

2024-2025  
Parent/Student Handbook



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## **Saint Rita Catholic School**

Saint Rita Catholic School was established in September 1954 as a parish school staffed by the Felician Franciscan Sisters. Initially, Saint Rita housed seven grades in four classrooms. The growing enrollment resulted in an additional four rooms and a library constructed in 1967. In 1995 the Early Childhood wing was established to meet the needs of preschool children, grades PK 3 and PK 4. Currently, Saint Rita Catholic School services children in prek-3 through 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

Saint Rita Catholic School is part of the Catholic School System of the Diocese of Fort Worth. Saint Rita is accredited by the Texas Catholic Conference Education Department (TCCBED). It holds membership in the National Catholic Education Association (NCEA) and the Texas Private Schools Association (TPSA).

### **Patron Saint**

Saint Rita of Cascia is the patron for Saint Rita Catholic School. Rita was born in 1381 at Roccaporena near Cascia, Italy. When quite young she felt the call to enter religious life, but at the age of fourteen she was promised in marriage by her parents to a young man of good will but rather restless by nature. Through her own goodness Rita was able to smooth over the rougher side of her husband's character, and they lived in harmony for about eighteen years. He was then murdered. Rita not only forgave his killers, but she also prayed to God that she would prefer the death of her sons rather than see them avenge the crime. As it happened, both sons died shortly after their father. Now totally alone, but filled with love, Rita thought of fulfilling the longings of her youth by seeking admission into religious life. Having overcome formidable difficulties, she was received by the Augustinian Nuns in Cascia. Here she lived for her remaining forty years of life. Throughout the final fifteen years she bore the mark of a thorn of Christ's passion. Rita died on May 22, 1456, which is observed as her feast day. She was noteworthy in that she experienced all the possible states of life and overcame the difficulties of each with a generous love and a profound spirit of penance, while always being a peacemaker and a helper of divisions. Her incorrupt body is preserved in Cascia in the shrine which bears her name.

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Note: The policies in this handbook align with those in the Diocese of Fort Worth Catholic Schools Administrative Handbook. In the event that differences exist between the two handbooks, the Diocese of Fort Worth Catholic Schools Administrative Handbook shall override this handbook. For a copy of the Diocese of Fort Worth Catholic Schools Administrative Handbook, please contact school administration.

It is a privilege and a grace to be educated in this Catholic school, not a right. The conduct of the student or a parent/guardian of the student may cause the student to lose the privilege of attending this Catholic school. The school retains the right to disallow a student to attend, continue attending, or to re-enroll in the school.

### **Saint Rita Catholic School Mission**

Saint Rita Catholic School is dedicated to giving glory to God by passing on to our students the teachings and traditions of the Roman Catholic Church while providing them with a quality education in a nurturing and diverse environment.

### **Saint Rita Catholic School Vision**

Saint Rita Catholic School will partner with parents in the academic and faith formation of students to support success for all students. Focusing on Catholic identity and values, we will develop students into good stewards of their faith with excellence of character to serve their neighborhoods and global communities.

### **Saint Rita Catholic School Philosophy**

At Saint Rita Catholic School, we believe:

- Everyone is a child of God, capable of great goodness and called to serve others.
- Gospel values must be interwoven into teaching all subjects to help form good stewards who will be morally responsible and productive citizens.
- The body is a temple of God to be nurtured spiritually, physically, intellectually, culturally and socially in a Catholic environment.
- The curriculum must be taught so that it provides the skills and concepts needed by the students to be successful at all grade levels and to form life-long learners.

### **School Creed**

This is our school.  
Let Peace dwell here.  
Let the room be full of contentment.  
Let Love abide here:  
Love one another,  
Love of mankind,  
Love of life itself,  
And Love of God.  
Let our prayers lead to world peace  
So that peace may prevail on earth.

## Admission/ Withdrawal/Transfer Regulations

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### NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATORY POLICY AS TO STUDENTS

Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth schools admit students of any race, color, national, and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

Religious educational institutions are exempt from Civil Rights legislation in the employment and enrollment of individuals of a particular religious persuasion. Preference in employment and admissions may be given to Catholic staff and students in the Catholic Schools of the Diocese.

