

# Parent-Student Handbook 2020-2021



*A community where the paths of faith and knowledge come  
together guiding US through life*

1773-0010 Blanding Boulevard  
Jacksonville, FL 32210

904.387.4401

stmatthewsoffice@comcast.com  
website: [www.stmatthewscs.com](http://www.stmatthewscs.com)

## Table of Contents

3-4	Introduction and Welcome
5	Faculty / Staff Roster
6	School Board and Finance Committee Roster/Parent Rights and Responsibilities
7-8	Mission Statement / Philosophy
9	History
10	Academics: Curricular Overview
11	Academic Fair
12	Admission Policy
13-15	Athletic Handbook
15-17	Attendance / Dismissal/ Bullying Policy
18	Change of Parent Information/ Child Abuse Reporting / Communication
19-21	Discipline Code / Code of Conduct/ Dispute Resolution
22	Conference Procedures/ Corporal Punishment / Curriculum/ Custody Requirements / Communication via FACTS SIS
23	Emergency Closings / Emergency Contact System / Educational Needs Policy / Electronic Devices
24	Emergency Procedure / Extended Care
25	Protective Care/ Field Trips / Chaperone Agreement
26	Fundraisers / Grading Scale / Guidance
27	Harassment, Threats, and Violence
28	Health Issues/Clinic/COVID-19
29	Insurance / iPads Agreement/ Lice Policy / Medication / Emergency Epinephrine Use
30	Self-Medication with Epinephrine Injectors and Inhalers/ Homework/ Honor Roll
31	National Junior Honor Society/ Internet Use/ Media Center / Lockers, Desks, and Personal Belongings
32	Lunch/ Open- Door Policy / Parties / Parent-Teacher Organization
33	Report Cards / Retention Policy/ Safe Environment
34	Security
35	Summer School /Scholarships
36	Service Hours /Traffic Safety-Dismissal
37	Tardy Policy / Tuition
38	Uniform Orders / Uniform Dress Code / P.E. Uniforms
39-40	Boys' Uniform Dress Code/ Girls' Uniform Dress Code
41	Student Cell Phones/Visitors / Volunteer Hours
41-43	Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK)
41-44	Registration K-8 / Thank-You to PTO, VIA, and Booster
44	Conclusion
45-53	Catholic Grade School Conference By-laws

August 1, 2020

Dear Parents and Students,

Welcome to the 2020-2021 school year. Consider yourselves as history makers. We will all look back on this time in our lives and remember the circumstances of our age and that of our loved ones, the challenges and isolation of sheltering in place, how the word curbside took on a whole new meaning, and distance learning and live streaming teacher instruction and class meetings became the new normal. What a totally unexpected ending to the past year.

So, now we begin a new school year with a very new and difference perspective of “Back to School.” We have proven our resilience and are fully capable of adapting to a new way of living, learning and being. Teachers, parents, grandparents and students have reconsidered priorities and made sacrifices with consideration of our families’ health and well-being.

We will be providing families requesting alternatives a hybrid learning experience that would include face-to face instruction and/or distance learning. If full distance learning becomes mandated for a specific area or period of time, we will be prepared. We realized families have unique circumstances to be considered regarding children’s and family member’s health situations.

Although it has been a fundamental part of learning in middle school grades for the past several years, all grades from 2nd to 8th will continue to receive some instruction digitally in the months and years to come. Digital learning and digital textbook access are an instructional practice that uses technology to enhance and increase student learning. Our middle school students are issued Chrome books for their exclusive use during the school year. Fifth grade will be added this year with an exclusive student issued device. Other grade levels have access to devices throughout the school day.

Social distancing is not a problem in our classrooms or on-grounds. The campus of St. Matthew’s Catholic Church and School covers over 13 acres. We have multitudes of space available, inside and outdoors, for instruction, recess, enrichment classes, serving lunch and physical education, all while maintaining physical distancing. The fourteen classrooms, an additional enrichment room in each of the elementary and middle school buildings, the preK building, a full gymnasium, computer lab, a media center, art room, full cafeteria with two rooms, the parish hall and meeting rooms, learning resource room and school guidance counselor room are learning spaces available.

With on-going guidance of the CDC, the Superintendent’s Office, and government directives, we have written a St. Matthew’s Catholic School, Return to School Plan, which includes arrival, dismissal, temperature screening, sanitizing cleaning, visitors and volunteers, and mask usage. We are ready for the children to return to school. The foundation of our faculty remains strong a cohesive group of teachers. So, let’s get started!

A theme of Creating a Growth Mindset and Mindfulness will continue to inspire our school community to nurture the tenets of Catholic faith through social–emotional learning while providing opportunities for project-based exploration and discovery, thereby building lifelong critical thinking skills, confidence and courage.

Instruction for all will be ever increasingly student- centered to encourage questioning, curiosity, and collaborative learning. Project based instruction will include characteristics of STREAM (science, technology, religion, engineering, art, and music). Children in grades 3-8 will participate in weekly robotics lessons and grades 4-7 will take part in Life skills instruction and STEAM classes. Eighth grade students will learn Business Education skills of personal finances, interests and job skills development, interviewing, showing responsibility, planning, performance evaluations and more. In addition to the core subjects, Art, Music, Physical Education, Spanish, and Technology participation take

place for all grades a minimum of once weekly.

Technology in grades 5-8 includes student's one-to one devices of Chrome Books use. As a Google Education School, children in all grades from PreK to middle school have access to Chrome Books, iPads, and/or PC's.

This handbook has been designed for you as a guide to the procedures and policies of St. Matthew's Catholic School and the directives of the Diocese of St. Augustine.

At the time of registration, you agreed to accept the conditions and policies of the school and to review and uphold the contents of this handbook. To utilize this handbook effectively, we recommend that you read all the material it contains. This will provide vital information and prepare you for the school year.

Please plan on accomplishing the required family service hours throughout the year by volunteering to be a part of the PTO (Parent- Teacher Organization), and watch for opportunities posted for assistance with student vision and hearing screenings, picture days, and sports concessions.

God bless you and thank you for your confidence in St. Matthew's Catholic School. The pastor, principal, faculty, and staff accept the privilege and duty of educating your children. We recognize the relationship of our partnership with parents in nurturing the development of each child's spiritual, intellectual, social, emotional, and physical growth. We ask for your support, participation and prayers for a successful school year.

Respectfully,  
Kathy Tuerk

**FACULTY and STAFF: 2020-2021 (Visit [www.stmatthewscs.com](http://www.stmatthewscs.com) for additional information.)**

**ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF**

<b>Pastor</b>	Fr. Jose Kulathinal
<b>Principal</b>	Kathy Tuerk
<b>Assistant Principal</b>	Tabatha Rhodes
<b>Administrative Assistant</b>	Barbara Feliciano
<b>Office Manager</b>	Anahi Michalowski

**MAINTENANCE STAFF**

<b>Maintenance and Facilities</b>	Romeo Casco
<b>Janitorial</b>	Nancy Fussell
<b>Cafeteria</b>	Peggy Howard

**FACULTY**

<b>Pre- kindergarten 3</b>	Christie Martin
<b>Pre- kindergarten 4</b>	Angela Dispenza
<b>Kindergarten</b>	Kathy Marshman - Early Learning Team Leader
<b>1</b>	Kelly Rom - Elementary School Team Leader
<b>2</b>	Aubry McKendree
<b>3</b>	Amber Kanobroski
<b>4</b>	Meagan Dubberly/5 <sup>th</sup> English

**Homeroom Teachers:** Grades 5-8 (teachers are certified in their specialty area):

<b>5</b>	Faryn Novotny - social studies, grade 5 & 6 literature, Life Skills 4 <sup>th</sup> -7 <sup>th</sup>
<b>6</b>	Tabatha Rhodes - math and science – 5 <sup>th</sup> & 6 <sup>th</sup> , pre-algebra -7 <sup>th</sup> , SEL 5 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup> , Business Education- 8 <sup>th</sup>
<b>7</b>	Erin McGuan- science- 7 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup> , algebra-8 <sup>th</sup> , STEAM-4 <sup>th</sup> -7 <sup>th</sup>
<b>8</b>	Drew Fluegel – English 6 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup> , literature 7 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup> , Robotics 3 <sup>rd</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup>

**Additional Subject Teacher:**

<b>Grades 4-8</b>	Tony Searl – religion- 4 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup>
-------------------	---

**Enrichment Teachers (all grades):**

<b>Art</b>	Amanda Jayne Chlopek Allen
<b>Robotics/Technology</b>	Drew Fluegel
<b>Media Specialist</b>	Faryn Novotny
<b>Music</b>	Christine Couch
<b>Physical Education/Athletic Director</b>	Drew Fluegel
<b>Spanish</b>	Alejandra Cole - grades 2 <sup>nd</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup> / Roxana Salcedo-Sotelo - grades K-1 <sup>st</sup>
<b>School Counselor</b>	Alexandra DeBever
<b>Paraprofessional</b>	Joyce Gahafer, Roxana Salcedo-Sotelo, Katie Bark, Charlotte Kensi
<b>Extended Day Director</b>	Tabatha Rhodes/ Felicia Settle
<b>Learning Resource Teacher</b>	Katie Bark/ Lisa Edgar Moore

In the absence of the principal, Kathy Tuerk, the assistant principal, Tabatha Rhodes will be in charge of daily operations with the assistance of the Early Learning Team Leader, Kathy Marshman.

## **School Board Members:**

Fr. Jose Kulathinal, Pastor  
Deacon David Yazdiya-Finance Committee Chair  
Facilities and Maintenance-Bill Schueth  
Marketing/Publicity-Michelle Kennedy  
PTO President- Jennifer Carter

Deacon George Good- Chair  
Long- Range Planning-Martin Polsenski  
Safety/Technology- Douglas Eurom  
Parish Programs- Celeste Green  
Kathy Tuerk -Principal

## **Finance Committee Members:**

Fr. Jose Kulathinal, Pastor  
Deacon David Yazdiya-Finance Committee Chair  
Martin Polsenski

Deacon George Good- Chair  
Kathy Tuerk- Principal  
Mary Frances Parsons

## **Parent Rights and Responsibilities**

Parents have a right to reasonable and regular communication through teacher notes and newsletters, FACTS/SIS student information access, Falcon newsletters, progress reports, calendars, school website, Facebook, the marquee located on school grounds, and reports as deemed reasonably necessary or requested by parents or the administration. Conferences are available upon request at any time. The principal and teachers are available via conference, email, or phone.

If, at any point, clarification is needed, please contact the principal or vice-principal. At the time of registration, you agreed to accept the conditions and policies of the school and to review and uphold the contents of this handbook. To utilize this handbook effectively, we recommend that you read all the material it contains. This will provide vital information throughout the school year.

Students will receive an acknowledgment form to be signed by a parent or guardian, and returned the first week of school. Parents have a right to expect that all decisions made will be based on the teachings of the Catholic faith and always with the intent to best serve the student and school community at large.

All policies and procedures are made in conjunction with St. Matthew's Catholic School administration and the directives of the Diocese of St. Augustine. A hardcopy of this handbook is available in English or Spanish, upon request.

## **Diocese of Saint Augustine: Mission Statement**

We, the Catholic school community of the Diocese of Saint Augustine, strive to provide a Christ-centered educational environment rooted in Gospel values and in our rich Catholic heritage.

### **We believe:**

- That we must continue to build on our rich history of education in the diocese.
- That we must respect the dignity of each individual within the school community.
- That, our partnership with parents, each student's spiritual, intellectual, social, emotional, and physical growth develops in an atmosphere, which stresses Gospel values.
- That the spiritual formation of the entire school community – students, faculty, and parents – must

be fostered.

- That worship, community, service, self-discipline, and academic excellence must be part of the school's program and atmosphere.
- That we must prepare our students to examine the implications of moral, social justice, and global issues in an ever-changing society.
- That by our example we must offer models of Christian witness to our students and the entire community.
- That the spiritual formation of the entire school community – students, faculty, and parents – must be fostered.
- That worship, community, service, self-discipline, and academic excellence must be part of the school's program and atmosphere.
- That we must prepare our students to examine the implications of moral, social justice, and global issues in an ever-changing society.
- That by our example we must offer models of Christian witness to our students and the entire community.

## St. Matthew's Catholic School Mission Statement

“St. Matthew's Catholic School is a community where the paths of faith and knowledge come together guiding us through life.”

It is our purpose to provide quality education to the children of families who enroll them in a Catholic school. St. Matthew's Catholic School recognizes the uniqueness of each individual and endeavors to nurture with loving respect the gifts with which each child has been bestowed by God.

With God's help, the faculty's intention includes nurturing students in the habits of thinking, analyzing, and acting as responsible Christian citizens of our community, and loving stewards of the gift of our beautiful planet and all living things. The purpose of the school is to help each child to grow and develop spiritually, morally, emotionally, physically, and intellectually.

## Philosophy

The philosophy of St. Matthew's Catholic School is to “teach as Jesus did” – by word and example. The faculty and staff strive to model that behavior which most exemplifies Christ and His teachings. It is our goal to instill throughout our teaching the knowledge and values for each student to recognize and acknowledge his/her responsibility in using individual talents as Christian citizens of our community. The principal, faculty, and staff have incorporated a school-wide discipline plan that includes a Merit and Demerit System and the Foundations program with the goal of “creating a safe, civil, and productive school” in which all are committed to making available to students the behavioral and academic skills necessary to reach their fullest potential.

We are dedicated to implementing the beliefs of the Foundations program, which was developed by Dr. Randy Sprick and promotes principles fundamental to all effective learning environments which states:

1. Education is important to a student's success in life.
2. **All** people in the school should be treated with dignity and respect.
3. Kids come first!
4. **All** the adults in a school bear the ultimate responsibility for making school a safe, civil, and productive place of learning and growing.

5. **All** students should perceive unconditional acceptance and high expectations from school personnel.
6. **All** students should receive frequent positive feedback on their behavioral and academic efforts.
7. **All** school settings should be structured for student success
8. Expectations for student behavior in all school settings should be clear, consistent, equitable, and directly taught to the students.

Student misbehavior should be addressed calmly, consistently, and immediately by all employees of St. Matthew's. The content of our school-wide behavior plan includes these beliefs as well as procedures to encourage responsible behavior, procedures to correct irresponsible behavior, and the teaching of expectations of behavior in common areas such as the classrooms, the cafeteria, the hallways, the playground, the Activity Center, and the restrooms.



## History

St. Matthew's Catholic Parish is located at 1773 Blanding Boulevard, Jacksonville FL, conveniently located to Avondale, Lake Shore, and Ortega. The parish consists of 13 acres of church and school facilities. Additionally, a new rectory was built for the pastor this year adjacent to the school property.

Fr. Joseph Corde established the parish in 1949. The original church was formerly a chapel relocated from Camp Blanding. This historic building currently houses the Knights of Columbus, Father Maher Council #648.

In early 1950's, the Sisters of St. Dominic of Adrian, Michigan, arrived as the administration and faculty of the school. A kindergarten class of 36 students became the first students of St. Matthew's Catholic School. In 1951, the south wing of the school and convent were built.

