

ST. JOHN CATHOLIC SCHOOL



Educating the total child

PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK 2009-2010



"Educating Hearts and Minds"

PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK

The purpose of the Parent/Student Handbook is to strive to insure cooperation between the parents, the students, the faculty, and the principal. Familiarity with these regulations and policies, as well as procedures, helps to create greater harmony in school life. St. John Catholic School looks upon parents and students as guardians of the regulations and holds them responsible for their observance.

St. John School believes that a positive and constructive working relationship between the School and a student's parents/guardian is essential to the accomplishment of the School's educational mission. The School accordingly reserves the right to terminate or not renew a student's enrollment contract if the School reasonably concludes that the actions of a parent or guardian make such a positive and constructive relationship impossible and/or otherwise seriously interfere with the School's accomplishment of its educational purpose.

ST. JOHN SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

This Mission Statement was developed by student council officers and the Beta Club president in an effort to put the official Mission Statement into more child friendly terms. Students felt this mission statement was understandable, and felt they could help make it clear to younger students.

St. John School is a Christian community filled with the Holy Spirit and guided by God's Word and Roman Catholic teaching and tradition. The main focus of our school is not only to provide quality education, but also to grow together in holiness, prayer, faith and love. This community with parents, teachers and students combined is a growing family working together to educate the total child in matters of the mind and spirit, while encouraging, artistic and physical development.

These students also suggested that our slogan, "Educating the Whole Child" might mean more to younger children if we said, "Educating Hearts and Minds."

PHILOSOPHY

St. John Catholic School is dedicated to the development of each student's academic excellence, physical well-being, moral strength and spiritual convictions in a Christian atmosphere. Students will acquire the essential knowledge to love and serve God in every aspect of earthly life: the family, the community and the Church.

PURPOSE

The primary purpose of Catholic education is directly related to the fundamental mission of the Catholic Church; to communicate Christ. Catholic education helps faith permeate culture; it relates human affairs and activities to religious values. This integration of religious truth and values with life, distinguishes the Catholic school from other schools. The Catholic school becomes the unique setting within which our faith becomes living, conscious, and active through teaching and learning.

Thus, in Catholic school each student is able to:

- Learn the good news of Jesus Christ
- Develop an understanding of the Catholic Church
- Develop an appreciation for Catholic tradition
- Recognize the importance of a Christian values system in daily life
- Integrate daily living with the Gospel message
- Grow in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ

CATHOLIC EDUCATION

Catholic education focuses on the whole person: on the physical, moral and intellectual talents of each student. Catholic education inspires a spirit of learning, knowing, and understanding the worthwhile goals of life. Catholic education further facilitates the blending of religion with the challenge of learning and living, through a well-balanced curriculum. It enables the student to:

- Develop a desire for learning
- Develop a knowledge and understanding of the academic content areas
- Become a skilled problem solver
- Strive for academic excellence
- Cope with daily living
- Accept responsibility as a productive member in today's society
- Continue education beyond school years through independent learning

LEARNING PROGRAM

To learn is to grow, to change, and to live. Instructional approaches and methods are varied to meet the learning rates, styles and individual needs of students and to help them integrate concepts, skills and attitudes. The faculty continually reviews and evaluates the content and instructional materials in each subject area.

St. John School follows curriculum guidelines of the Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee and the State of Florida.

EARLY CHILDHOOD

The program of early childhood promotes maximum physical, emotional and intellectual development for the young child. These objectives are reached by providing the young child with a warm and stimulating environment within the total Christian atmosphere of the school. Play experiences are geared to the individual needs of each child. Large and small motor activities, musical, art, science experiences and skills necessary to the development of reading and math readiness are encouraged in the Pre-K and Kindergarten programs. Emphasis is placed on learning from the immediate environment, and in providing concrete experiences consistent with the developmental stages of young children.

ELEMENTARY

Classes at the elementary level (grades 1-5) are primarily self-contained. Emphasis on the primary level (grades 1-2) is placed on religion, language arts and math. Social studies, science, music, art, physical education, computer library and guidance are also part of the elementary curriculum. Developmental priorities for this level are encouraging growth and responsibility, including the need to develop good organizational skills and study habits necessary for success in school.

MIDDLE SCHOOL (GRADES 6-8)

St. John School recognizes that early adolescence is a unique period in the lives of students, during which they must cope with a changing self and an increasingly complex world. Our mission is to create a program which provides a supportive environment which fosters educational achievement while providing for physical, social and spiritual growth. Students are exposed to a variety of learning experiences and a rigorous curriculum, encouraging the development of the whole child and providing the opportunity for the student to get a solid preparation for high school.

