sentiment from the class to the Teacher. A monetary collection, however, should not be used to fund these gifts. If in doubt, touch base with the coordinator. Teachers do receive a small token of appreciation from the HSA.
- Other occasional donation collections will be authorized as permitted and directed by administration and HSA, only.

Safety

Campus Safety and Security Personnel

The safety and well-being of our students, staff, and families is a top priority at St. Joseph School. In partnership with the parish, and in alignment with best practices for school safety, our campus includes the presence of trained and licensed armed security personnel during the school day and for certain parish and school events.

These security professionals are carefully vetted and work in coordination with school and parish leadership. Their role is to provide a visible presence, support emergency preparedness, and help ensure a safe and secure environment for all who enter our campus.

We recognize that the presence of security personnel can raise questions for students and families. As a Catholic school community, we are committed to balancing safety with a spirit of welcome, peace, and faith. Our goal is to foster an environment where students feel secure, supported, and free to grow in both mind and spirit.

Any questions or concerns about campus security may be directed to the school principal.

Emergency Plan

(Policy ADM 12.0; ADM 12.1; ADM 12.2; ADM 12.3; ADM 15.0; ADM 16.0; ADM 18.2; ADM 41) St. Joseph School has an Emergency Operations Plan. The purpose of this plan is to promote the safety and welfare of students and school staff, protect school property, and regulate the operation of the school during a crisis incident or emergency situation. It is also in place to prepare students and school staff to take appropriate actions in response to a crisis incident or emergency situation. Finally, this plan will provide the policies, guidelines, and procedures that St. Joseph School (SJS) will utilize during any crisis incident or emergency situation.

As part of our emergency preparedness, the school community conducts regular fire and safety drills. In the event the crisis plan has to be enacted, the school administration will communicate with families through email and text communication. Our onsite evacuation locations are the church (if available) or Joe's Café (Lower Hall) and the off-site evacuation site is the PAL Center at Padonia International Elementary. The school will communicate to families the necessary information and procedures should the school community be moved to one of those locations. In the event of an emergency situation or evacuation, families are to wait for communication from the school regarding reunification.

Fire and Safety Drills

(Policy ADM 12.2) St. Joseph School complies with all fire and safety drill requirements as mandated by the State of Maryland and the Archdiocese of Baltimore to ensure the safety and preparedness of our students and staff in the event of an emergency.

Throughout the school year, we conduct the following drills:

- Eight (8) Fire Drills

- Three (3) Lockdown Drills (one per trimester)
- Evacuation Drill
- Shelter in Place Drill
- Reverse Evacuation Drill
- Drop, Cover, and Hold Drill

These drills are conducted regularly and are designed to help students and staff respond calmly and effectively to a variety of emergency situations. Faculty and staff receive appropriate training to lead students safely during each drill.

All scheduled drills are posted on the school calendar and shared in the Office Notes to keep families informed and aware of our ongoing commitment to school safety.

Emergency & Weather-related Closings and Delayed Openings
(Policy ADM 12.4; ADM 13.1) The school will follow the county in which the school is located, for decisions regarding early dismissals, delayed openings and any other emergency and weather-related closing. St. Joseph School will follow Baltimore County Public Schools.
Before & After Care Inclement Weather Policy

Before Care – If Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS) open one hour late, SJS Before Care will begin one hour late (8 a.m.) and if BCPS operates on a two-hour delay, SJS Before Care will also open two hours late (9 a.m.).