Additionally, in 1964, an administrative office and rectory were constructed. A gymnasium was built in 1975. Sporting events of the school, parish, and neighboring church and civic organizations, are hosted in this air-conditioned facility. Furthermore, a full stage area with theater lighting provides for school events including the annual talent show, student project displays, pep rallies, fun runs, physical education classes, summer camp activities, and interactive classroom happenings.

The construction of Schiavone Hall, the Religious Education Department of the parish, school administrative offices, teachers' lounge, and media center consisting of a library and computer lab was completed in 2009. This addition to the campus increased parish and community socials, as well as, spiritual and educational event workshops.

May of 2017 brought a major remodel of the gymnasium. A new roof, interior and exterior painting, remodeled restrooms, new tile around the parquet flooring and stage area, soundproofing and the installation of a state-of-the-art sound system were completed. Moreover, the PTO assisted in the funding to add video capabilities which include a projector and screen. A new extended walkway from the school office was constructed in the front entrance of the school buildings.

The 2018-2019 school year began with much anew. Seven new members join our faculty/staff as long-time Educators retired, relocated to a different part of the country or school, ere added or changed positions within the school. Additionally, a new position was created for student support and a resource teacher certified in Exceptional Student Services (ESE) was hired.

St. Matthew's Catholic School has been led under the direction and guidance of many pastors committed to the integration of faith and knowledge in every child's educational experience. Beginning with Father Joseph Corde, Father Daniel Hegarty, Monsignor John P. Burns, Father Luke McLoughlin, and our current pastor, Father Jose Kulathinal, all of these pastors have strived to make Catholic education affordable to all parishioners. This goal remains a focal part of the church's largest ministry: Catholic education.

Students participate in liturgical events throughout the school year at the children's Mass, celebrated every Friday mornings at 8:30 am. The Rosary, Stations of the Cross, May Crowning, Adoration, Parade of Saints, Rosary recited in the multiple languages of our students, prayer services initiated by various grade levels, Grandparents' Day special service, highlight the grace, love and gifts bestowed by Our Lord.

Technology has come a long way since the introduction to the school in 1991. Most recently, Chromebooks have become the device of choice for student use in the middle school. iPads are provided for all teachers, and are

available in middle and lower school grades for instruction and text book content. The computer upgrades of the lab were made possible by a very generous donation of a current, and longtime parishioner, who wishes to remain anonymous. Students in grades 5-8 are assigned a Chromebook for their use throughout the middle school years. All other grades have access and use of Chromebook and iPad carts located in the middle and elementary school buildings, as well as the computer lab.

The instruction and use of the most current technology integrated across the curriculum provides for student directed learning among the disciplines.

The Parent - Teacher Organization, PTO, is a supportive group of parents offering time and talent as volunteers. Over the years, these parents and parishioners have organized fundraising and social events, to bring church and school together and provide enhancements to the facilities and classrooms.

The School Board has long been an advisory collaboration of parents and parishioners, offering expertise and observation to the pastor, principal, and finance committee chairperson to improve and sustain the educational program.

The FL Catholic Conference first began an accreditation program in 1969. This accreditation body approves and regulates specific criteria of spiritual and educational programs, policies, administrative and teacher credentials, and community development of the school.

The school was awarded re- accreditation in 2013. The third-year review was completed in October, 2017. A Self-Study began in Spring of 2019, concluding with the next re-accreditation visit in December 2020.

### **Academics: Curricular Overview**

St. Matthew's Catholic School complies with the State of FL Department of Education and Diocese of St. Augustine standards as well as a focus on national standards. The school is accredited by the Florida Catholic Conference (FCC) and the National Council for Private School Accreditation (NCPSA). A challenging academic curriculum surpasses the Florida Sunshine standards and is developed at each grade level to prepare students for their future educational experiences and studies. The faculty utilizes many modalities, resources, technologies, collaboration, and strategies to make certain that the State and Diocesan curricula are provided. We strive to inspire the students to lovingly share their faith throughout all aspects of their lives. The curriculum includes connections to our faith in every subject taught. Students and faculty begin the day with a school prayer; continue through the day, at closing, and all special presentations.

**Academics: Enrichments Courses:** All students in grades pre-kindergarten through grade participate in enrichment classes every week. Students are provided age appropriate lessons in Art, Music, P.E., Spanish and technology. Social Emotional Learning (SEL) is part of daily lessons in grades preK-4 and twice weekly in grades 5-8. STEM, Life Skills, and Business Education lessons are taught in middle school grades.

### **Pre-kindergarten**

St. Matthew's Catholic School has provided a pre-kindergarten program since the early 1950s in which our "littlest saints" learn through play. The environment is safe and welcoming, creating a cohesive experience for early learners. Activities include creative events, problem solving, social skills development, physical, and

spiritual growth and development. Students gain personal confidence and learn to trust in those around them. The curriculum, *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool*, by Teaching Strategies, presents an emphasis on phonetics and mathematic concepts, while encouraging active questioning and investigation to apply to skills of literacy, math, technology, the arts, movement, science and social studies, while including project based and social-emotional learning.

## **Kindergarten**

Kindergarten continues to develop students' social skills and a foundation for the academic years ahead. Learning through play is promoted. The experiences set the stage for the years ahead. The focus on self and positive experiences with others are reinforced while activities include an academic base. Learning through discovery, exploration, and in cooperation with others expands thinking and reasoning skills. This beginning of developing new relationships with others and learning and growing in faith, is an exciting, and fulfilling time of growth.

## **Elementary school**

Elementary years begin the challenges of increasing, yet age-appropriate curriculum. Our program for students in grades one through four focuses on all modalities and the learning style of each child. Researched-based, best practices of teaching strategies are implemented. Daily activities include student-centered, interactive lessons to encourage the development of students as critical thinkers able to work with others solving real world problems and preparing for middle school.

## **Middle school**

Middle School offers an advanced educational, social, and spiritual setting for early adolescents. These years combine activities in academics, social opportunities, spiritual retreats and programs, physical challenges and team building options, and preparations for a positive transition from the elementary years to high school. Our middle school students are the leaders of the school community and partner with the younger students in Mass and in educational events. These students discover to continue to take pride in their accomplishments and to be aware of a plan to attend to areas of challenge.

Middle School: Technology- daily, P.E., Spanish, & SEL classes - 2 times weekly; Art and Music, specific STEAM lessons, Life Skills, and Robotics -1 time weekly. Business Education is taught weekly in grade 8.

Additionally, students are held to a standard of accountability comparable to the high schools they will be attending. Policies regarding due dates, test procedures, and requirements of work due following illness are increasingly similar to the secondary schools from grades 6-8.

**Service hours completed by students in grades 6-8 (number of hours required varies by grade), are required to prepare our children to be active citizens in our church and community.** (See Service Hour section p. 29 for more information)

Eighth grade students prepare for the sacrament of Confirmation. Many retreats, reflections, and acts of charity make up this inspiring, life changing time of their lives. A mandatory total of 20 hours of community service are required of students in their Confirmation/graduating year.

## **Academics: Academic Fair**

All students in Grades 6-7 participate in St. Matthew's Catholic School's Academic Fair. Students create a project, including a research paper, in one of the following areas: *language arts, math, science, or social studies*. An informational packet is published in the student portal and a hard copy is sent home with each student. The packet includes a rubric which specifies the requirements of the assignment and the points associated to each part, as well as due dates of the project. Teachers spend extra time with the students offering guidance and assistance.

No homework days are designated to allow for project work time. Parents are requested to assist their children by checking their progress and helping them to be aware of deadlines.

## **Admission Policy**

St. Matthew's Catholic School has an open admission policy. No person, on the grounds of race, color, gender, disability or national origin, is excluded or otherwise subjected to discrimination in the receiving of services. The school does not discriminate in hiring, promotion, discharge, pay, fringe benefits, job training, classification, referral and other aspects of employment on the basis of race, color, disability, age, gender, or national origin.

St. Matthew's Catholic School is open to all members of St. Matthew's Parish, other parishes, and non-Catholics without regard for religion or ethnic origin. Families make an appointment with the administration through FACTS SIS found on the school website or contact the school office by phone (904) 387-4401 or email (Stmatthewsoffice@comcast.net).

At the meeting, the administration will provide the advantages of the school programs, provide a tour of the facilities, introduce teachers, and discuss parent concerns and student needs. Student report cards for the current year and previous year will be reviewed and a baseline assessment of the incoming students will be administered. The registration process for the new school year begins in February with currently enrolled families and parishioners; acceptance is on a first-come basis with the right of refusal of acceptance reserved by the principal and pastor. ***A registration fee is to be paid at the time registration is accepted and is non-refundable. The annual fee is due June 1 and is non-refundable.***

As stated in the Agreement of Registration, each student – *new or returning* – is under a 60-day probationary period beginning the first day attending St. Matthew's Catholic School. If asked to leave or expelled, during this time, all registration and resource fees will be retained. Tuition will be retained based on the number of days in attendance. The administration reserves the right to make the final determination regarding a family's future enrollment.

**Admission Policy: Age Requirements:** In compliance with Florida Statutes and the Florida Catholic Conference accreditation standards, the following guidelines are followed:

- ***All children must be fully "potty trained."*** If a child soils his/her underclothing, a parent will be required to change the child's clothing. Although teachers will work with parents, if this happens repeatedly, the child may be asked not to return.
- Early Childhood Development Program: ages three and four *on or before September 1*
- Kindergarten: must be five years of age *on or before September 1*
- Grade One: must be six years of age *on or before September 1* and must have satisfactorily completed Kindergarten
- No new eighth graders will be admitted to St. Matthew's Catholic School unless relocating from out of state or otherwise approved by the principal.

**Admission Policy: Health Certificate:** HRS Form 680 or HRS Form 3040 must be on file in the school office by the first day of class. No other forms can be accepted.

## Amendments

The administration reserves the right to make the final determination regarding a family's future enrollment. Additionally, amendments may be made to this handbook at any time during the school year.

## Athletic and Extracurricular Activities Handbook

### Mission of the St. Matthew's Catholic School Athletic Program

The mission of St. Matthew's Catholic School Athletic Program is to provide a goal-oriented program that matches our school mission where God, Catholic education, and athletics work together to develop healthy children in a Christ centered environment.

### Mission of Extra-Curricular Activities

St. Matthew's Catholic School believes it is important to promote a child's mental, spiritual, and physical capabilities. It is for this reason we value active extra-curricular programs for our students. These activities include sports, Acolyte (during school), choir, Student Council, cheerleading, Safety Patrol, Boy/Girl Scouts, as well as others that may be added as the school year progresses.

Eligibility shall apply to all the athletic, allied, and extra-curricular activities of the Catholic Grade School Conference. The medical form (includes medical history, physician approved participation application) must be **dated after June 1 of the previous school year and be kept on file at school.**

- A. Parental Consent – parents and students must sign a St. Matthew's Catholic School agreement plus any applicable Diocesan participation application(s) prior to each activity. The agreement shall be kept on file at the school.
- B. Physicals – A one-time per year physical examination signed by the attending physician, dated after June 1, is required of all athletes who plan to participate in athletics and extra-curricular activities. Physicals shall be kept on file at the school. Any student not allowed to play because of injury must have a “clear to play” report from the physician before return to play.
- C. Transfers – any student who transfers into a school after a sports season (i.e. basketball) has begun is ineligible to play that sport.
- D. Age Eligibility – if an athlete turns fifteen (15) **before** August 31, he/she may not play any sport for the entire school year. Any principal or coach wishing to check the age of a player can contact the Commissioner's office. The commissioner will then contact the school involved requesting the birth certificate of the player in question.
- E. Unsportsmanlike Conduct (ATHLETE)– Any athlete who strikes, curses, is removed from a game, threatens an official, or is guilty of any other related misconduct during a game, or at any other time because of resentment over occurrences or decisions during a game, shall **SERVE A MANDATORY SUSPENSION FOR THE NEXT GAME AND MAY BE SUBJECT TO FURTHER SUSPENSION FOR A SPECIFIC TIME** and therefore shall be ineligible to participate in interscholastic athletics for a period up to ten (10) academic days. The effect of suspension shall be to prohibit individual players from taking part in interscholastic activity for a specified length of time for violation of the rules of this Conference. An appropriate committee of League Coaches and the official(s) involved shall determine a sanction that shall require the advice and consent of the principal(s) and the Superintendent of Schools. **(COACH)** Any coach who strikes, curses, is removed from a game, threatens an official, or is guilty of any related misconduct during a game, or at any other time because of resentment over occurrences or decisions during a game,

**SHALL SERVE A MANDATORY SUSPENSION FOR THE NEXT GAME AND PAY A MONETARY FINE OF FIFTY (\$50) DOLLARS TO THE CATHOLIC GRADE SCHOOL CONFERENCE.** The coach will be subject to one or more of the following penalties:

- a. Reprimand – a letter of censure to the individual concerning offense committed and warning against further acts of detrimental nature, which are contrary to the aims of the Conference
- b. Fine – monetary payment of Fifty Dollars (\$50.00)
- c. Probation – may allow season activity pertaining to circumstances
- d. Suspension – the effect of a suspension shall be to prohibit an individual coach from taking part in interscholastic activity for a specific length of time for violation of the rules of this Conference. The length of time and other penalties imposed will be determined by the administration of that school, Commissioner of the Conference, and Superintendent of the Catholic Schools, Diocese of St. Augustine.

Complaints arising from unsportsmanlike conduct shall be submitted by the official(s) involved and/or representatives of the Catholic Grade Schools involved to a Review Board consisting of the Commissioner of the Catholic Grade School Conference, and two (2) duly appointed coaches for the ruling. Penalties shall begin from the time of the filing of said complaints unless overruled by the Review Board.

Eligibility may be recovered only by written request to the Superintendent of Catholic Schools of the Diocese of St. Augustine through the Commissioner of Catholic Grade School Conference. The administration of the ineligible person's school must endorse this written request.

1. Ineligible players or coaches at games – **Ineligible players or coaches are not allowed to sit on the bench during any athletic contest.** This includes academically ineligible players. The penalty for playing an ineligible player or for an ineligible player or coach sitting on the bench shall be loss of any game or games in which that player or coach was involved while ineligible.
2. Full day school attendance is required on the day of a practice, game, or extra-curricular activity. Students leaving school due to illness the day of the scheduled activity are disqualified from participation in that activity.
3. Students who remain on the grounds waiting for an activity to begin must be supervised at all times. No student regardless of age may be left unattended after 2:55 p.m. Students will be supervised by the coach or checked in for extended day if left on campus after 2:55 p.m. Parents may not sign students out of Extended Day and leave children unsupervised on campus.
4. In the event that the student athlete's team is participating in more than one scheduled game/match/event, then the student athletes are prohibited from leaving the location of said game/match/event at any time from the beginning of the first scheduled game/match/event through the conclusion of final game/match/event in which the student athlete's team is participating.
5. All student **athletes must pay a \$50** athletic fee for all sports if they wish to participate. This fee is due before uniforms will be distributed. All uniforms must be returned by the date specified on the parent- student letter. Unreturned or damaged sports uniforms will be charged **\$100 for replacement.** Report cards will not be issued to students who have not returned or paid for damaged or lost items.