ADMISSION POLICY

St. John School follows the Admission Policy as defined by the State of Florida and the Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee. All families are eligible to attend St. John School regardless of race, religion, creed, color, sex, or national origin.

APPOINTMENTS

Appointments with members of the faculty must always be made in advance, before coming into the school. All appointments must be made before 7:30 a.m. or after 3:00 p.m. **No adult or parent is permitted to enter the school buildings, including the Parish Hall, during school hours without checking in at the office.**

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance is a necessity in pursuing excellence in education. Students should not be kept home except in case of illness or emergency. Students missing assignments during this time will be held responsible for completing their work within 1 day per each day missed. (Ex: A student missing 3 days, once returning to school, will have 3 days to turn in all completed work). Students are held responsible for making up class and homework by the assigned date.

ARRIVAL, TARDINESS AND EARLY DISMISSAL

School gates will open at 7:45a.m. Morning Prayer is at 8:00a.m. Please try to have your children here on time to get the day off to a good start. Habitual tardiness is not acceptable. Late arrivals and early dismissals are disruptive to the rest of the class.

New policy on early dismissal: There will be times during the year when children need to leave early for doctor's appointments or other serious reasons. When this is the case, please call the school ahead of time (a day ahead preferred, but no later than the morning of the dismissal). We will notify the teacher, so your child can be in the office at the appropriate time. This will prevent classroom interruptions by not using the intercom system.

**THERE WILL BE NO DISMISSALS FROM THE OFFICE AFTER 2:30P.M.
REGULAR DISMISSAL IS AT 2:45P.M.**

Students should be in their respective rooms by 7:55 a.m. If a student is ill or must be absent for some serious reason, the parents or guardian must phone the school office between 7:30 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. A student who comes after 7:55 a.m. will be considered tardy. Before a tardy student will be admitted to class, a parent/guardian must accompany the student to the office to explain the reason for the tardiness.

DISCIPLINE

Discipline is a necessary aspect of Christian life. St. John School strives to teach students to be responsible for the choices they make. Discipline is a form of moral guidance and not a form of punishment. Student discipline is under the jurisdiction of each faculty member. The main purpose of school discipline is to provide a Christian atmosphere of learning based on charity and courtesy. Discipline also provides guidelines for student behavior and a framework of consequences for choices made by the student.

BEHAVIORAL RESPONSIBILITIES

1. We respect all people and their property.
2. We respect a person's right to be free of mental, physical, and/or personal property abuse stemming from intimidation or "horseplay."
3. We are self-disciplined and maintain order.
4. We are honest. We do not lie, steal, or cheat.
5. We do not use rude, abrasive or profane language.
6. We accept responsibility for what we do and what we fail to do.

The goal of Christian education is the development of the whole child. Part of this development lies in the growth of good judgment and a desirable value system. This development should produce self-discipline, self-direction, and responsible behavior as manifested by kindness, respect, thoughtfulness, and proper language.

It is important that students understand that acceptable standards of behavior as defined by our school will be expected at all times. Discipline will be administered when any individual's actions interfere with the rights of teachers to teach and students to learn. Our goal is growth from external control to internal self-discipline.

If a student presents any serious disciplinary problem, the following procedure will be followed.

1. Teacher-student conference.
2. Principal-teacher-student conference.
3. Principal-teacher-parent-student conference.
4. Suspension with possible expulsion.*

* Decided by Pastor and Principal in accordance with Diocesan regulations.

SUSPENSION

Suspension or expulsion may be given to a student for the following reasons:

1. Involvement in physical violence towards any school personnel or pupils.
2. Continuous disruptive classroom behavior.
3. Disrespectful behavior towards teachers or any other personnel.
4. Continuous disobedience to school regulations.
5. Leaving school grounds without permission by the principal (this includes going to the Convenience Store).
6. Frequent failure to do assignments.

7. Profanity or vulgarity.
8. Bringing to or possessing weapons or dangerous instruments in the vicinity of the school. (This includes water and toy guns).
9. Use, possession, or supplying drugs, or alcohol on or off school premises.
10. Bullying or harassment of fellow students.
11. Vandalism or any form of destruction of school property.
12. Any other behavior determined to be inappropriate by school administration.

CONFERENCES

Parents or guardians may have a conference with a teacher by appointment at any time during the school year. After parents have contacted the school office, the school secretary will respond within a reasonable time and set up an appointment. Parent/Teacher Conferences should always be held in a professional manner, keeping in mind respect for the individual person.