After Care – If Baltimore County Public Schools announce an early school closure, SJS After Care will also close early. For example, if schools close two hours early, SJS After Care will close two hours early (4 p.m.) or if BCPS closes one hour early, SJS After Care will close at 5 p.m. If BCPS cancels Afterschool and/or Evening Activities, After Care will be open until 4 pm to allow families time to pick up students. If Baltimore County Public Schools are scheduled to be closed, SJS will make an independent decision about school operations, including Before and After Care. We do reserve the right to adjust any of these based on the forecast/weather. This decision will be made in consultation with the Department of Schools of the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA)
(Policy ADM 17.0) AHERA – In October 1986, the U.S. Congress enacted the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA). Under this law, comprehensive regulations were developed to address asbestos problems in public and private elementary and secondary schools. These regulations require most schools to inspect for friable and non-friable asbestos, develop asbestos management plans that address asbestos hazards in school

buildings and implement response actions in a timely manner. Our program for fulfilling these responsibilities is outlined in our asbestos management plan. This plan contains information on our inspections, re-inspections, response actions and post- response action activities, including periodic surveillance activities that are planned or are in progress. The plan is kept in the principal's office and may be viewed upon request during normal business hours.

Child and Youth Protection

(Policy ADM 26.0) St. Joseph School follows the policies and procedures as outlined by the Office of Child and Youth Protection.

Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Policy Procedures

(Policy ADM 1.0) Maryland law requires that all educators and other school employees, including volunteers, report suspected child abuse or neglect to the proper authorities in order that children may be protected from harm and the family may be helped. Our school policy supports Maryland laws in this regard and requires that all school staff report suspected abuse and neglect to the Department of Social Services, Protective Services Division, and/or the local police department, as well as to the principal. The Office and Child Youth Protection (OCYP) director, Archdiocese of Baltimore, may also be contacted.

Student's Cell Phones

Students are not permitted to bring cell phones to school. Parents are not to phone a child during the school day. Emergency messages will be handled through the school office. If a circumstance warrants your student to have a cell phone for after school, it must be turned off and dropped off to the school secretary prior to 8:10 a.m. by the student. It may be picked up by the student at dismissal on his/her way to the parking lot. Students are not to use the school telephone unless an emergency situation arises. In such cases, the office telephone ONLY is to be used.

Visitors and Volunteers

We welcome visitors and volunteers at St. Joseph School. In order to ensure a safe environment for your child, all school doors will remain locked during the school day. All visitors must report to the office and receive an identification badge through RAPTOR before visiting other parts of the school building.

To receive a badge and be allowed to be signed in to school, all adults must provide a driver's license or state issued ID each time they enter the school. This will be utilized to create the visitor badge. Upon leaving, they must return the badge and sign out.

Parents and visitors must report to the school office where a member of the administrative

staff will be of assistance. Parents MAY NOT go to a child's classroom without signing in at the school office so we know who is in the building.

(Policy ADM 26.0) Prior to volunteering, all volunteers must be fully trained in VIRTUS as required by the Archdiocese of Baltimore. All policies and procedures must be followed for Child and Youth Protection.

Playground & School Supervision and Provisions

Recess is supervised by school staff, and we welcome the support of Virtus-approved parent volunteers to assist with supervision. Parents may sign up in advance to help during recess times, and their involvement contributes to the safety and community spirit of our school.

Supervision Responsibilities (Before and After the School Day)

School Staff and volunteers (when available) provide supervision during outside recess times to ensure the safety and security of all students. During the school day, staff provides supervision to students and establishes procedures to provide for the safety of the school community.

Parents are required to follow the times stipulated when dropping off or picking up students. The school is not responsible for supervision of students before the drop-off time and after the pick-up time, as listed above. The school is not liable for any injuries or accidents which may occur before the drop-off time or after the pick-up time, as stated above.

If the student is participating in a scheduled, supervised activity before or after the hours noted above, specific arrangements must be made for drop-off and/or pick-up at the designated times. If children are participating in before or after school care, parents must comply with the rules established by the program for drop-off and pick-up.

Since there is no adult supervision, students must not arrive at school before 7:50 a.m. unless they are in the Before Care Program. Children in Before Care should be dropped off at the designated area. School doors open at 7:50 a.m. and classes begin at 8:15 a.m.

Children are marked tardy when arriving in the homeroom after 8:10 a.m. The arrival and dismissal guidelines are for the sole protection and safety of all our children. All students are to be dropped off on the South Side or Quarry side. There is **no** morning drop off permitted on Flagpole as this is reserved for the parish.