**\* By-laws are inserted as an addendum at the end of the handbook.**

**\* Athletics / Extra-Curricular: Discipline**

All student athletes are expected to abide by the school code of conduct at all times. If a student athlete receives a detention, they cannot practice or participate until the detention is cleared with the office.

If a student is suspended from school, he/she may not practice or participate during the suspended period.

## **Athletics / Extra-Curricular: Transportation**

If bus or van transportation is necessary, the head coach is responsible for arranging details. In most cases, private vehicles transport our student athletes. Whenever a private vehicle is used, the driver must verify the following:

1. The driver must be 18 years of age or older and must have a valid, non-probationary driver's license and no physical disability that may impair the ability to drive safely.
2. The vehicle must have a valid registration. The vehicle must be insured for minimum limits of \$100,000 per person/ \$300,000 per occurrence.
3. Seat belts must be worn at all times.

## **Student athletic participation: pick up of children**

1. Practice and game day schedules are communicated to parents/guardians and student athletes. If at any time you have any questions, please contact the school office for clarification.
2. Parents/guardians are responsible for picking up the student athletes AT the time practice or games ends. It is not the responsibility of the coach or other parents to supervise athletes until their ride arrives. There is a maximum of 10 minutes after practice or game end which student athletes must be picked up. Please remember practice or game time is over and no longer the duty of others to supervise.
3. Parents/guardians will be provided three excused instances. After the third time, the student athlete will not be permitted to participate in the sport.
4. Extended day is available until 6:00pm when events are on campus. Applicable rates will apply.

## **Attendance**

School supervision begins at 7:00 a.m. for students in Extended Day Morning Care. Please do not leave children at school earlier than 7:00 a.m. as there are no adults available and the school is not responsible for their care at this time. All students should report to their homeroom classrooms between 7:30 a.m. and 7:45 a.m. Any student arriving between 7:00-7:30am, MUST report to the Cafeteria. Students may only be allowed to sit in front of the school in the front car line once safety patrols are present. Students should arrive in their homeroom classroom by 7:45 a.m. The school day begins at 7:45 a.m. with attendance, opening prayers, announcements, and the pledge.

**Students arriving after 7:45 a.m. must obtain a tardy slip from the office for admittance to the classroom.**

**(See Tardy Policy on page 35)**

**On early dismissal days**, as scheduled on the school calendar, students will be dismissed at 12:00 p.m. due to faculty professional development. All days in which extended care is not offered are noted on the yearly and monthly calendars, on the marquee, in the Falcon Newsletter, on morning yard signs, and on the school website ([www.stmatthewscs.com](http://www.stmatthewscs.com)).

1. Consistent and punctual attendance is necessary for students to be successful in schoolwork. All absences are unexcused except those due to illness, accident, or death in the immediate family. Absences due to family vacations during school days will be unexcused absences. **Unexcused absences do not require a teacher to accept make-up work for credit. It is the responsibility of the student to inquire about missed work.**

2. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to contact the school if their child will be absent. Excused absences include: a student's serious illness or death in the student's family; scheduled doctor or dentist appointment; special family events in which the permission from the principal has been approved at least five school days in advance; having or suspected of having a communicable disease or infestation. Excused absences due to illness, accident, or death in the immediate family require parent or guardian documentation. Unless extenuating circumstance are documented and approved by the administration, no more than 36 days per calendar year may be unexcused without impacting promotion status of the student.  
Perfect attendance is achieved by attending all scheduled school days with no absences, tardies, early dismissals, or suspensions.
3. The school checks on absentees by phone once a student is absent for the third day. If your child is going to be absent, we request parents notify the school office prior to 9:00 a.m. on the day of an absence. This is a busy time in the office, and an email to the [stmatthewsoffice@comcast.net](mailto:stmatthewsoffice@comcast.net) , a voicemail message, (904) 387.4401 x 0 should be left, or an email to the homeroom teacher is desired.
4. Excused absences require a parent or guardian note be to be provided when a child returns to school stating the reason for absence. Please be aware that, if absences and tardies that are excused solely by parent explanation become excessive, the school will require additional documentation in order to ensure consistent student attendance.
5. Missed assignments due to absence may be obtained by checking the school's FACT SIS website. If a student has missed more than one consecutive day, textbooks may be requested by 12:00 p.m. and picked up at the office after 3:00 p.m.
6. The dismissal bell will ring at 2:55 p.m. for all grades.

**Students picked up prior to dismissal time: Please advise any authorized person picking up your child of these procedures. The safety of your children is our main concern.**

- If a child is to be picked up before the school day ends, they must be checked out before 2:30 p.m. by signing out at the school office.
- After 2:30 p.m., students must be picked up from dismissal via the car line.
- Parents may not park and walk up to remove students from the dismissal line. The same applies for the Pre-K and Kindergarten dismissal area.
- The students must be signed out in the office prior to 2:30 p.m. and an announcement will be made to the teacher to make the student available for the early dismissal.
- Rainy Day Procedures for Kindergarten: Dismissal for grades 1-8 starts at 2:55 by the flagpole circle. Kindergarten leaves their building and walks to their dismissal area around 2:30 p.m. If it is raining at that time, they stay in their building and participate in the upper grade dismissal even if it stops raining by 2:55 p.m. If it is not raining at that time, they leave their building and participate in their usual dismissal even if it is raining at 2:55 p.m. Please pay attention to rainy day dismissal signs for guidance.

## **Bullying Policy**

All students participate in Social Emotional Learning (SEL) lessons weekly. Faculty and students will explore aspects of active listening, empathy, emotional management, and problem solving through self-regulation and rehearsing strategies.



**Bullied- the concise definition:**

Attacked emotionally, physically, and/or socially, a perceived imbalance of power, it happens more than once over a period of time, someone is being hurt on purpose.

Defined by the **U.S. Health and Human Services, Education Department, Centers for Disease Control, and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration:**

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

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

**Three types of bullying are identified:**

- **Verbal bullying** is saying or writing mean things. Verbal bullying includes:
  - Teasing
  - Name-calling
  - Inappropriate sexual comments (also sexual harassment)
  - Taunting
  - Threatening to cause harm
- **Social bullying**, sometimes referred to as relational bullying, involves hurting someone’s reputation or relationships. **Social bullying** and **Cyber-bullying** include:
  - Leaving someone out on purpose
  - Telling other children not to be friends with someone
  - Spreading rumors about someone
  - Embarrassing someone in public
- **Physical bullying** involves hurting a person’s body or possessions. Physical bullying includes:
  - Hitting/kicking/pinching
  - Spitting
  - Tripping/pushing
  - Taking or breaking someone’s things
  - Making mean or rude hand gestures

Everyone’s safety **is everyone’s responsibility**. Bullying is a learned behavior and is the most frequently occurring form of violence in schools nationwide. We continue to provide opportunities to identify the many types of bullying as well as the skills to help deal with them. Students and teachers participate in monthly lessons

focusing on the issues, problems, and solutions. It is our goal to develop a community of people who respect authority, themselves, and others. All incidents and types of bullying are encouraged to be reported to a school representative in order to address the issue with students, parents, teachers, and the administration.

## **Change of Parent Information (Address/Phone/Email)**

It is the **responsibility of the parent(s)** to notify the school office of any change of email address, telephone number, place of employment, and the name and telephone number of the emergency contact person(s). It is imperative to your child's safety and well-being that we have accurate and current contact information.

## **Child Abuse Reporting**

The duty of ensuring the safety of children is a huge undertaking. We encourage and support the reporting of any suspicion of abuse or neglect. All cases will be investigated by the Department of Children and Family.

Florida law and diocese policy requires that any person "who knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is an abused or neglected child" immediately reports the suspicion to the Department of Children and Family. Teachers will report and/or discuss the matter with the administration.

If a child's imminent danger is deemed at issue, call 911 immediately.

Per the Diocese of St. Augustine:

Florida law provides that any person who knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is abused by a parent, legal custodian, caregiver, or other person responsible for the child's welfare must report such knowledge to the Department of Children and Families (DCF). The school will cooperate with all child protective investigations by DCF or the local law enforcement agency.

**Reports should be made to Florida's Department of Children and Families by calling the Abuse Hotline at: 1-800-96-ABUSE (1-800-962-2873).**

Child protective investigations by DCF or local law enforcement agencies sometimes include interviews of students at school and may occur without advance notice. When it is reasonably possible, the school will request of the investigator that the school be allowed to notify the parents that their child has been asked to participate in a child protective investigation. The school may also request the presence of a school staff member during investigative interviews on school property. However, the school will follow the direction of the investigator with respect to these requests.

## **Communication**

1. **Parent-Student Handbook:** a reference booklet for policies and procedures
2. **Agendas:** Parents are asked to check students' agendas daily for assignment information and notes from teachers.
3. **Monday Folders:** distributed every Monday to students and include weekly information and updates
4. **Website:** [www.stmatthewscs.com](http://www.stmatthewscs.com) for information including current calendar, lunch menu, and more
5. **Marquee and Digital Sign:** a visual daily reminder of the week's happenings and special events
6. **Open House:** held in August before school begins and in January before registration (August 2020:

COVID-19 Virtual edition)

7. **PTO meetings:** held monthly by the Executive Board. Announcements will be made in advance of general meetings and your attendance is welcomed.
8. **Falcon Newsletter:** published by the school and distributed by email to the students bi-weekly each month; please watch for these informational newsletters
9. **Calendar:** listings of happenings, events, activities, holiday schedules, and important dates and updates. Updates are sometimes required during the year so please refer to Falcon Newsletters to verify.
10. **Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/SMCSchool](http://www.facebook.com/SMCSchool)
11. **Email addresses:** listed for each teacher on ParentsWeb and on the school website.
12. **Telephone:** Each teacher has a telephone in the classroom and a voice mailbox to receive messages. Messages may be left at any time using the directory system when phoning the school. Teacher class time may not be interrupted; however, a specific message may be left with an available phone contact. The faculty will respond at their earliest opportunity; all calls will be returned within 24 hours of receipt.
13. **Parents Web with RenWeb:** individual student progress, teacher assigned projects, and daily homework may be accessed
14. **Instagram & Twitter:** posts from our social network faculty
15. **Notification of emergencies:** *Please remember for weather related emergencies, the schools in the Diocese of St. Augustine follow Duval County school closures unless otherwise notified. School re-openings will be posted by individual school locations.*

The leader/leadership team works with community leaders and constituents to develop credible and reliable vehicles of communication for all stakeholders in the community, including families with second languages at home. All new initiatives and/or changes to school programs are shared at the beginning of the initiative or change, and updates are provided as the initiative develops over time with outcomes routinely measured and reported to all constituents. Information about the new programs are communicated electronically and celebrated at community events.

## Discipline Code

Students are expected to conduct themselves at all times in a manner indicative of young Christian men and women. Respect for authority, other students, school property, and all personal property is necessary for the maintenance of proper order during the school day. It is necessary for each student to exercise self-discipline, to learn responsibility, and to make progress in his or her social relationships while striving for academic excellence. **The classroom management system** is a school wide program designed to eliminate time from the academic focus, allowing students to take responsibility for their behavior, and identifying areas in which each student is requiring an excessive amount of reminding. ***Our goal is to promote a positive, affirming atmosphere.*** Demerits help redirect student behavior that interferes with instructional time or the comfort and safety of fellow students and faculty. Merits help to reinforce positive behaviors and promote good choices. Homeroom teachers keep a master sheet of “demerits” a student has received in a week. Consequences are age appropriate and are explained in a letter by each grade level teacher to the students and in written form to the parents at the beginning of the school year. For example, consequences range from loss of recess time, silent lunch, notes home to parents, morning detention, self-reflection, etc. Additional consequences may include loss of privileges ***such as field trip attendance*** to the most severe cases including **Saturday School Detention** with a cost of \$40 with required attendance from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. on a specific Saturday determined in advance, and notified in writing to the parent(s). When a behavior leads to *morning detention*, parents will receive notice at least two days prior to the date the detention is to be served. Students must arrive for Wednesday morning detention by 6:55a.m.

## Discipline: Students in grades 5 through 8

If silent lunch (**first consequence**) and morning detention (**second consequence**) have been served, the student will receive a week's worth of cafeteria duty (**third consequence**). The **fourth consequence** is **Saturday detention with a fee of \$40 payable to the school for supervision** provided. Parents will be notified at least two days prior to the date Saturday detention is to be served. Failure to attend Saturday School will automatically result in a **one day out of school suspension to be served immediately** following the missed day. The **fifth consequence** is a student/parent/teacher contract made with guidance counselor specifying the issues of concern and the requirements of the student to remain enrolled in the school. The principal/pastor has the discretion to enforce sequential disciplinary actions as deemed appropriate. *Multiple violations will lead to expulsion.*

## Code of Conduct

This student **code of conduct** is in force whenever the student is on school property and at any school-related events. This includes but is not limited to field trips, extended day, and sporting events. Students in uniform represent the school and church. Any misconduct off campus, including internet, texting, communication through digital means, as well as while conducted in school uniform, may result in disciplinary action by the administration. Each case is dealt with individually. *Violation can lead to immediate suspension or expulsion. Multiple violations will lead to expulsion.*

Parents/guardians are asked to work in partnership with the school to promote and maintain a positive relationship with faculty, staff, and administrative members, initiate conferences to discuss academic or social concerns of their child(ren), and encourage their child(ren) to adhere to the code of conduct including uniform policies.

The pastor, principal, faculty, and staff will work toward the establishment and preservation of an effective rapport with parents, students, and all members of the school.

The following are considered unacceptable behavior and are *violations of the code of conduct*:

1. Disrespect, verbal or gestures, shown to anyone in the school community
2. Disregard for directives and instruction of a faculty, staff, or extended day employee
3. Chronic tardiness
4. Use of profane language, gestures, printed images, or behavior
5. Physical contact (fighting, pushing, biting, kicking, etc.)
6. Bullying of any type as defined in the section of this document
7. Inappropriate display of affection on campus
8. Leaving school grounds, designated area assigned, or classroom without permission
9. Chewing gum is not permitted on campus property
10. Consistent disruption of class activities or assemblies
11. Violations of all federal, state, or local laws
12. Cheating or stealing
13. Deliberate destruction of school property or misuse of property
14. Uniform violation as specified in the contents of this handbook
15. **Possession** and/or use of drugs, cigarettes, tobacco, vape devices, alcohol, or anything intended to resemble such items, inhalants, or fireworks on school grounds or at school-sponsored functions
16. **Possession** and/or use of knives, guns, or *any other object that can be considered a weapon* on school grounds or at any school-sponsored functions

17. Any **behavior or language** that is threatening to another student or staff member or deemed vulgar by the teacher or administration
18. Internet policy abuse (See Internet Acceptable Use Policy.)
19. Posting on personal internet sites to which is accessed away from school grounds, any pictures or unfavorable comments reflecting a negative image of the school, its personnel, or students. (See Internet Acceptable Use Policy.)
20. Public display of affection among students.
21. Failure to observe school rules.