The policy concerning grievances states that any parent who is not fully satisfied with the decision of a teacher regarding an action on a particular problem, should first consult and discuss the decision with the appropriate teacher. If the problem still is not resolved, then the administrator should be consulted. If dissatisfaction still exists after consulting the teacher and the administrator, then the pastor is to be consulted.

DRUG POLICY

It is of the utmost importance that the physical, social, and mental health of our students be protected at all times. If such is to be done, then there must be a well-defined, fully explained and meticulously carried out school policy in this area. This policy defines these areas of concern.

1. Smoking is not permitted at any time in the school buildings, on church grounds, or at school sponsored activities. Suspension can occur.
2. Those students caught on school premises or on school sponsored activities using/in possession of, selling or supplying drugs (alcohol included) will be subject to suspension and/or expulsion.
3. When a student's behavior or physical appearance gives indication of being under the influence of drugs (alcohol included) his/her parents will be notified and the school will insist on medical or professional consultation.

4. The school, in the person of the principal or his designate, reserves the right to search desks, bags, cupboards, etc., in order to preserve the safety of each individual and the common good of the school.
5. Police aid will be sought when the gravity of the situation so warrants it.

FIELD TRIPS

All students travel under the auspices of the school. Requirements include written permission from the parents/guardians, proper supervision, and adequate insurance coverage. Field trips should be truly educational and directly related to the curriculum.

BIRTHDAYS

On the Friday closest to a student's birthday, students may use a No Uniform Today Pass (NUT). Weekend birthdays may be celebrated on the following Friday. Summer birthdays can be celebrated on the Friday closest to the six month/half year anniversary. (Students are still expected to dress appropriately for school and must still dress out for PE.) Flowers, balloons, etc. delivered to school will be kept in the office and given to the child at the end of the day. If you send birthday treats, they are to be given out at lunch time to the whole class. Treats should be easy to serve, like cookies or cup cakes. If **YOU** want to slice a birthday cake and serve it that is fine also. Party invitations must be given to the teacher for the whole class or all girl/all boy parties.

PARTIES

Parents must be fingerprinted and a background check done at a cost of \$45 through the Diocese and attend a designated diocesan workshop in order to attend or chaperone parties (this class can be completed on-line at www.ediocese.net; course title *Safe Environment*).

There is no classroom gift exchange or individual gift exchange at Christmas on campus.

Preschool and K5 – 1 hour (near the end of the day). Room mothers coordinate with the teacher. Halloween, Christmas, Valentine's, Easter and End of the Year.

1st thru 5th – 1 hour (near the end of the day). Room mothers coordinate with teacher. Halloween, Christmas, Valentine's and End of the Year.

Middle School has parties at Christmas and an End of the Year Activity, as well as numerous other activities throughout the year.

EMERGENCIES

If an emergency arises and early dismissal is necessary, parents are requested to listen to the local radio and TV stations to learn when school is open after such events.

If Bay County Schools are closed due to inclement weather, St. John School is also automatically closed.

HARASSMENT POLICY

The Pastor, administration, and staff of St. John School believe that all employees and students are entitled to work and study in a school environment that is Christ-centered and free of harassment. St. John School will not tolerate harassment of any type, and the appropriate disciplinary action will be taken. Disciplinary action may include suspension or expulsion.

Examples of harassment include but not limited to verbal or written taunting; bullying; intimidating, hostile or offensive conduct; jokes, stories, pictures, cartoons, drawings or objects which are offensive, tend to alarm, annoy, abuse or demean an individual or group.

Students who believe they have experienced harassment shall report such matter to the teacher. If the teacher feels the complaint has merit, and is unable to stop the inappropriate conduct, the matter will be referred to the principal.

1. A complaint of harassment is to be made to the Principal and shall be as specific as possible regarding details. The complaint shall be in writing.
2. The Principal shall immediately investigate the complaint and shall make written notations of the specific allegations.
3. Information to be acquired during the investigation of the complaint shall include names of witnesses, dates, times and the specific charge of harassment.
4. Stress the need for confidentiality.
5. No reprisals will be tolerated against complainants, witnesses, or of individuals involved in the investigation.
6. The Principal shall make a prompt determination regarding any disciplinary action.

HOMEWORK

Homework is an integral reinforcement tool in the educational process. It helps to discipline the student to develop independent work habits and a sense of responsibility. Homework is assigned throughout the week but not usually assigned on weekends. Any student who does not complete homework or classwork during the week is expected to do the work over the weekend. Long term projects and/or assignments are not considered weekend homework. As a rough guideline, homework should not generally exceed 10 minutes per grade – that is 10 minutes in grade 1, 20 in grade 2, 30 in grade 3, and so on.