Families unable to pick up their children before 3:15 p.m. will be required to enroll them in after care. The school is not responsible for supervision of students before 7:50 a.m. or after 3:15 p.m. (12:15 p.m. on half days). The school is not liable for any injuries or accidents that may

occur before or after the times stated above. Parents are required, therefore, to follow the times stipulated when dropping off or picking up students. If the student is participating in a scheduled, supervised activity before or after the hours noted above, specific arrangements must be made for drop-off and/or pick-up at the designated times. If children are participating in before or after school care, parents must comply with the rules established by the program for drop-off and pick-up.

Tobacco and Drugs

(Policy ADM 15.0; ADM 41.0) St. Joseph School is a tobacco-free and drug-free workplace.

Transportation Procedures

Students are only to be released to custodial parents, legal guardians, or those adults listed on emergency contact forms. Students may NOT ever leave school in an UBER, Lyft, or any private transportation company.

(Policy ADM 13.0) To ensure the safety and efficiency of our arrival and dismissal process, all students must be dropped off and picked up on either the Southside (Pre-K–1st Grade) or the Quarry Side of campus. The designated side for each student is based on the youngest child in the carpool or family group.

Arrival:

- Students in Pre-K through 1st grade are dropped off on the Southside. ● All other students are dropped off on the Quarry Side, unless they are arriving with a younger sibling in Pre-K–1st grade.
- All drivers and students must follow the instructions of the staff members monitoring arrival. This is essential for the safety of all students and families.
- When crossing Church Lane, both students and adults must use the crosswalk and be accompanied by the crossing guard or designated school staff.

Dismissal:

- Dismissal follows the same side assignment: students are dismissed to the side designated for the youngest student in their carpool.
- Families must follow the same traffic and supervision guidelines used at arrival. ***Please refer to the Campus Maps for specific traffic flow and drop-off/pick-up locations.***

Use of School Grounds

The buildings and grounds of St. Joseph School are to be used only by school or parish

organizations with prior approval and reservation through the appropriate administrative office. Use of any part of the campus—including classrooms, multipurpose room, fields, and outdoor spaces—must be scheduled in advance to ensure proper coordination and supervision.

All individuals and ministries are expected to demonstrate respectful and responsible care of school facilities. Maintaining a clean, safe, and welcoming environment is a shared responsibility that supports the mission and integrity of our parish and school community.

Before & After School Care

The SJS Before and After care program is regulated by the Maryland Office of Child Care. This extended day care service provides quality childcare experiences based upon the child's physical, emotional, social and intellectual needs. Activities are designed to be developmentally appropriate and are based, in part, upon the child's own needs and interests. Although the program is non-academic in nature, time may be allocated for children to complete their homework as appropriate. A nutritious snack is provided after school. This program is held on the school premises from 7:00 a.m. - 8:00 a.m. and 3:10 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. For more information, please contact the After Care Coordinator by calling the school office. For enrollment information, please log into your School Admin Account. Enrolled students will have the forms available on their enrollment checklist. If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Kammeran Giggers at kgiggers@sjpray.org.

Cafeteria: Lunch Program

Every student brings his/her own lunch to school. Names should be written on the lunch bag or box. **No glass containers or cans are allowed in school. Soda is not permitted in school for snack or lunch.** If your child forgets a lunch, it may be dropped off at the school office. We request that no hot lunches from area restaurants be dropped off.

MealMode will be providing hot lunches with unique menus curated specially for our students, Monday through Friday. Mealmode lunches are available by menu selection at a cost to parents. Lunch must be ordered and paid for on-line in advance. Information regarding lunches will be sent to parents electronically prior to the start of lunch service.

Pre-Kindergarten Snack and Lunch

Parents are asked to send in one nutritious food item and water for your child to eat during the morning snack. Fresh fruits, vegetables and whole grains are a great choice for snacks. These items will also help limit fat, sugar, and salt intake. To support your child's healthy eating habits, snacks are monitored to ensure children are receiving nutritious, balanced meals. Milk is provided for PK4 students for lunch each day. Pre-Kindergarten students will eat lunch in the classroom. Sandwiches or main course are to be finished before snacks or treats are consumed. Please do not send foods that must be heated. An alternative is putting hot food in a thermos that will stay warm until lunch.