***Violation can lead to immediate suspension or expulsion. Multiple violations will lead to expulsion.***

St. Matthew's Catholic School calls for clearly posting the rules for the students to see as well as the rewards for following them and the consequences for disobeying them. The expected behaviors are taught and rules are explained to the students with clarification provided repeatedly. Parents are notified in writing and require acknowledgement of the discipline policy at the beginning of the school year by each teacher.

Any student suspended is responsible for all work missed and will receive a 1 for their conduct grade for the quarter. Additionally, suspended students will be ineligible for Honor Roll for that quarter.

**Field trips** are a privilege and **are NOT guaranteed to every student**. A student with a conduct grade below "3" (Meets Expectations) or having accumulated "demerits" within a grading period or accumulating a certain number of "demerits" in the school year to make the student ineligible will not be entitled to attend a field trip until improvement is noted by the teacher(s) and principal at the next progress report. Additionally, students who have earned a conduct referral or have been suspended may not be entitled to attend a field trip.

## **Dispute Resolution as provided by the Diocese of St. Augustine**

Students and their parents are understood to be aware of established school rules and regulations in effect as agreed at the time of registration and through notification of any amendments throughout the year at the discretion of the principal.

Students and parents shall have the right to be informed either orally or in writing of the school rules that have been violated and the specific disciplinary action.

*Failure of the school to follow its discipline procedure as outlined in the Parent and Student handbook is appealable. However, if the school has followed its procedure as outlined in the handbook, there is no appeal.*

The faculty and administration will work consistently and diligently toward providing our students with a safe and wholesome atmosphere where education and values are taught and practiced.

The mission of discipline at St. Matthew's Catholic School remains the desire for all parties to act in a Christian manner characterized by fairness and compassion, with the achievement of pastoral reconciliation as the outcome.

The Diocese of St. Augustine Office of Dispute Resolution seeks to help members of the faith community resolve their disputes through formal means when other avenues of dispute have failed.

Contact Information: Office of Dispute Resolution Diocese of St. Augustine  
11625 Old St. Augustine Road, Jacksonville, Florida 32258

## Conference Procedure

**Problems, questions, or inquiries should be handled in the following manner:**

1. Parents **must first discuss** the matter with the teacher. Conferences should be scheduled directly with the teacher(s) by email, phoning the office and leaving a specific message for the teacher at his/her extension on voice mail, or in writing for an afternoon appointment. Please refrain from confronting a teacher in the morning or at the closing of the school day, as the teacher's attention is obligated to the students at these times.
2. If further clarification is needed, a conference with the parent(s), teacher, and principal may be scheduled by calling the office. The principal retains the final authority to settle any disputes between a teacher and a parent.
3. Parents are welcome to meet with the teachers or principal at any time during the school year. Appointments are necessary to assure adequate time is provided to address your suggestions or concerns.

## Corporal Punishment

St. Matthew's Catholic School does not ever use corporal punishment as a source of discipline for children.

## Curriculum

St. Matthew's Catholic School supports a policy of total education for each student. Curriculum standards and objectives are developed and continually reviewed by the Diocese of St. Augustine. Teacher lesson planning is based on the objectives provided by the diocese. Students participate in critical thinking activities, discovery learning, and cooperative working groups. Phonics is heavily emphasized from grades pre-K through eight.

This education includes reading, literature, grammar, writing, mathematics, spelling/vocabulary, science, social studies, character development, religion, Christian service, sacramental preparation, computer literacy, foreign language- Spanish, physical education/health, STEM, Social Emotional Learning, Robotics, Life Skills, music, and art.

## Custody Requirements

Divorced or separated parents must file a court-certified copy of the custody section of the divorce or separation decree with the principal's office. The school will not be held responsible for failing to honor arrangements that have not been made known.

## Communication via SIS/FACTS

Teachers use ParentsWeb through FACTS to provide a consistent tool of communication for students and parents. We continue to improve this valuable resource of communication between teacher and student/parent. This internet-based service provides real-time updates for students in grades PreK through 8.

## Emergency Closings

St. Matthew's Catholic School follows the **same directives as the Duval County school system** regarding emergency closings of schools. If *Duval County Schools are closed* due to emergency conditions, we will be closed. In addition, the diocese will make announcements regarding school closings through the media.

### School Closure or Delays Policy for the Diocese of St. Augustine-

“The governance of Catholic schools rests with the Bishop of St. Augustine who exercises it directly or through his delegates. In accordance with Canon Law, the Bishop is the chief catechist of the diocese with final authority over schools. At the discretion of the Bishop or the Superintendent of Catholic Schools, his delegate, can decide to close or delay the opening of the diocesan school system by location, territory, county or region. The diocese reviews the *Emergency Operations Centers* and public school districts in the 17 counties that make up the Diocese of St. Augustine as a large scale emergency or a natural disaster is on the horizon or in process. **If a county closes all public schools for such an emergency or natural disaster, the diocese will follow suit in closing all schools in that county.** A principal may not make the decision to close or open without consultation with the Superintendent of Catholic Schools for approval. Catholic Schools **do not follow the counties' lead in reopening.** Our Catholic schools will reopen when the school has sufficient staff, power, water, sewage and the emergency or natural disaster has been rectified or cleaned up at the school's location.”

In the event of an emergency or unplanned event that causes early dismissal, school cancellation, or a late start, St. Matthew's Catholic School will implement an emergency email and text blast to notify parents and guardians.

## Emergency Contact System

Via email contact system, in the event of an emergency, every parent will be notified in a timely manner. Please be sure to advise the office if phone and email contacts **change throughout the school year.**

## Educational Needs Policy

The Catholic School community in the Diocese of St. Augustine has a goal of helping all children reach their full potential intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually.

Individual schools establish admission policies for their own schools, which target students who are able to manage in a mainstream setting. Limited resources prevent us from accepting students who would require more than basic accommodations specified by individualized programs.

**Educational Needs Policy: Explanation:** Due to a lack of funding for instruction that would require significant environmental or programmatic changes, the Diocese of St. Augustine does not currently offer a continuum of services for learning disabled students, as provided by the Public School System under the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (P.L. 105.17)., however, our schools do strive to appropriately serve students with some physical disabilities and learning differences which require minimum accommodations. Each applicant will be considered on an individual basis.

## Electronic Devices

Hand-held video games, radios, laser pens, or any other electronic communication devices not permitted on school grounds will be confiscated. A parent or guardian must pick up these items from the school office.

Cell phones are allowed on campus, but must be turned off at all times and remain in book bags during the day. Repeated offenses by a student will result in disciplinary action including non-return of the item. Students are not allowed to have cell phones out of their book bags during the school day and/or Extended Day. (See Student Cell Phone Policy on page 33)

Until otherwise notified, e-readers or any other devices upon which students may download books are permitted with parental permission; however, the school is not responsible for loss, damage, or theft. Abuse of use will result in loss of privilege. Students are not authorized to access the school wifi system for any reason. (See iPads section below.)

## **Emergency Procedures: Fire/Lock-Downs/Severe Weather**

Emergency procedures are practiced with the administrator, faculty and staff, and students. These measures will be implemented in the event of a perceived threat or actual notification of an incident. Specific procedures as directed by the diocese will be followed according to the situation. Teachers will secure their classrooms as advised. Parents will be notified of any situation requiring an unscheduled change of dismissal time.

## **Extended Care Program (phone contact: 387-2063)**

The fee schedule is available on the website at [www.stmatthewscs.com](http://www.stmatthewscs.com).

**The main purpose of St. Matthew's Extended Care program is to provide students with a safe and caring environment until they are picked up from school. Students may bring snacks and beverages for after school consumption. Snacks and beverages will be available for purchase in the cafeteria, homework time provided, and an opportunity for free play and additional enrichment activities are offered.**

1. The Extended Day Program will be available before school beginning at 7:00 a.m. and after school 2:55 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.
2. Early morning care is available from 7:00 a.m. to 7:30 a.m. **All** students arriving before 7:30 a.m. **must** report directly to the protective care in the **cafeteria building**.
3. **All** students must be picked up by 2:55 p.m. Remaining students will be escorted to and charged the daily for Protective Care in the cafeteria. If students are not picked up by 3:30 p.m., he/she will be checked in to Extended Care and charged the daily rate for Extended Care instead.
4. **After 6:00pm**, there will be a \$1.00 per minute on-site late fee payable along with the next week's billing following the event. If you know you will be late, please contact the Extended Care office at 387-2063 to arrange for a staff member to stay late. Applicable late fees will apply.
5. Extended Care registration forms require an election of payment choice depending on the need for this service. See the Fee Chart. **A late fee of \$25.00 will be assessed if not paid by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the monthly billing.**
6. If a balance reaches **\$100.00 or more** and is not paid by the first of each month, child(ren) **will not be allowed to attend Extended Care until the balance is paid in full.**
7. Students may bring an appropriate change of clothes and an additional snack and/or drink if desired. Snacks are available for purchase. Especially during the hottest months, an additional drink is advised. Water fountains are available to students at all times.

All students at Extended Care are required to abide by the rules and regulations of St. Matthew's Catholic School at all times while on campus. **All staff members are employees** and representatives of St. Matthew's Catholic School. **All school rules are in effect during Extended Care.**



### **Extended Care:**

Early Morning Care Only:	7:00 a.m. - 7:30 a.m.
Extended Day Care:	7:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Early Dismissal Care Only:	12:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

## **Protective Care**

This service is **offered from 3:10 p.m. (when car line ends) til 3:30 p.m.** Any student not picked up by 3:30 p.m. will be checked into Extended Day and be billed the daily rate.

Please check the calendars, teacher letters, the Falcon Newsletters, yard signs on campus, and the marquee in front of the school for Early Dismissal or No Extended Day services reminders. Children left at school when Extended Day is not offered will be charged \$1.00 for every one minute per child. This fee will be charged for payment on the next billing.

## **Field Trips**

Field trips are considered an important part of the curriculum and are used as a learning tool; however, **field trips are privileges, and a student can be denied participation for failure to meet academic or behavioral requirements.**

1. Permission forms are sent home and must be returned, signed by the parent or guardian and witnessed by the specified date with the student fee enclosed. **We regret that handwritten notes or faxed permission slips cannot be accepted, nor can parents be called the day of the trip to come sign the forms.**
2. The parent(s) or legal guardian retains the right to refuse to allow a child to participate in a field trip. Should this be the case, the child will remain with a class staying at the school and will be given appropriate work to do.
3. Uniforms are required except when the nature of a field trip calls for less formal attire. The homeroom teacher will notify the students of the dress requirements for the trip.
4. Chaperones are needed for field trips on a limited basis. Since their responsibility is to help the teacher supervise the children in the class, **other children of chaperones not part of the class field trip are not permitted.** Contact the homeroom teacher prior to the trip. Chaperone time will count towards the required Volunteer Service Hours.
5. **Field trips are prepaid by the school and are nonrefundable.**

## **Chaperone Agreement/Responsibilities**

*Thank you for volunteering to chaperone a field trip.* Experience outside the campus would not be possible without your help. Adequate supervision is required for the safety and well-being of our students and in respect for the organization that has accepted our request to visit their facility. Please keep the following requirement in mind:

1. Chaperones must be documented with the Diocese of St. Augustine including being fingerprinted and completing the "Protecting God's Children" class. Parents accompanying field trips who are not officially documented will not be allowed to ride on the bus with the class, will not be able to receive volunteer hours, and must pay their own admission where applicable.
2. Parents accompanying field trips who are not documented may not remove their child from their assigned chaperone. All children must stay with their assigned chaperone at all times.
3. The chaperone may be asked to take responsibility for a group of children during the visit. You are

responsible for the safety and conduct of the children you agree to escort at all times during the visit.

4. The chaperone should know the students he/she is escorting by name and should introduce himself/herself to each student.
5. The chaperone should verify with the teacher the scope of the area the students should cover in the field trip and the time and meeting place to report to the group.
6. Chaperones should always account for each student he/she has been assigned and monitor student behavior. Students should be advised and their behavior redirected when they are in violation.
7. Chaperones are needed for field trips on a limited basis. Since their responsibility is to help the teacher supervise the children in the class, **other children of chaperones not part of the class field trip are not permitted.** Contact the homeroom teacher prior to the trip. Chaperone time will count towards the required Volunteer Service Hours.
8. Teachers will provide a contact for chaperones to report any problems during the stay.
9. The chaperone is expected to keep the students together and remain with the group assigned at all times.
10. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the students you have been assigned, please advise the teacher. Your comfort and the children's safety is our concern.
11. Enjoy the field trip and have fun with the children. Explain any 'teachable moments' as you proceed.

## Fundraisers

Fundraisers serve as an important and necessary function in our school. The **support of all families, faculty, and staff in these endeavors is required** to fund improvement projects for which there is no internal funding. The funds generated from these projects provide updating and improvements to our academic program and facility while deferring tuition dollars. We encourage and appreciate the support of all our members of St. Matthew's Catholic School and Church.

## Grading Scale: St. Augustine Diocese: Academics

### Academic Grading Scale

A:	90 – 100
B:	89 - 80
C:	79 - 70
D:	69 – 60
F:	59- below

### Conduct /Behavior Key

4:	<i>Exceeds Expectations</i>
3:	<i>Meets Expectations</i>
2:	<i>Working Toward Expectations</i>
1:	Not Meeting Expectations
*	Not Assessed

NOTE: I (Incomplete) = If an "I" is earned, the student will fail the course unless coursework is completed within two weeks after evaluation report.

## Guidance

The school counselor is available to all students three days a week: **Monday, Wednesday and Friday of each week.** Individual and small group counseling and advisement is provided. The role of the counselor involves working with parents, teachers, and the administration as well as with outside resources in solving and resolving issues. The counselor also coordinates Nationalized Testing evaluations, provides lessons for students in social skills and bullying awareness and training, aides in referrals for outside testing, referrals, study skills, and Social Emotional Learning (SEL), and Growth Mindset lessons.

## Harassment / Threats and Violence

St. Matthew's Catholic School is committed to providing an environment that is free of discrimination and harassment. In keeping with this commitment, the school will not tolerate harassment or discrimination on the basis of a person's protected status, such as gender, color, race, ancestry, national origin, age, physical disability, mental condition, marital status, veteran status, citizenship status. All employees, faculty members and students are protected under this policy. In addition, this policy applies to all conduct occurring on school grounds, at assignments outside the school, or at school-sponsored events. All students are responsible for helping to assure that any harassment or discrimination is reported. If a student witnesses or learns of any conduct that violates this policy, the student must immediately report the incident to his/her principal. If, however, the principal is the individual who is believed to have engaged in the inappropriate conduct, the student should notify the Superintendent of Schools of the Diocese of St. Augustine. If an investigation reveals that inappropriate conduct has occurred, the school will take corrective action based on the circumstances.

Catholic teaching recognizes that we are made in the likeness of God, and that each person be treated with respect and dignity. This teaching should be modeled by the pastor, administration, faculty, staff, and students of grades pre-kindergarten through eighth grade. All persons must be aware of the limits acceptable in all the areas mentioned here at all ages.

**Harassment** consists of unwelcome sexual advances or inappropriate oral, written, or physical conduct. Any person who alleges harassment by another should bring this matter to the attention of a faculty, staff, or administration member. The principal will ultimately investigate each incident. In determining whether alleged conduct constitutes harassment, the totality of the circumstances, the nature of the conduct and the context in which the incident occurred will be investigated and acted upon.