INSURANCE

Every child in our school is covered by the Diocesan Insurance Plan for the hours he/she is under school supervision.

LITURGY

Liturgy is our greatest act of worship and praise as Catholics. Students attend Liturgy on a regular schedule, indicated on a monthly calendar sent home via the school newsletter. Parents are invited to join in the celebration. Parents are also welcome to join us at morning prayers around the flagpole at 8:00 a.m.

MEDICATION

Administration of medications during school hours should occur only when the medication schedules cannot be adjusted to provide for administration at home.

If any medication is to be administered at school, prescription and over-the-counter, a “Permission to Administer Medication” form (obtained from your doctor) must be filled out by the physician and parent and brought to the school office along with the medication.

The medication must have the child’s name on it. No student is allowed to keep any medication in his/her desk, book bag, or on his/her person at any time.

PARENT-TEACHER ORGANIZATION (PTO)

Parents, guardians, and teachers of children attending St. John School are eligible to be members of the St. John PTO. The purpose of the PTO is to help parents and teachers fulfill their responsibilities for the education of their children in Catholic schools; and to provide parents and others with a means of participating effectively in the educational mission of the school.

REGISTRATION

At the time of registration, the child’s birth certificate, baptismal certificate, and medical records must be presented. Children being registered for K3 must be three years of age by September 1; K-4 must be four years of age by September 1. Kindergarten must be five years of age by September 1, and First Grade must be six years of age by September 1 or have completed Kindergarten at an accredited school.

REPORT CARDS

Students receive report cards approximately every nine weeks. Grades can also be checked via the internet on Powerschool.

SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL

St. John School Advisory Council is the advisory body that upholds and carries out the policies set by the Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee as well as policies adopted by its own Board.

Advisory Council meetings are held monthly, at dates indicated on the school calendar. Persons seeking to address the Council must contact the Council president or principal no less than 24 hours before the monthly meeting to be put on the Board agenda.

SCHOOL HOURS

The school day begins at 7:55 a.m. and ends at 2:45 p.m.

For the security of the children, after Morning Prayer and until dismissal, the campus is closed. The only gate open from 8:00 a.m. to 2:45 p.m. is the gate leading to the school office door.

The expressway **must** be used to pick up all students. K4 & K5 only pick up by the middle school gate on Flower Street. All other students will be picked up on the 10th Street expressway. So that students can be loaded efficiently & safely, please pull as far forward in line as possible. It is much quicker for your child to walk to you than for you to stop by your child and hold up the line.

The school grounds are open to students at 7:45 a.m. Students who come between 7:15 a.m. and 7:45 a.m. should gather in the cafeteria (there will be adult supervision during this time). The school grounds close at 3:00 p.m. Parents must make arrangements for students to be picked up by 3:00 p.m.

EXTENDED CARE

An extended School Day Program will be offered each school day from 2:45 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. Any student not picked up by 3:00 p.m. will go to the Extended School Day Program.

If you have special needs concerning these procedures, please call the office.

SCHOOL PROPERTY

Students are responsible for damage to all school property. Parents will be notified if a student is guilty of such damage. Students are also responsible for loss or damage to school textbooks and will be required to pay the full price for any book damaged.

TECHNOLOGY

Powerschool enables you to check your child's progress on-line at any time. New access codes will be distributed at the beginning of each year.

Email is a convenient way to communicate with teachers. Addresses are in the school directory and on the school website.

There are a number of good websites of special interest. The St. John School website is located at www.stjohncatholicschool.com. Sites linked to St. John School curriculum in grades K-5

include: Math: www.eduplace.com
 Reading: www.mhschool.com
 Religion: www.webelieve.com

These sites have general information and specific grade level activities.

ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY FOR TECHNOLOGY – St. John students are not permitted to visit unacceptable web sites, or to misuse software or hardware. Students not abiding by acceptable use policies will lose the privilege of computer access.

TUITION/FEES

Tuition helps defray the cost of educating each student. A variety of payment plans is available to accommodate family budget planning. Tuition and fees for the following year are set by the School Board in the spring. Parents are notified of the amount at that time. In May parents are reminded of tuition and fee payment schedules.

Children of families with outstanding tuition or fees will not be re-registered until such debts have been paid in full. Transcripts and report cards of children who are not returning to St. John School and who owe tuition will not be released to new schools until payment has been made. Any child who is not current in tuition will not receive a final report card.