Water Bottles

All students are expected to bring a reusable water bottle to school each day, filled with water only. Staying hydrated is important for focus and well-being throughout the school day.

To help prevent spills and classroom disruptions, it is strongly recommended that water bottles have a retractable straw and/or a lid that closes securely. All water bottles must be made from non-breakable materials—glass or other breakable containers are not permitted for safety reasons. Families are encouraged to label water bottles with the student's name to help prevent loss.

School Activities & Organizations

Throughout the year, there are numerous activities available to the students. Information about these activities and clubs will be sent home through the weekly Thursday emails.

In addition to meeting any criteria for participation in any St. Joseph School club/team, the administration reserves the right to determine behavioral and academic criteria for students who wish to participate on school teams and other extracurricular school activities. Extracurricular activities assume many shapes and involve many different elements. Some of these activities involve only a segment of the student body. On the other hand, some involve the entire student population. Regardless of the extent to which the students are involved, the responsibility and obligation to participate are considered very important.

Throughout the school year, the entire student population, or specific grades, may be called upon to participate in an event or program. These programs, such as the Christmas Show or the Spring Concert, are publicized well in advance of the performance date. Participation in these events is required for students. Failing to participate will impact a student's grade.

From time to time, various organizations ask to distribute material to our students and/or their families via the school. This is done ONLY if this material has been approved by the Principal. Any activity which is directly or indirectly related to the school and occurs during the regular school hours or during a school-sponsored activity, must also be approved by the Principal. Students who are involved in after school activities must report to those activities immediately at dismissal. They may not leave the campus for any reason. After school activities are not held on faculty meeting days.

Students who are absent from school for any part of the day may not participate in any after school or evening school sponsored events such as sports, dances, etc. Even if a student leaves school and returns, they are not eligible to participate in any SJS clubs, activities or events on that day. The St. Joseph Soccer and Basketball programs are overseen by the Parish. Questions should be directed to the Parish Office.

Guidance Counselor

A School Counselor is available to work with students. The purpose of this program is to provide services that enhance students' overall learning and social development as they strive to reach their full potential while dealing with the normal ups and downs of childhood and early adolescence. As a main role, the School Counselor will focus on individual, classroom, and family support services and resources that center on children's emotional and social development. In this role, the School Counselor may provide the following services: classroom observations; faculty/administrative consultations; parent meetings; classroom presentations; individual student meetings; facilitate topical group discussions or trainings; and referrals for further services when needed.

Leadership Programs

At St. Joseph School, we believe in nurturing the leadership potential of our middle school students by offering opportunities for both formal and informal involvement.

Students in grades 6–8 may be eligible for membership in the **National Junior Honor Society (NJHS)**, which recognizes academic achievement, character, leadership, service, and citizenship.

In addition to NJHS, students may be selected to serve as leaders in a variety of **school groups and initiatives**, such as assisting with prayer services, mentoring younger students, supporting service projects, or representing their class in various school activities. These informal leadership roles help students grow in responsibility, confidence, and their ability to serve others in our faith-based community.

Library

Students in elementary grades visit the library regularly. Students may sign out library materials under the guidelines set by the staff. They are held responsible for all materials checked out. Fines are imposed for overdue materials and equipment. The borrower is also responsible for all damaged or lost materials.

Lost and Found

A Lost and Found cabinet is located outside the Multi-Purpose Room (MPR). Students are encouraged to check the cabinet if they have misplaced any personal items, including clothing, lunchboxes, or school supplies.

To help items be returned promptly, families are encouraged to label all personal belongings with the student's name.

Unclaimed items are donated twice a year, typically at the end of each semester. Please be

sure to check the Lost and Found regularly to avoid the loss of valuable or needed items.