**Sexual harassment** of any form is prohibited. This applies to conduct during and related to all school activities. Any person engaging in the sexual harassment of anyone in the school will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion or dismissal.

**Threats and acts of violence** that are verified will be taken seriously. A threat is an expression of intent to cause physical or mental harm regardless of whether the person communicating the threat has the present ability to carry out the threat and regardless of whether the threat is conditional or future. Threatening behavior consisting of words or deeds that are intended to intimidate anyone in the school community is strictly forbidden.

**Students:** If a student makes a threat, the principal, at his/her discretion may suspend/expel the student from school. If suspended, the student may be required to receive psychological assessment and counseling, and, if required the student may return only if he/she presents a written recommendation to that effect from the psychologist, psychiatrist, and the administration is willing to have the student return to school. A reinstatement conference should take place with the parent and student. Parents should be notified in writing that a second offense will result in further disciplinary actions up to and including expulsion.

**Parents or other adults:** Any person on campus who presents a threat to anyone on the school grounds will be asked to leave the premises. Law enforcement will be notified when necessary.

**Cooperation with Investigators and Law Enforcement:** Students and employees will cooperate with officials duly authorized to investigate and respond to threats on campus.

## Health Issues/Clinic

The clinic area is available for students who become ill at school. Parent's authorizing their child to have any form of medication must complete a form provided in the office *and* provide the medication with administering directions. Parents are notified immediately of any change in a child's health. ***There is no school nurse on duty at St. Matthew's Catholic School.*** A child may stay in the clinic for 30 minutes, after which they either return to class or go home. Students are made comfortable and bandages are provided for minor cuts and scrapes. Wounds are not treated nor medication given without prior written consent of the parent or guardian. **If your child has a fever immediately prior to coming to school, please refrain from sending them to school so as to avoid continued discomfort and possible infection of other school children and faculty.**

**Medical Evaluation and Conditions for Return to Campus:** Medical evaluation or certification by qualified healthcare professionals is required as a condition for returning to campus after a medical or involuntary leave.

The school provides limited medical assistance and/or emergency first aid to students who become ill or suffer injuries at school. No student may remain at school if he/she shows evidence of an acute illness, a temperature > 100 F, vomiting, diarrhea, dizziness, or injury, etc. The parent/guardian will be called to pick up the student, and the student must go home if he/she is too sick to remain at school. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to pick up the student or arrange for pick up within a reasonable amount of time. The school reserves the right to call 911 or seek other medical assistance, as it deems necessary under the circumstances.

If an accident or injury occurs on campus during school hours, a diocesan accident report will be filled out and a copy will be given to the parents.

Current home, business, mobile, and emergency telephone numbers should be on file at the school so that parent/guardian may be contacted if necessary. If contacts or numbers change during the school year, please contact the school office.

## COVID 19

St. Matthew's leadership team is continuously following the CDC recommendations, government regulations, local guidelines, and faculty and parental recommendations. Extraordinary safety measures are in place to ensure the safety of the students, parents and employees while putting the children and their well-being first. The children's educational foundation of academics, social interaction, emotional support, and spiritual guidance is at issue. Our children need to be in a community setting with the support in guidance of highly effective teachers and peer engagement. It is our duty and privilege to make on-campus learning always an option. Please visit our school website, [www.stmatthewscs.com](http://www.stmatthewscs.com), for continuous updates.

## Insurance

Student Accident Insurance is mandatory for all students in the Diocese of St. Augustine and is included in the Resource Fee. This insurance serves as a secondary insurance to the parents' primary insurance.

## **One to One Device User Agreement**

Technology immersion is a part of everyday life at home, in schools, and in the workplace. Increasing access and use is a part of every student's future. iPads and Chromebooks are used by students as a seamless integration of technology in the curriculum and educational program. The additional of technology does not diminish the educator's role in the classroom, but transfers teachers to a facilitator role of student-directed learning.

### **iPads and Chromebooks Policies, Procedures, Information**

All iPads and Chromebooks are synced with the school's server and iTunes account for the purpose of maintenance and updates. Students are not permitted to use the devices for personal iTunes accounts and will not be able to install, modify, or remove applications.

Any damage that occurs should be reported directly to the teacher at the time it is recognized. Intentional destruction or negligence will result in charges up to \$658 for replacement or repair. A 'user agreement' will be provided to students and parents for review and signature at the start of school. Violation of acceptable use will result in the following disciplinary steps:

- Modification of use
- Suspension of use
- Removal of all use privileges

### **Lice Policy**

The Diocese of St. Augustine has instituted a "no-nit" policy in all schools in the diocese. Occasionally, we will conduct a school wide inspection for the presence of head lice. Any student found with head lice or nits will be sent home, may return to school only after 24 hours or the following school day, and will be rechecked when returning. Students will not be permitted to remain at school if head lice or nits are suspected. If a student is found with head lice or nits a second time in a 30-day period, the student will be sent home, may return to school only after 48 hours, and will be re-checked upon returning. The third time a student is found with head lice or nits in a 30-day period, the student will be sent home, may return to school only after 72 hours, and will be rechecked upon returning to school.

### **Medication**

All medications (over-the-counter and prescription) must be brought to the school office by the parent in the original container. It must be unopened if it is an over-the-counter medication. The permission form must be signed at that time. A handwritten note will not be accepted without a parent present and medications will not be given.

#### **Medication: Emergency Epinephrine Use**

The following Policy for Administering an injection of Epinephrine otherwise known as the "Epinephrine Auto-Injector" for Adults and Students has been approved by the Diocese of St. Augustine in accordance with Florida statutes: All medical and trained school personnel (including, but not limited to, any Registered Nurse) employed by or acting on behalf of the school system may administer epinephrine via an undesignated epinephrine auto-injector to an individual using professional judgment if an individual is experiencing a potentially life-threatening allergic reaction, such as anaphylaxis during the school day, including before and after-care school programs.

Upon administering epinephrine, call 911. This policy does not extend to off-campus activities (including transportation to and from school, field trips, etc.) or outside of the academic day (athletic or extracurricular activities, etc.).

### **Medication: Self-Medication via an Epinephrine Auto-Injector Pens**

A student who has experienced or is at risk for life-threatening allergic reactions may carry an epinephrine auto-injector and self-administer epinephrine by auto-injector while in school, participating in school sponsored activities, or in transit to or from school or school-sponsored activities if the school has been provided with parental and physician authorization as designated under Florida statutes.

### **Medication: Self -Medication via a Prescribed Inhaler**

Parental authorization for student to self-medicate via a prescribed inhaler is required. The form provided by the diocese states, “It is understood that school personnel will not be responsible or liable for the administration of the medication.” The form specifies that the student’s name must appear on the inhaler.

## **Homework**

**Please check our website [stmatthewscs.com](http://stmatthewscs.com) for access to ParentsWeb.** ParentsWeb is the site to enroll/check homework assignments. There is NO Charge for this service. Parents and students can check here to confirm or clarify an assignment.

1. Homework is given as an academic strengthening device.
2. The amount of homework varies from grade to grade and between courses.
3. Homework is a percentage of a student’s grade. Parental monitoring of completion of homework assignments is required to assure accomplishment of student responsibilities.
4. The results of **incomplete homework** will affect your child’s grade. Parents should periodically check student assignment books and cross-reference work completed.
5. Teachers may choose not to accept for full credit forgotten homework. Assignments may not be submitted electronically, and parents may not electronically submit student work to the school. It is the student’s responsibility to get homework to class on time. Late work is not accepted from 8<sup>th</sup> graders.
6. Make-up work is the student’s responsibility. Students will receive one day per every day absent to complete and turn in makeup work. (For example, if absent on a Monday, the student will receive missed assignments on Tuesday which will be due on Wednesday). Unexcused absences do not require a teacher to accept make-up work for credit.
7. If students are absent the day of a quiz or test, they will be expected to complete that quiz or test the next day in attendance.
8. Additionally, students are held to a standard of accountability comparable to the high schools they will be attending. Policies regarding due dates, test procedures, and requirements of work due following illness are increasingly similar to the secondary schools from grades 6-8

## **Honor Roll**

Students in grades 4 through 8 are eligible for Honor Roll status. Every quarter, St. Matthew's announces its Honor Roll at the school mass following the distribution of the quarter report cards. The **“A Honor Roll”** is reserved for those students who earn all “A”s for that particular quarter while maintaining **“very good” in conduct or a 4 on the new report card system.** The **“A/B Honor Roll”** is reserved for those students who earn all **“A”s and “B”s for that particular quarter and at least 3 on the new report card.** We are proud to acknowledge the hard work and diligence of our students and encourage each one to strive to be their very best.

## **NJHS: National Junior Honor Society**

The National Junior Honor Society chapter of St. Matthew's Catholic School is a duly chartered and affiliated chapter of this organization. To be eligible, students must have no grade of less than 80% in any single subject in any grading period, a cumulative average of at least 85% in every subject, and no conduct grade below a "3" (Meet Expectations) in any grading period. Any student that earns a conduct referral, Saturday school, or suspension will be removed from National Junior Honor Society.

Membership is open to those students who have met this criterion in grades six and seven and have submitted an application letter in the first quarter of grade 8. The induction ceremony will be held in the spring of their 8<sup>th</sup> grade year.

### **NJHS: Criteria for Acceptance:**

A student must meet or exceed the criteria as stated above. Students must meet the required standards for selection in five areas of evaluation: scholarship, leadership, service, citizenship, and character.

All are equally important. Students must return a completed application form by the recorded due date. Applications will be reviewed for acceptance by the St. Matthew's Catholic School NJHS faculty board.

## **Internet Acceptable Use Policy**

Our goal in providing this service to teachers and students is to promote educational excellence in our school by facilitating resource sharing, innovation, and communication development. The privilege of using this service includes a responsibility for one's own actions and an observation of the moral teachings of the Catholic Church **reflected at the school**. Violation of this policy may result in the suspension or expulsion of the student. User policy will be explained the first week of school during computer classes. Students will be required to sign an agreement of understanding of expectations at this time.

**Students, faculty, and staff may not post on personal Internet (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.) sites to which they have access away from school grounds any pictures or inappropriate text comments that reflect a negative image of the school or school personnel, other students, races, and/or ethnicities.**

## **Media/Spirituality Center**

1. The school library is available daily.
2. There is a charge **for overdue books**.
3. Students are responsible for damage to or loss of books borrowed in their name.
4. A \$10.00 processing fee will be applied in addition to the cost of each lost book.

## **Lockers, Desks, and Personal Belongings**

Students in grades 6, 7, and 8 are allowed to use combination locks for lockers. No keyed locks are permitted. Students are responsible for their lockers and the security and contents of their own locker. Lockers or lock numbers should not be shared among students. The administration reserves the right to inspect lockers, desks, pencil pouches, purses, and any other personal belongings at any time. All students are prohibited from bringing toys or games to school. Phones must be on silent or turned off and kept in their homeroom class

(grades 5-8).

## Lunch

Students may bring or buy lunch. If lunch is forgotten or not ordered and paid for the day, parents should bring the forgotten item **to the school office** clearly marked with the child's name and grade. Students will pick their lunches up from the office during their assigned lunch period. **If a student has no lunch for the day, it will be provided and automatically charged to the parent/guardian.** This charge will be shown on a bill at the end of each month. Please be sure arrangements have been made for your child(ren) for this important meal of their day.

1. **Reminder emails are sent home monthly** if the availability of the new lunch menu on the website.
2. Lunch and beverage orders must be received **no later Wednesday** for the following week. **Lunch and beverage orders must be placed on RenWeb and paid for at the time of the order. ALL** items must be ordered in advance using the deadlines on the menu.
3. **Every child MUST have a lunch daily. Either a peanut butter and jelly sandwich lunch with chips and a drink, or chef salad if available, will be provided to any child without a lunch and will be charged to the family account.**

## Open-Door Policy

Conferences with teachers and the principal are available upon request at any time (in person or via email or phone). All school community member and visitors must check in at the administrative office.

## Parties

Parties are permitted as approved by the teacher and the principal. To celebrate birthdays, brownies, cupcakes, or cookies may be distributed during lunch only. Please notify the teacher one day in advance of the event.

## Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO)

The St. Matthew's Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) is an association of families with the main purpose of organizing school events, coordinating volunteers, and assisting with communication between school, parents, and the community. Our school facility, programs, academics, and special events are enhanced by the collaboration of the many talents of our parents.

Each parent of a St. Matthew's student is PTO, and is invited to attend monthly meetings held in Schiavone Hall. Monthly meetings are announced in the Falcon Newsletters, on the school marquee, and in the church bulletin.

The PTO supports and sponsors many events and activities. Volunteering and being involved helps make our school one that our children are excited to attend! Each family is required to volunteer a minimum of 25 hours per school year (see SERVICE HOURS below). Volunteer opportunities are available throughout the year and all committees need assistance. Information and meeting announcements will be made by Jennifer Carter, PTO President.

The following are some of the activities in which the PTO hosts or provides assistance:

- Assists in funding 8<sup>th</sup> grade graduation reception



- Assists in funding school improvements
- Family Fun Nights
- Funds Teacher's' Wish List items for all teachers
- Honor Roll Breakfast
- Organize Spirit Nights
- Plants and maintains a butterfly and vegetable garden
- Serves Grandparents' Day refreshments
- Sets up all Fall Fundraising opportunities
- Treats offered at the Christmas program
- Teacher's' Appreciation Week activities
- Teachers' luncheons
- Funds Retreats for middle school
- Unsung Hero Award

## **Report Cards**

1. Report cards will be distributed at the end of each 9-week period.
2. Parent(s) sign and student(s) return the report card envelope to the homeroom teacher within five(5) school days of distribution.
3. Report cards and ParentsWeb access for families with outstanding accounts will be withheld until overdue fees are paid.

## **Retention Criteria/Summer School Requirements**

The following criteria will be followed for retention:

- Kindergarten: failure of Readiness Test for First Grade
- Grades 1 and 2: failure in Reading \*
- Grade 3: failure in Reading and Mathematics \*
- Grades 4 through 8: failure to achieve a passing grade in all major subjects including:
  - religion
  - literature / reading
  - English
  - math
  - social studies
  - science

If one of the failed subjects is religion, the student must make up work if he/she wishes to return to the school or enroll in any other Catholic school in the diocese.

## **Safe Environment**

The diocesan Safe Environment Program consists of the following components:

- A background check and screening program for clergy, religious, lay employees, educators and covered volunteers. It is diocesan policy that background checks and screening obtained with written consent and that include criminal record information be completed before a person assumes his or her position

or begins volunteer service; there can be no compromises or exceptions regarding this aspect of our Safe Environment Program.

- The Protecting God's Children program is designed to educate clergy, religious, employees, educators and volunteers in ways and means to establish and maintain a safe environment for children.
- The Touching Safety and alternative program – Children & Youth Personal Safety – are designed to provide children and youth the tools they need to overcome the advances of someone who intends to do them harm. These two programs are designed to assist parents and teachers in this important task. It is of vital importance that every child and every youth in our Catholic schools, religious education programs and parish youth programs be given the opportunity to take part in this critical element of our Safe Environment Program.
- All of the above components of our diocesan program are in full compliance with the requirements of the USCCB's Office for the Protection of Children and Youth. Bishop Felipe J. Estévez has directed that the program be fully implemented and continue to be fully implemented in each parish, school and agency of the diocese.