INTRODUCTION TO UNIFORM CODE

Students are expected to follow the dress/uniform code on all school days, and to be clean and neat in keeping with the pride we have in our school. Students violating the dress/uniform code will be sent to the office for a "**violation of dress/ uniform code.**" He/she will call a parent to bring the proper clothing or take the child home. The student will receive a zero for work missed because of the unexcused absence from class.

K4 STUDENTS DO NOT WEAR UNIFORMS.

IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF PARENTS TO SEE THAT STUDENTS COME TO SCHOOL IN PROPER (*ZOGBY ONLY*) UNIFORM.

SCHOOL UNIFORM

Girls, Grade K – 2

Blouse: white polo or oxford shirt w/logo;
white peter pan w/logo

Shorts: navy (5” or less above the bend of the knee)

Jumper: plaid

Skort: navy

Pants: navy pleated or non-pleated

Girls, Grade 3-5

white polo or oxford w/logo
white peter pan w/logo

navy (5” or less above the bend of knee)

plaid

plaid

navy pleated or non-pleated

Girls, Middle School

Blouse: yellow or navy polo or oxford shirt w/logo

Skort or shorts: plaid (5” or less above the bend of the knee)

Pants or shorts: khaki pleated or non-pleated

Boys, Grade K – 5

Shirt: white polo or oxford shirt w/logo

Pants or shorts: navy pleated or non-pleated

Boys, Middle School

yellow or navy polo or oxford w/logo

Khaki pleated or non-pleated

ACCESSORIES

BELT: Brown, tan, or black belt must be worn with shorts or pants.

SOCKS: Socks must be worn every day. Boys may wear navy or white socks. Girls may wear navy or white socks, knee socks, or tights.

SHOES: Navy, brown, or black tie or loafer or white, navy, or black tennis shoes. Shoes must be closed toe and closed heels and just be solid color. No boots or sandals

GIRLS: No nail polish allowed. Only stud earrings (one pair) and **small religious** emblems may be worn. No other jewelry allowed. No make-up in Grades K-5 and light and natural make-up only in Grades 6-8.

BOYS: **Small religious** emblems may be worn. No other jewelry of any kind can be worn. Hair should be neat, clean, and appropriate and not cover student’s eyes.

COLD WEATHER GRADES K-5 THROUGH 8

SWEATER: navy blue or white (plain, no emblems), no hood (does not have to be Zogby)

SWEATSHIRT: St. John School zip fleece with logo, sleeveless vest with logo, navy blue or white (plain, no emblems, does not have to be Zogby), no hoodies

SHIRTS: Long sleeve polo or oxford shirts (Zogby only) with logo may be worn in cold weather. Turtle necks may not be worn under uniform shirts.

COATS/JACKETS: May be worn to and from classes and cafeteria in cold weather but must be removed in classrooms.

P. E. CLASS (ONLY GRADES 6-8 DRESS OUT)

Solid navy blue shorts with plain white, gray, or T-shirt or St. John Panther T-shirt and tennis shoes and socks.

****Students must wear uniforms purchased from Zoghby's Uniforms ONLY****

NUT DAY PASSES

Students may use Not in Uniform Today (NUT Day) passes only on a FRIDAY and only within a week of earning them. That also includes birthday celebrations (see Birthday section for rules). Students are still expected to dress appropriately for school. Shorts and skirts need to reflect same lengths as uniform policy. NUT Day passes relate to clothing only and does not reflect accessories including jewelry, makeup, hats, etc. PE uniforms must still be worn on NUT Day.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers make a major contribution to St. John School and are always welcome. To ensure a safe environment for the students, there are some diocesan requirements.

All volunteers, coaches, chaperones, etc. must be fingerprinted through the Diocese have a background check at a cost of \$45, and attend a Diocesan workshop on *Safe Environment*. Call the school office for details.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Student use of cell phones on campus during school hours is **not** permitted. Phones must be kept in the off position and remain stored. If use of cell phones occurs or it is observed as being, the phone will be confiscated. Use or visibility of cell phones will lead to confiscation.

All other electronic devices including MP3 players, iPods, handheld games, etc. should not be brought on campus. If seen, they will be confiscated.

.....DETACH AND RETURN TO HOME ROOM TEACHER.....

The administration at St. John School reserves the right to amend this handbook for just cause. Parents will be given prompt notification in the school newsletter if changes are made.

I _____ and _____
(Students Name Print) (Parent/Guardian Name Print)
have read, or have an understanding, of the St John Catholic School Parent/Student Handbook 2009-2010 and agree to abide this handbook.

_____ and _____
(Students Signature and Date) (Parent/Guardian Signature and Date)