Money Collection

All money is collected by the homeroom teacher and then sent to the office, which allows for accurate recordkeeping by the teacher. **Please enclose money (cash or check made payable to SJS) in an envelope marked with the student's name, homeroom, amount, and designation (i.e. field trip, pictures, etc.)** Exact Change Is Required. If possible, please send in money for each child individually. If money is sent in for multiple children, please make sure to indicate the specific amount for each student.

Technology

Acceptable Use Policy for the Internet and Technology Tools

(Policy ADM 29.0) *Technology skills are necessary to prepare our students for their future. Access to the Internet and technology tools (including software tools, web-based applications and services, computer equipment, I-Pads, and other personal electronic devices) allow*

students to conduct research, produce digital content, and communicate with classmates and teachers. The Internet and technology tools put enormous power at the fingertips of users. As such, they also place a great deal of responsibility on users.

It is imperative that technology resources be used to build community, encourage critical reflection, and foster readiness for future learning. Developments in technology at the School are to be used ethically, legally, and responsibly. As in other areas, our students are expected to make good choices with regard to their behavior.

Individual users are responsible for their activity on the Internet and technology tools, including the material stored and information shared. In order to protect private and personal information, unauthorized disclosure, use, or dissemination of personal information is prohibited. The School reserves the right to edit Internet accounts for child-only configurations, and to run filtering software for students' protection.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that student users (and their parents) recognize the limitations the School imposes on the use of the Internet and technology tools and that they understand the standards of behavior the School expects of users.

All users of the School network and technology tools, whether on a School-owned or personal device, are responsible for adhering to the following guidelines for acceptable use.

Acceptable uses of the Internet and technology tools are for authorized academic and school-related activities that support learning and teaching and:

- *Respect the privacy and property rights of others and the well-being of the School*
- *Are consistent with Roman Catholic values and morals*
- *Treat technology tools and computer equipment with respect.*

Unacceptable uses of the Internet and technology tools include but are not limited to:

- *Violating the rights or privacy of others, including by photographing or filming an individual without consent*
- *Posting or distributing videos or photographs without consent of the persons depicted and the School*
- *Using technology to send profanity, obscenity, or other offensive or harmful language*

- *Unauthorized copying, downloading, or installation of content, software or applications (including plagiarism or "pirating" music)*
- *Sending false information or sending messages to the School community that fail to*

identify the sender (including anonymous messages or messages using a pseudonym) ● Using any program designed to disrupt network performance or breach network security, such as software designed to capture passwords or break encryption protocols ● Revealing personal information beyond what is required for login while using Internet or web-based resources

- *Responding to inappropriate messages from others (which should be reported to the School)*
- *Downloading or copying information onto disks or hard drives without prior teacher approval*
- *Accessing, downloading, storing, or printing files or messages that are inappropriate or may be offensive to others (including pornography and other inappropriate images) ● Sharing of passwords or attempting to discover another's password (passwords should be changed frequently)*
- *Using or accessing another's account (network accounts are to be used only by those for whom the account has been established)*
- *Intentionally writing, producing, generating, copying or introducing dangerous codes or programs designed to cause harm, including, but not limited to viruses, bugs, 'worms', etc.*
- *Intentionally damaging, altering, or tampering with any hardware, software, printers, keyboards, speakers, etc.*
- *Accessing or searching files, directories, or folders for which the user does not have authorization*
- *Intentionally erasing, renaming, or disabling of anyone else's files or programs ● Accessing social media, email, or other off-task websites or apps during School without explicit permission of a teacher or adult supervisor*
- *Violating School conduct rules or the law.*

Harassment/cyber-bullying of others online, whether against a student, non-student, or employee, is serious, is prohibited, and is contrary to the School's policy and values. Harassment/cyber-bullying whether it is initiated on campus or off campus, online or in person, should be reported immediately to a faculty member, and may lead to disciplinary action and possible criminal prosecution under Maryland's law prohibiting the Misuse of Interactive Computer Service ("Grace's Law").

Parents are responsible for:

- *Reviewing and discussing this policy with their child as well as supporting the*
- *School in its enforcement*
- *Partnering with the School in monitoring their child's technology use*