The Diocese of St. Augustine treats all allegations of misconduct seriously and deals with them in a prompt, confidential, and thorough manner. Keep in mind:

- Every person has the right to be treated with dignity befitting a child of God.
- Every person has the right to have appropriate boundaries respected.
- Every person has the right to challenge any comment or behavior that is perceived to be sexually oriented.

Allegations and complaints can be made by contacting the Diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator at the Catholic Center.

11625 Old St. Augustine Road, Jacksonville, Florida  
32258 904-262-3200, ext. 129  
1-800-775-4659, ext. 129

Allegations may also be reported directly to the Department of Children and Families. 1-800-96ABUSE  
1-800-962-2873

## Security

Safety is of the utmost concern for all members of the school community. The school campus is fully fenced and gated. A Safety Committee member of the St. Matthew's Catholic School, School Board helps in reviewing and recommending safety issues. LIFE SOLUTIONS contracted by the Diocese of St. Augustine, also assessed our facilities, practices, and procedures and verified a safe environment if provided for the church and school community. The Jacksonville Sheriff's Office will be providing training for staff and students through conducting drills and faculty preparation.

Emergency procedures and practice drills are initiated regularly by the administration, and enacted by the faculty, staff, and students. Faculty and students are trained in fire, intruder, lock-down, and severe weather situations. These procedures will be implemented in the event of a perceived threat or actual notification of an incident. Specific actions as directed by the diocese will be followed according to the situation including the securing classrooms and common areas. Parents will be notified of any situation requiring an unscheduled change of dismissal time.

ALL parents, visitors, and volunteers must report directly to the school office to gain entrance into the school

buildings. A Visitor's Pass will be issued to identified parents and approved school community members. The pass must be visibly displayed at all times. Faculty and students will not grant entrance to anyone without this identification.

Diocesan policy requires all volunteers working or in contact with students be fingerprinted through the LiveScan process and complete safe environment training, Protecting God's Children, before contact with students. **Fingerprint applications must be completed every five years.**

## Summer School

Any failed subject must be made up in a summer program approved by the principal. Any student failing one subject must receive 30 hours of tutoring by a certified teacher approved by the administrator. If two subjects are failed, a total of 50 hours of tutoring must be completed. A maximum of two subjects may be taken in an approved summer school program. The tutor must provide documentation of completed hours and assignments. A proficiency test is required at the conclusion of the summer tutoring. The principal reserves the right to retest any student who wishes to return the following year.

Provisional promotion is granted to those who have completed summer school and need no more than one credit to complete grade level.

The student is expected to demonstrate acceptable effort to achieve academic success. The following types of behavior might indicate unacceptable effort:

- Consistent failure to complete school and homework assignments and projects
- Consistent inattention to classroom instruction
- Lack of preparedness for school assignments
- Chronic absenteeism or tardiness

## Scholarships

### **Kelsey-Ann Kite Fine Arts Scholarship:**

*Funded by the Roberts Family (continues as long as funds are available in this scholarship)*

**Award:** \$250 cash prize to the recipient and a plaque for music or framed piece of student art

**Criteria:** In the honor of the former student, Kelsey Ann Kite, this scholarship is awarded in the areas of music and art to a student recommended by the music and art teachers. An appointed panel of teachers discusses the candidates' performances and chooses one student to receive the award.

### **St. Matthew's Catholic School Scholarship:**

*Initiated by Father Luke McLoughlin and currently funded by the Michael Cascone, Jr. scholarship*

**Award:** \$250 per student applied toward tuition

**Criteria:** The highest GPA (grade point average calculated using final, raw, year-end scores) for the student entering grades 6, 7, and 8. Final GPA scores are confirmed by the finance committee chairperson. The student must exhibit satisfactory conduct throughout the school year to be eligible. The students entering grades 6, 7, and 8 must be registered to attend St. Matthew's Catholic School.

### **Mark Piotrowski Sportsmanship Award:**

*Funded by Mrs. Lisa Piotrowski in honor of her husband, Mark*

**Award:** a \$100 cash prize and certificate

**Criteria:** Established in 2013, funds are awarded to the 8<sup>th</sup> grade student who best exhibits the attributes of good sportsmanship.

### **Nu-Trends Plastics Scholarship:**

*Funded by the Corrigan Family (continues as long as funds are available in this scholarship)*

**Award:** a tuition credit of \$500 for Bishop John J. Snyder High School

**Criteria:** Established in 2009, this scholarship is a student of St. Matthew's Catholic School who exhibits consistent effort in his/her schoolwork, whose character and example to fellow students and respect for teachers is evident, who is considered an asset to the graduating class, and who has overall satisfactory conduct grades throughout the year. Each 8<sup>th</sup> grade subject area teacher nominates candidates and then votes on a recipient. This scholarship is paid directly by Nu-Trends Plastics to Bishop John J. Snyder on behalf of the recipient.

## **Service Hours**

**Parents:** Diocesan policy requires all volunteers working or in contact with students be fingerprinted through the *LiveScan* process and completes safe environment training, *Protecting God's Children*, before contact with students. Fingerprint applications and *Protecting God's Children* must be renewed every five years.

**Every family is required to participate in 25 hours of service during the school year, and an assessment fee of \$15 per hour will be billed in May for any hours fewer than 25 completed.** We appreciate your participation in the activities of the school as well as your time and talents. A listing of opportunities for service hours are available and may be completed at home, weekends, evenings, and during the school day. Any volunteer hours turned in after May 1 will be allocated for the following school year.

**Students:** The required number of hours varies by grade. Students in grades 6 (10 hours), 7 (15 hours), and 8 (20 hours) are required to complete service hours each school year. Forms to track completed hours are provided at the beginning of the school year. An approved listing of service opportunities is also provided. Forms are also found on the school website. Eighth grade students making their Confirmation and completing service hours as part of their sacramental preparation may be exempt from part of the school required Social Media Policy.

Students, faculty, and staff may not post on personal Internet (ex. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.) sites to which they have access away from school grounds any pictures or inappropriate text comments that reflect a negative image of the school, school personnel, other students, races, and/or ethnicities. Violation of this policy may result in the suspension or expulsion of the student. (See Internet Acceptable Use Policy.)

## **Traffic Safety / Dismissal: Please advise any authorized person picking up your child of these procedures. The safety of your children is our main concern.**

The majority of the students are transported by private vehicle. The most important thing that parents/guardians can do to ensure the safety of everyone is to strictly follow the school's arrival and dismissal procedure to ensure the safety of the students.

1. Please stay in your vehicle at all times. If your child is not ready, the child will be delivered to you. Pull your vehicle forward and out of the flow of traffic.
2. Parents/guardians may not park their cars and remove a student from the dismissal pick up line. If a student must leave earlier than the 2:45 p.m. dismissal time, parents should arrive no later than 2:30

- p.m. to sign their children out at the office.
3. Bicycles must be walked while on the school grounds. Skateboards, skates, scooters, or rollerblades are not permitted at anytime on the school grounds.
  4. **Please observe the 10 mile per hour speed limit while on campus at all times.** “Cutting through” the parking lot is dangerous. There are children on our campus before and after school hours daily; observe traffic safety at all times.
  5. No student may arrive earlier than 7:00 a.m. and may not be left unsupervised after 2:55 p.m. Any remaining students will be checked into Extended Day Services and parents will be billed. Students may not be picked up from the Activity Center (gym) at school dismissal time.
  6. If a student must be picked up at the office after dismissal has begun, please stay at the office entrance and someone will assist you.
  7. Rainy Day Procedures for Kindergarten: Dismissal for grades 1-8 starts at 2:55 by the flagpole circle. Kindergarten leaves their building and walks to their dismissal area around 2:30 p.m. If it is raining at that time, they stay in their building and participate in the upper grade dismissal even if it stops raining by 2:55 p.m. If it is not raining at that time, they leave their building and participate in their usual dismissal even if it is raining at 2:55 p.m. Please pay attention to rainy day dismissal signs for guidance.

## Tardy Policy

Tardiness causes disruption of teaching time and class routines and puts students at a disadvantage to begin their day. Students arriving past 7:45am must check in at the office and obtain a tardy slip for classroom entrance. **Consistent tardiness**, if unresolved, will result in disciplinary action including Saturday School up to non-acceptance to re-enroll.

## Tuition

The yearly tuition fee is published in February of each year and is subject to change. Payment may be made annually or divided into 10 equal payments. An Annual Fee per student is assessed at registration in addition to tuition. This fee is needed to help cover the costs of ever-increasing replacement and addition of technology resources and instructional materials.

- The first tuition payment is due July 1. All other payments are due on the first of each month through April 1.
- Post-dated checks will not be accepted.
- Tuition is past due if not received in the office by 3:30 p.m. on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the month. A **Late Fee** charge of **\$25.00** is assessed for any payments not received by the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month.
- Report cards are held on accounts that are still past due at the end of the school year. Children in families with **accounts more than 30 days past due will not be permitted to attend classes until the account is brought current** or arrangements accepted.
- A **Returned Check Fee** for Non-Sufficient Funds is **\$25.00 per incident**. Any account that has two or more NSF checks returned to the school will result in only cash or money order payments for the remainder of the school year.
- Families of **graduating 8<sup>th</sup> graders or Kindergartners** must have their accounts paid in full before graduation in order for their child to participate in graduation exercises.
- **Graduation Fees** must be paid in full by the requested date in March and are as follows:
  - Kindergarten: \$35.00
  - Eighth Grade: \$50.00

To be eligible for the **St. Matthew’s Catholic School Scholarship**, the student's immediate family must be

Catholic, registered as a member of the parish, and contribute a minimum contribution (the minimum weekly parish contribution by means of the parish envelop system for 52 weeks of the year). However, Catholic families who live outside of the Parish boundaries but wish to belong to St. Matthew's Parish may make their intention known to the Pastor, register in the parish, and upon approval of the Pastor, contribute a minimum of 5 months prior to the date which the supporting rate will be in effect. Catholic families of parishes without a school may also be considered for supporting tuition rates. Minimum supporting contributions of \$ 20 per week for 52 weeks of the calendar year are documented monthly through the parish envelop or Faith Direct system and qualifying families are reported to the school. Families who do not observe this commitment will automatically be reverted to non-supporting rates.

Parishioner's rates apply to Catholic families registered as a member of St. Matthew's, Most Holy Redeemer, or St. Catherine's Churches provided families contribute a minimum of \$25 per week for 52 weeks of the calendar year and are documented monthly through the parish envelop or Faith Direct system. Contributions must begin a minimum of 5 months prior to the date which the supporting rate will be in effect.

Families are required to participate in 25 hours of service to the school during the year. Extended family members are welcomed and encouraged to participate. Activities such as chaperoning field trips, helping in preparing for class parties, attending workdays for the parish bazaar and casino night are some of the ways to fulfill the service requirement. **An assessment fee of \$15 per hour will be billed in May for any hours fewer than 25 completed.** We appreciate your participation in the activities of the school as well as your time and talents.

## Uniform Orders

The boys' and girls' new uniforms may only be purchased through **North Florida Uniform**. This is our exclusive uniform provider. Order forms are available in the office for North Florida Uniform.

## Uniform Dress Code

*All students* enrolled in our school must abide by the dress code. Boys and girls will purchase the school uniform through our exclusive local provider, **North Florida Uniform**, and order forms are available in the office. Student P.E. uniforms must be purchased from the school office.

***Please mark all articles of clothing:*** Jackets and hoodies are best marked on the inside waistband with a permanent marker. We have multitudes of unclaimed clothing, lunch boxes, etc. every year. Please mark your items so they can be returned to the owner.

## Uniform Code

**The following is the St. Matthew's uniform; anything that does not conform to these standards is not acceptable. If any item is not listed, it may not be worn.**

### P.E. Uniform: Boys and Girls

**PE uniforms and hoodies are available from and ordered through the school office.**

1. Socks, at least 2 inches over the ankle, must be worn by all students during P.E. and the school day.
2. A student not dressed in regulation P.E. uniform, including sneakers and white socks, will lose points per day from their P.E. grade as designated by the P.E. teacher.
3. All students in grades pre-K through eighth are required to wear a P.E. uniform. Students in grades pre-K through eighth grade may wear their P.E. uniform to school and for the entire school day.
4. **Only St. Matthew's Catholic School P.E.-issued T-shirts and shorts may be worn.**

5. **Cold weather days**-black sweatpants may be worn over PE shorts. An outerwear jacket or coat may be worn over the uniform hooded sweatshirt while outside only.

## School Uniform: Boys

1. **Pants:** Boys in grades 5 through 8 must wear navy blue uniform pants only from North Florida Uniform (with the cross emblem on the left pocket). Boys in grades PreK through 4 may wear navy blue uniform pants or shorts from North Florida Uniform (with the cross emblem on the left pocket). If wearing pants, then a black, brown, or navy belt **must also be worn**. Pants must be appropriate in length, size, fit, and condition. Pants must be worn at the waist. Prekindergarten and Kindergarten students may wear uniform pants with elastic in the waist.
2. **Shirts:** Red or white collared, knit shirts with the SMCS logo from North Florida Uniform must be worn. Sleeves must not be rolled. The shirt must be tucked so the belt and waistband of the pants/shorts is visible. A solid white (no design) short-sleeve T-shirt may be worn under the collared uniform shirt. Long-sleeve undershirts may not be worn under collared uniform shirts.
3. **Shorts:** Boys in grades Prekindergarten through grade 4 may wear uniform shorts from North Florida Uniform. If wearing shorts, then a black, brown, or navy belt must also be worn.
4. **Hair:** Hair must be at least one inch off the collar with eyes and tops of ears exposed. Hair must not touch eyes, ears, or collar. No fade cuts (i.e. Mohawks), or extreme fade cuts, dyed unnatural colors (i.e. frosted tips), multicolor, or dreadlocks at any time and will be required to leave school until in compliance. Students in violation of hair length requirements must be in compliance within 48 hours and may be prohibited from returning until in compliance at the principal's discretion. No facial hair or sideburns. No caps or hats.
5. **Shoes:** Black or dark brown leather, suede, or canvas, solid-colored dress shoes may be worn. Shoes must be worn as intended and shoelaces must be tied. Loafers, topsiders, and oxfords are permitted. No soft fabric or moccasins allowed. No boots or any shoes cut above the ankle. Only Pre-K and Kindergarten students may wear tennis shoes daily (Velcro closures for these grades preferred).
6. **Jewelry:** No earrings. Only religious necklaces may be worn. All necklaces must be worn inside shirt. No rings or bracelets may be worn.
7. **Outerwear:** Jackets and outerwear purchased from North Florida Uniform or SMCS hooded sweatshirt (red) purchased from the school are the only outerwear items allowed to be worn. If the weather warrants an additional jacket, an outer jacket must be worn over an approved SMCS jacket or outerwear item. No jean jackets or flannel shirts allowed. If temperature is below 60 degrees, additional outerwear, solid colored with no writing on it may be worn at P.E. or recess.
8. **Socks:** White or navy socks (solid colors only) **at least two inches over the ankle**. No ankle socks. Students not in compliance will be given the opportunity to call home and have a pair delivered by 10a.m. or will be charged for the purchase of a pair from the office.
9. **Belts:** Black, brown, or navy belt **must** be worn by all students in grades K-8.
10. **Make-up:** Make-up of any kind and nail polish are not permitted.

## School Uniform: Girls

1. **Jumper:** Grades PreK3 through grade 4 required to wear plaid uniform jumpers from North Florida Uniform. Jumpers must be worn no more than 2 inches above the back of the knee.
2. **Skirts:** Grades 5 through 8 required to wear plaid uniform skirts from North Florida Uniform. Skirts must be worn no more than 2 inches above the back of the knee.

3. **All girls' uniforms** must be worn no more than 2 inches above the back of the knee. No rolling of waistbands or sewing down pleats are permitted.
4. **Shirts:** Red or white collared knit shirts with the SMCS logo must be worn. No "blousing" or rolling of sleeves. Shirts must be long enough to remain tucked in to the waist of the uniform bottoms. A solid white (no design) short-sleeve T-shirt may be worn under the collared uniform shirt. Long-sleeve undershirts may not be worn under collared uniform shirts.
5. **Pants:** Girls in all grades may wear navy blue uniform pants from North Florida Uniform (with the cross emblem on the left pocket). If wearing pants, then a black, brown, or navy belt **must also be worn**. Pants must be appropriate in length, size, fit, and condition. Pants must be worn at the waist. Prekindergarten and Kindergarten students may wear uniform pants with elastic in the waist.
6. **Shorts:** Girls in grades Prekindergarten through grade 4 may wear uniform shorts from North Florida Uniform. If wearing shorts, then a black, brown, or navy belt must also be worn.
7. **Socks:** Solid-colored socks worn **at least two inches over the ankle**. No pantyhose or ankle socks. Solid red, black, navy, or white tights, leggings, or knee socks may be worn.
8. **Shoes:** Black or dark brown, navy blue, leather, suede, solid-colored dress shoes may be worn. Shoes must be worn as intended and shoelaces must be tied. Loafers, solid colored topsiders without printed panels), and oxfords are permitted. No soft fabric or moccasins allowed. No boots or any shoes cut above the ankle. No platform shoes, sandals, clogs, or backless shoes. No heels of any kind are permitted. Only Pre- K and Kindergarten students may wear athletic shoes daily (Velcro closures for these grades preferred).
9. **Jewelry:** One pair of earrings (one earring in each earlobe) and one religious necklace may be worn. All necklaces must be worn inside shirt. No dangles allowed. Earrings larger than a dime in circumference are not allowed. Rings or bracelets are not permitted.
10. **Make-up:** Make-up of any kind is not permitted.
11. **Nails:** Nail polish of any color is not permitted. This includes all artificial nails, French/American manicures, etc. A clear coat polish is permitted.
12. **Outerwear:** Jackets and outerwear purchased from North Florida Uniform or SMCS hooded sweatshirt (red) purchased from the school are the only outerwear items allowed to be worn. If the weather warrants an additional jacket, an outer jacket must be worn over an approved SMCS jacket or outerwear item. No jean jackets or flannel shirts allowed. If temperature is below 60 degrees, additional outerwear, solid colored with no writing on it may be worn, at P.E. or recess.
13. **Hair** must be out of the student's eyes. No fad cuts, dyed unnatural colors, or multicolor at any time. This includes bright red and black. No caps or hats. Students in violation will be required to leave school until in compliance at the principal's discretion. Compliance must be reached within 48 hours unless otherwise approved.

\*The Principal of the school has the right to make judgment on any portion of the uniform code. This code must be observed at all times while the student is on campus.\*

**NOTE: When offered, *Dress Down Days* are restricted to specified attire according to the theme. The principal reserves the right to specify the criteria and will explain it fully to all teachers and students prior to the event.** Students non-compliant to the specifications must be picked up from the office and will receive a "0" on all missed work until returning to class in the appropriate attire.

## Telephone Use

Telephones are located in every school classroom, the office, gym, and cafeteria. All students are allowed to use classroom and office telephones. Permission to leave a classroom for phone use must be granted by a teacher.



## Student Cell Phone Policy

Cell phones are disruptive to the academic environment as well as presenting the possibilities of privacy violations due to photographic capabilities. *Cell phones should not be brought to school due to the risk of loss or damage. If brought to school, they are to be turned off at all times and must be kept in their homeroom class.*

Students are not permitted to use cell phones during school hours or while at Extended Day Care. Phones are available for use in every room of our campus with permission from an employee of St. Matthew's.

Violation of this policy will result in the confiscation of the cell phone and a conduct referral that notifies parents of the violation. First violation of usage, a parent or guardian must pick up the cell phone from the school office. Subsequent violations of usage may result in Saturday School. Students repeating Saturday School must conference with their parents, teacher(s), and the principal and may result in suspension or expulsion.

## Visitors

ALL parents, visitors, and volunteers must report directly to the school office to gain entrance into the school buildings. A **Visitor's Pass** will be issued to identified parents and approved school community members. The pass must be visibly displayed at all times. Faculty and students will not grant entrance to anyone without this identification.

**Volunteer Hours: See SERVICE HOURS above.**

## Pre- Kindergarten- Ages 3 & 4

### Provider Eligibility:

- St. Matthew's Catholic School is accredited by the Florida Catholic Conference, a member of the Florida Association of Academic Nonpublic Schools.
- St. Matthew's Catholic School maintains Pre-K class sizes no larger than 20 students.
- In Pre-K classes with 11 to 20 students, the classroom also has a teaching assistant.
- St. Matthew's Catholic School offers a developmentally appropriate curriculum provided by the Diocese of St. Augustine.
- Our Pre-K teachers hold the required credentials to teach early childhood education.
- Our faculty and staff are of good moral character and have completed background screening.
- We do not discriminate against anyone based on race, color, or national origin.

## Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) Program

- The VPK program provides a school year program of 540 instructional hours.

### VPK: Required Documents

A clear copy of the birth certificate, the original immunization (Florida HD 680) and health (Florida HD 3040) forms are required for each student prior to the first day of school.

### VPK: Instructional Hours

VPK students are provided three instructional hours per school day when St. Matthew's Catholic School is in

session. Students may participate in off campus field trips and enrichment programs brought in. The VPK program does not operate when school is not in session.

## **VPK: Attendance Requirements**

Students eligible for VPK are required to sign the VPK Attendance Policy the first day of school and comply with the terms throughout the year.

### **VPK Attendance requirements:**

1. Children must arrive in the VPK classroom no later than 7:45 am daily.
2. Children must be in attendance until 11:00 daily.
3. Children who arrive late or leave early will be counted as absent on the VPK attendance form.
4. Parents must call the school office 387-4401 if your child is going to be late or absent.
5. If you are late picking up your child, you will be charged the daily extended care fee applicable.
6. If a child is absent for 5 consecutive instructional days he will be dismissed from the VPK program unless a parent note is received.
7. Absences and tardiness may be excused under “extraordinary circumstances” if appropriate documentation is provided.  
These include:
  - Hospitalization of the child, his parents or guardian (Doctor’s note).
  - Illness of the student, his parent or guardian that requires the ill person to remain at home (Doctor’s note)
  - Death of a member of the student’s, Parents’ or guardian’s immediate family (Obituary or death certificate).
  - Court ordered visitation (court documents).
  - Parent’s or guardian’s military deployment (military documentation).
8. A child may not miss more than 3 days per month for illness.
9. A child may not miss more than 10 days per month regardless of circumstances as listed above.

Parents must complete and sign an attendance verification form each month. These forms will be distributed on the last instructional day of each month and must be signed the same day.

## **VPK: Tuition and Fees**

**The VPK program of 540 instructional hours is FREE** for eligible children, regardless of family income. **Fees paid by the state are contingent on attendance.** Regular attendance is required.

**Pre-K “Stay & Play” fees** will be charged **for all students in the full-time program** based on the hours of 11:00 a.m. to 2:55 p.m. The fee for this portion of extended day is \$225 per month. These students may also opt to stay for a fee for the school-wide Extended Care Program offered from 2:55 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. for \$325 per month when school is in session. These fees are NOT covered by the VPK program. All fees for these programs must be paid by the families who choose to register for them. Families may lose their eligibility to continue in the VPK program if their Extended Care account becomes delinquent. Families are requested to provide items on the supply list for their child.

## **VPK: Activities**

Developmental activities are planned to help your child prepare for Kindergarten. Children will play and participate in individual and group activities that are educational and fun. Organized activities will include prayer, stories, listening skills, social skills, art, music, Spanish, and supervised play. The Pre-K program

provides a safe, enjoyable early learning environment, develops concepts upon which future learning builds, and becomes the foundation for a lifetime of learning.

### **VPK: Discipline**

Good behavior is expected of all children in the program in order to provide a safe and friendly environment in which all can learn. Any child who continues to demonstrate disruptive behavior after parents are notified will be dismissed from the program.

### **VPK: Program Compliance**

Families are advised that to remain in the program, all state requirements and requirements of St. Matthew's must be observed. This Parent/Student Handbook is given to each family at the beginning of the school year to advise of school policy and procedures. An attendance policy will be provided the first day of school for signing and acceptance. The pastor and principal may amend policies for fairness and safety as new situations arise. Amendments will be provided to all families in writing.

## **Registration in Our K-8 Program**

Students who successfully complete the pre-K-3 program in academics and citizenship at St. Matthew's Catholic School are automatically guaranteed a place in our enrollment for the next school year once registered. Priority is given to those currently enrolled in our school, their siblings, and registered parishioners of St. Matthew's Catholic School.

*A special thank you to our volunteer committees who provide many hours to enhance our academic, athletic, and educational programs throughout the year*

### **PTO (Parent-Teacher Organization) Executive Board:**

**President: Jennifer Carter**

These members organize and facilitate fundraisers and special events. The PTO hosts special events, provide refreshments, and make projects and programs available to students and teachers throughout the year. (See Parent-Teacher Organization above.)

### **VIA (Volunteers in Achievement):**

**President: Emma Spence**

These volunteers work with students who need a little extra time to complete their work or those ready for enrichment activities.

### **Athletic Booster Club:**

**President: Christine Geiger**

This parent coordinates fundraising for the athletic department and aid in making improvements to our facilities and equipment.

## **Conclusion**

The policies in this handbook are designed to serve the best interests of all the members of St. Matthew's Catholic School and are based on experience gained over our history and that of the diocese. There will, however, be changes to these policies from time to time. Should you have any questions regarding these policies or any issues not addressed in this handbook, please contact the school office. The principal welcomes suggestions and ideas for changes to any policy that is presented in this handbook, with the understanding that the best interest of all the children will guide all decisions.

We are fully aware and concur with the words of Haim Ginott ... "as a teacher, I possess tremendous power to make a child's life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal."

We understand we are charged with the duty of being a positive, proactive, and optimistic presence in the lives of the children in which we are entrusted. On behalf of the pastor, principal, faculty, and staff, it is our pleasure to serve the families of St. Matthew's Catholic School.

**Yours in Christ,**

**Fr. Jose Kulathinal, Kathy Tuerk, and the faculty and staff of St. Matthew's Catholic School**



## **Diocese of St. Augustine**

# **CATHOLIC GRADE SCHOOL CONFERENCE BY-LAWS**

### **CATHOLIC GRADE SCHOOL CONFERENCE BY-LAWS**

#### *Mission Statement*

The mission of the Catholic Grade School Conference is to provide a wholesome, competitive, athletic program within a Christian environment, in which students can participate in interscholastic athletics. The Conference promotes good sportsmanship and fair play, within the guidelines established by the Conference, through the Diocese of St. Augustine.

Catholic Grade School Conference, located in the Diocese of Saint Augustine.

The Conference shall meet three (3) times every year (August for Basketball and Cheerleading, November for Soccer and Volleyball, and February for Softball). The Commissioner will decide the place and inform the members. Special meetings may be held throughout the year.

Membership includes the Catholic elementary schools in the Diocese of Saint Augustine.

Commissioner of Athletics/Treasurer – This is a permanent, paid position, unless by a 2/3 vote of the coaches he/she is asked to resign or is removed by the Superintendent of Catholic Schools.

The duties of the Commissioner are:

- (a) Preside at all meetings;
- (b) Keep record of all meetings and file copies with the Office of Educational Services;
- (c) Inform members of all regular and special meetings two (2) weeks in advance;
- (d) Draw up schedules of all schools, in all sports;
- (e) Appoint a Coaches' Committee consisting of coaches and official(s) to deal with issues

during a specific season in play.

(f) Arrange for all tournaments, including, but not limited to: arrangement of locations, facilities, times for games, and officials.

(g) Compute standings to determine the teams eligible for the play-offs in softball, basketball, soccer, and volleyball, according to the standings and seasonal play; and

(h) Take care of the proceeds of all seasonal games and tournaments and establish an account with a reputable bank of Jacksonville. Report on all money shall be given at the August meeting in regard to income and expenses.

Eligibility shall apply to all athletic and allied activities of the Catholic Grade School Conference.

(a) A student is academically ineligible if he/she receives two (2) grades (or more) of 69 (D) or below in a major subject. If he/she receives any one (1) 59 (F) or below, that student is also academically ineligible. The major subjects include: Social Studies, Math, Science, Religion, Reading/Literature, and English/Spelling. Principals reserve the right to make a policy with stricter guidelines to deal with this rule on the local level.

(b) Students' grades are evaluated at mid-quarter (progress reports) and at the end of the quarter (report cards) for eligibility.

(c) If a student is academically ineligible, the length of the suspension is five (5) academic days for suspension at Progress Reports; ten (10) academic days for suspension at Report Cards. The suspension begins on the day following distribution of progress reports and/or report cards. Eligibility may be regained following the five (progress report) or ten (10) day suspension, if the grade(s) adhere to the rules of eligibility as stated in (a). Students must be academically eligible prior to tryouts according to existing criteria.

(d) Principals reserve the right to suspend a student from a team for unsatisfactory conduct.

(e) All students shall be given equal opportunities to try out for all teams and eligibility rules shall apply when a student is part of the team.

(f) If a student is ineligible at his school and then transfers to another school, his ineligibility will be carried over to the next report card.

(g) The Pastor or Principal may at any time declare a student, by lack of school attendance or improper conduct, ineligible.

(h) Grading Policy- Diocese of St. Augustine:

90-100 A Passing	1- Outstanding
89-80 B Passing	2- Above Average
79-70 C Passing	3- Average
69-60 D Passing	4- Below Average
60- below F Failure	5- Unsatisfactory

NOTE: Grade of "I" for "Incomplete" means failure unless completed in one week after evaluation report.

(i) In accordance with FHSAA rules, any student who repeats 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade and has played a school sanctioned sport, he/she is ineligible to play that sport the year he/she is repeating.

Eligibility shall apply to all athletic and allied activities of the Catholic Grade School Conference. The medical form (includes medical history, physician approved participation, and participation application) must be dated after June 1 of the previous school year and be kept on file at school (Appendix A).

(a) Injury – Any student not allowed to play because of injury, must have a “clear to play” report from the physician before returning to play.

(b) Transfers – Any student who transfers into a school after a sports season has begun is ineligible to play that sport.

(c) Age Eligibility – If an athlete turns fifteen (15) before August 31 of the school year, he/she may not play any sport for that entire school year. Any principal or coach wishing to check the age of a player can contact the Commissioner’s office. The Commissioner will then contact the school involved requesting the birth certificate of the player in question.

(d) Unsportsmanlike Conduct for Athletes – Any athlete who strikes, curses, is removed from a game, threatens an official, or is guilty of any other related misconduct during a game, or at any other time due to resentment over occurrences or decisions during a game, shall **SERVE A MANDATORY SUSPENSION FOR THE NEXT GAME AND MAY BE SUBJECT TO FURTHER SUSPENSION FOR A SPECIFIC TIME** and therefore shall be ineligible to participate in interscholastic athletics for a period of no more than ten (10) academic days. The effect of a suspension shall be to prohibit an individual player from taking part in interscholastic activity for a specified length of time for violation of the rules of this Conference. An appropriate committee of league coaches and official(s) involved shall determine a sanction that shall require the advice and consent of the principal(s) and the Superintendent of Schools.

(e) Unsportsmanlike Conduct for Coaches – Any coach who strikes, curses, is removed from a game, threatens an official, or is guilty of any other related misconduct during a game, or at any other time because of resentment over occurrences or decisions during a game, **SHALL SERVE A MANDATORY SUSPENSION FOR THE NEXT GAME AND PAY A MONETARY FINE OF FIFTY (\$50) TO THE CATHOLIC GRADE SCHOOL CONFERENCE.** In addition, the coach will be subject to one or more of the following penalties:

1. Reprimand- a letter of censure to the individual in regard to offense committed and warning against further acts of a detrimental nature, which are contrary to the aims of the Conference.

2. Probation- may allow season activity pertaining to the circumstances.

3. Suspension- The effect of a suspension shall be to prohibit an individual coach from taking part in interscholastic activity for a specified length of time for violation of the rules of this Conference. The length of time and other penalties imposed will be determined by the Principal and Administrator of that school, Commissioner of the Conference, and Superintendent of Catholic Schools, Diocese of St. Augustine.

*The Superintendent, Principal, and Commissioner will have the final decision-making authority over all issues of coach and athlete misconduct.*

(f) Ineligible players or coaches at games – Ineligible players or coaches are not allowed to sit on the bench during any athletic contest. This includes academically ineligible players.

The penalty for playing an ineligible player or for an ineligible player or coach sitting on the bench shall be the loss of any game or games in which that player or coach was involved while ineligible.

(g) A student may not attend a practice or game the day of a school absence. A student missing more than three (3) classes is considered absent for athletic competition.

(a) Assessment Fee – An assessment fee (subject to change) of Three Hundred Dollars (\$300.00) is to be paid at the August meeting.

(b) Other Fees - Basketball and Volleyball gate fees will be charged to help pay for officials for those two (2) sports. Each school will pay for softball and Soccer fees for officials. No gate fees will be charged for these two (2) sports.

(c) Money raised by the League is used for a variety of reasons including the salary of the Commissioner of the Conference, equipment purchases, All-Star T-shirts and certificates, payment of workers (basketball), trophies, paying officials (basketball and volleyball), and other purposes determined by the Commissioner of the Conference and the Superintendent of Catholic Schools.

(a) Officials – Official-in-Chief will assign officials for games. There will be two (2) officials, when possible, for all sports. (Team will take whoever is assigned.) He/she shall be an adult connected with a reputable officials association. NOTE: In an emergency, a person may officiate with approval of both teams. His/her payment shall be the current rate charged by the association. The League will pay officials' fees for the finals of each sport. Officials shall have full authority accorded him/her in the Rule Book.

(b) Facilities – All athletic facilities are required to be in safe playing condition and may be checked by a qualified official upon the request of any team. Host schools will provide trained scorekeepers and use approved sports game management forms for each sport.

(c) Authorized Personnel – No more than three authorized personnel, 2 coaches and one manager, or, 1 coach and 2 managers, and the eligible players may sit on the bench during an athletic contest. One (1) scorekeeper from the visiting team is allowed to sit at the official scorer's table.

(d) Results – Home teams will send results of athletic contest to the Commissioner.

(e) Rosters – A roster must be turned in for every sport. Name, date of birth, grade, and uniform number must be on the roster. Roster must be signed by the Principal and Head Coach. Rosters must be turned in two (2) days (48 hours) prior to the start of a season. No additions may be added after the final roster is turned in. Only one (1) team per school is allowed.

(f) Drop Outs – If any school drops out of the League during a season, it may be subject to paying a penalty amount for the officials for the remaining games.

(g) Rules – Please respect the rules and regulations of each school when you are visiting its facilities. Each coach and team is responsible for knowing the rules and regulations of each site.

(h) Tournaments – Regular season standings determine tournament seeding. The team with the best regular season record will be seeded first, followed by the other teams seeded according to their regular season record. The higher seeded team in each game of all tournaments is the designated home team. It does not guarantee that the higher seed will host a tournament game. Byes occur when there are an odd number of teams at any time during the tournament. Depending on the number of byes, the highest seeded teams will draw the bye spot in the tournament. Tournaments are set up in multiples of four (4) (i.e., 4, 8, 12, 16, etc.).

(i) All-Conference Teams – Players are selected to play in an All Conference game for each sport.



The number of players selected from each school is decided by the final standings in each sport. Each school will have at least one (1) representative. Coaches for the All Conference games are selected from the teams that played in the two (2) tournament finals.

(j) Trophies – Trophies will be given to the Regular Season Champions in each sport and the Tournament Champions and Tournament Runners-Up in each sport. A Most Valuable Player trophy will be given to one (1) person from the Tournament Championship Team as the most valuable player of the Championship game.

(k) Coaches' Responsibilities:

1. Coaches in each sport are required to abide by the by laws and to sign the Conference Roster form.  
2. Coaches will make every effort to show good sportsmanship toward opposing teams and coaches during athletic contests.

3. Coaches and school personnel may not transport students. Coaches are required to follow Diocesan Policy for transporting students to athletic contests.

4. Coaches must remain with their teams immediately following athletic contests to ensure good sportsmanship (shaking hands following games, etc...). They must remain with their teams during and following awards presentations.

5. Coaches must remain with their players following athletic contests until the players are safely turned over to their parents or guardians.

6. Coaches or Athletic Directors who solicit help from volunteer coaches are required to see that the volunteer abides by all the rules for coaches. They are required to sign the Conference Roster form.

(l) Divisions – The Conference is divided into two (2) Divisions. Divisional play is set up according to the total enrollment of a school including its 4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grades. The top eight (8) teams in each Division will qualify for tournament play. Schools may only have one team participate in each sport in the League.

All sports will follow the Florida High School Activities Association rules (FHSAA), under the rules of the National Federation of State High School Associations. Coaches will pick students for ability to participate in various activities. The judgment of the coach will be final from the viewpoint of ability. Tryouts for each sport may not be held prior to one month before the season begins. Final cuts for teams may not be made before the school year begins.

Painted hair, tattoos or body paint is not allowed to be worn by athletes at any games. Writing on the face, arms or legs is not allowed.

No warm up music is allowed.

Water ONLY is allowed to be consumed by anyone on the bench in all gyms.

#### **(a) Basketball**

Will follow the FHSAA Rules with the following exceptions:

1. Boys – Six (6) minute regular clock in each quarter.
2. Girls – Ten (10) minute running clock in each quarter, with the following exceptions:
  - Clock stops during time out;
  - The last minute of each half (2nd and 4th quarters) the clock will stop like a regular game.

3. Overtime will be three minutes. Boys: regular clock; Girls: Running clock, except for the last minute, the clock will stop like a regular game.
4. Girl's only and boy's only teams are allowed to participate. The roster limits are fifteen (15) players.
5. Unruly fans can cause their teams to be penalized by:
  - First – A warning is given the team's coach;
  - Second – A technical foul is called against the team;
  - Third – Forfeit of game.
6. Girls play first unless a school does not have a girls' team.
7. During evening games, the host school is required to have a police officer on duty until everyone has left the school property.
8. Basketball Tournaments – The Basketball Tournament Location for Girls and Boys Division 1 and Division 2 Finals will be played at the same site on the same date. The location will alternate each season between Bishop John Snyder and Bishop Kenny. If neither High School is available for the Finals, the Finals will be played in a facility selected by the Commissioner. The Commissioner will take into consideration the tournament seeding of the schools, size of the facility for accommodation of fans, the playing condition of the facility, and location centrally located for the schools participating in the League.

#### **(b) Cheerleading**

Will follow the following rules:

1. Cheerleaders may only cheer at Catholic Grade School Basketball games. Cheerleading squads must be accompanied by their Cheerleading Sponsor or an adult designated by the school in order to cheer at Catholic Grade School Basketball games. The Cheerleading Sponsor is required to abide by the rules for coaches as stated in the by-laws.
2. Cheerleading costumes shall be of an appropriate cheerleading skirt and top, or of a jumper style. Shoes shall be constructed of a canvas top or soft leather with soft rubber soles.
3. The roster limit is fifteen (15) cheerleaders.
4. *No dancing, music, or music routines are allowed. This includes before, during, in between, or after games.*
5. Halftime performances may not exceed two (2) minutes. It may consist of two (2) cheers, with or without a stunt.
6. Squads must remain seated in the stands except during time outs. Squads must remain in the stands during time outs. Squads alternate cheers during time outs. Cheers during time outs may not exceed thirty (30) seconds.
7. Squads alternate cheers between quarters. Cheers between quarters may not exceed forty-five (45) seconds.
8. Cheerleaders must not begin a cheer during a foul after the player on either team has been handed the ball to take a foul shot (i.e. MISS IT!).
9. *Cheerleaders may not stomp on the bleachers.*
10. The squad whose team is the home team gives the visitor the prerogative of cheering first at half-time and between quarters.
11. Cheerleaders are not permitted to wear makeup of any kind. This includes: glitter body paints, tattoos. No jewelry is allowed. No gum is allowed.

12. No megaphones, pom poms or flash cards are allowed.

13. Stunts allowed:

- Cradle Dismounts – A flyer tossed from a stunt caught by two bases landing in a pike position and wrapping her arms around the bases
- Pyramids – May be no more than two cheerleaders in height
- Prep extensions – Shoulder high only with front and back spotters
- Elevators – At waist or shoulder high only with front and back spotters

14. Stunts not allowed:

- Freefalls – Flyer goes from a standing position on shoulders and falls back
- Basket Tosses – From bases' hands, throwing flyer up and catching her back in bases' hands
- Full Extensions – Holding flyer's feet above the shoulders of the base
- Elevators above the shoulders

15. Cheerleading Sponsors are subject to penalties listed for Coaches on page 4, Article XII, (d) for failure to enforce all cheerleading rules as stated in the by-laws.

### **(c) Soccer**

Will follow FHSAA rules with the following exceptions:

1. Game will consist of two (2) thirty (30) minute halves with a five (5) minute half time. There will be no overtimes in case of a tie except during the tournament. A point system is used to determine the standings:

0 points = loss

1 point = tie

3 points = win

2. In playoff overtime, there will be 2 five minute overtime periods (golden goal), then the teams will go to penalty kicks, if necessary, until a winner is decided.

3. All players must wear rubber cleats (no detachable or screw-in cleats).

4. Boys and girls are allowed to participate. The roster limit is twenty-five (25) players.

5. Any player receiving two (2) yellow cards in one game will automatically receive a red card after the second yellow card and be sent off the field. The player sent off will not be allowed to be substituted. Any player receiving a red card will automatically be ineligible for the next regularly scheduled game.

6. Any player receiving three (3) yellow cards during the course of the season and/or playoffs will be suspended from the next game.

7. Any player receiving two red cards during the Regular Season and/or Tournaments will be given a three (3) game suspension.

8. Coaches are required to report all yellow or red cards issued during games to the Commissioner no later than the following day.

9. A suspended game occurs when one half of a game is not completed. The rescheduled game will begin as a new game. Any game, in which a half has been completed, will be considered a completed game. The score when the game is called after a completed half will be the score for the game.

10. Soccer Tournaments – Division 1 and Division 2 will have separate tournaments. The higher seed in

each game of the Soccer tournaments (including the Finals) will host that game. If the higher seed cannot host the game, a field will be selected by the Commissioner. The Commissioner will take into consideration the playing condition of the field and location centrally located to the two teams playing in the game.

**(d) Softball**

Will follow FHSAA Rules with the following exceptions:

1. Girl's only and boy's only teams are allowed to participate. The roster limits are eighteen (18) players.
2. *Ten (10) run rule after five (5) innings. Fifteen run rule after three (3) innings.*
3. One (1) hour fifteen (15) minute time limit including tournament and finals.
4. Bases are sixty (60) feet apart.
5. Pitchers do not have to pitch to the batter in an intentional walk situation.
6. No metal cleats are allowed.
7. If a game ends in a tie, the League will use the NCAA/ International tie breaker: The last batter in the line-up will be placed on 2nd base. Play will continue as normal. The tie breaker procedure will only be utilized for one additional inning during the regular season. If the game is tied after one additional inning, the game ends in a tie. A point system is used to determine the standings:

0 points= loss

1 point= tie

2 points= win

8. Girls:

- Play fast pitch
- May steal when the ball is released from the pitcher's hand
- Home team supplies two (2) optic yellow balls (girls play with 12 inch ball)
- Pitcher's mound is 40 feet from home plate

9. Boys:

- Play modified fast pitch. **Modified pitching rules** for the boys:
  - No windmill
  - Strike zone is defined as area between the forward armpit and top of the knee
  - Pitch cannot exceed the height of the batter's helmetMay steal after the ball crosses home plate
- Home team supplies two (2) optic yellow balls (boys play with 1-1 inch ball)
- Pitcher's mound is 46 feet from home plate
- May utilize a DH

10. Softball Tournaments – The tie breaker procedure will be utilized during the Tournaments and will continue procedure until such a time as winner is determined. In the tournament, each team supplies one (1) new ball. Division 1 and Division 2 will have separate tournaments. The finals in each Division will

be played as a doubleheader, girl's game, followed by the boy's game. The location, dates and times of all tournament games will be selected by the Commissioner. The Commissioner will take into consideration the time constraints dictated by the availability of officials, the tournament seeding of the schools, the playing condition of the field and location centrally located for the schools participating in the League.

**(e) Volleyball**

Will follow FHSAA rules with the following exceptions:

1. Girls only are allowed to participate. The roster limit is eighteen (18) players.
2. All matches including all tournament play will be best two (2) out of three (3).
3. Leather balls are required for game balls.
4. The tournament location will be selected by the Commissioner. The Commissioner will take into consideration the tournament seeding of the schools, size of the facility for accommodation of fans, the playing condition of the facility, and location centrally located for the schools participating in the League.