New admissions will be based on the following priorities:

1. Children of faculty
2. Children who are currently enrolled
3. Children of active parishioners of Saint Rita Parish with siblings enrolled in the school
4. Children of active parishioners of Saint Rita Parish
5. Children of non-active parishioners of Saint Rita Parish with siblings enrolled in the school
6. Children of non-active parishioners of Saint Rita Parish
7. Children of Catholics who are parishioners of other Catholic communities
8. Children of non-Catholics with siblings enrolled in the school
9. Children of non-Catholics

*The above priorities shall be used by the admission staff with respect to any conflicts in the enrollment of Saint Rita Catholic School.*

#### **Admission Procedure**

1. Parents/Guardian will complete an online application form and present the following original documents to the school office.
  - Birth Certificate
  - Baptismal Certificate
  - Health Records
  - Court-ordered custody documentation
  - Previous school records: last report card, cumulative record, achievement test scores
2. A student entering kindergarten must be 5 years of age on or before September 1. A student entering 1<sup>st</sup> grade must be 6 years of age on or before September 1. A student entering PK3 or PK4 must be 3 or 4 years of age on or before September 1 and must be able to feed himself and use the restroom independently.
3. Upon receipt of the application form, an interview will take place with the family and the children. New students in grades K-8 will be given a placement assessment.
4. The principal makes the decision regarding acceptance of each new student.
5. Upon acceptance, registration form is completed online & non-refundable registration fee is paid.
6. Prior to the child's entrance into Saint Rita Catholic School, the child must have a physical check-up by his/her family doctor. Also, all immunizations required by law must be up to date.
7. All new students are accepted on a nine-week probationary period, during which time a decision is made whether or not the school can meet the needs of the child. After the first four weeks, a progress report will be sent to the parents, and a conference may be requested regarding the progress of the student. At the end of the nine weeks, the principal will inform the parents **if there is a need** for the parent to enroll the student elsewhere since the school is not able to meet the needs of the student.
8. Each child's performance and citizenship are evaluated at the close of each school year to determine continued enrollment in Saint Rita Catholic School.

9. Students who are invited to return for the upcoming school year will register during the spring semester. Fees are to be paid at this time. No student shall be re-admitted who has an outstanding financial obligation to the school.

***Student Withdrawals/Transfers***

When a student is transferring to another school, parents must notify the principal and the homeroom teacher at least one week in advance of the transfer. All textbooks, library books, and other school property must be returned to the teacher. After the first quarter, tuition and fees will not be refunded except in the case of extraordinary circumstances. **Transcripts and other school records will be released only after all financial obligations have been met and all textbooks and library books have been returned.** Refer to Diocesan Policy 5230 for additional information.



## Academic Information

**Curriculum and Textbooks** The religion curriculum for Saint Rita Catholic School is provided by the Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth. The curriculum for core subjects (excluding Religion) is aligned with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills. These standards guide instruction in all grades. Textbooks are selected from the State of Texas adopted textbook list and Diocesan recommendations. A variety of supplementary materials is used to enrich and expand the curriculum.

Textbooks are distributed to students at the beginning of the school year. Students will be fined for textbook damage and will be required to purchase lost books.

### **Classwork and Homework**

- We have high expectations for our students. In grades 3-8, it is the student's responsibility to keep up with class assignments. Students will record assignments in student planners daily and will be instructed on accessing their assignments in FACTS/Renweb beginning in grade 4. Parents of students in grades 3 or lower should review the nightly homework folder for assignments or messages from the teacher.
- Students with excused absences will make up any work missed.
- Any student entering the school after the start of the day will make up work missed.
- Students absent on the day of a test will be expected to take the test when returning to school.
- Students in grades 6-8 (or parents of students in grades 5 or lower) must meet with/contact the teacher to determine a schedule for making up missed work.
- On the day of an absence, class work/homework requests need to be called into the office by 9 A.M. to allow sufficient time for teachers to prepare. If a call is not made to the office by 9 A.M., the student will get the work from the teacher the following day or upon returning to school.
- Teachers will communicate homework policies with students and parents at the beginning of the year.
- It is the purpose of these guidelines to promote responsibility in our students. Teachers will work with students to support the needs of the individual.

**Grading** Grades are based on a combination of daily formative assessments and summative assessments including quizzes, tests, papers, and projects. Refer to your child's teacher for additional information.

Numerical grades are recorded on student report cards for all core subjects (religion, English, reading, math, social studies, science). Alpha grades are given for the following subjects in grade 5-8 (P.E., art, Spanish, music, and technology).

A = 100-94

B = 93-86

C = 85-76

D = 75-70

F = Below 70

(a + or – may appear after an Alpha grade indicating upper or lower range of the grading scale)

The following ratings are used for P.E., art, Spanish, music, and technology grades 1– 4.

E = Excellent

S = Satisfactory

U = Unsatisfactory

G = Good

N = Needs Improvement

Inc. = Incomplete

PK 3, PK 4, and Kindergarten students receive skill development reports. Student skill development will be indicated per below.

M – student has met objective

P – student has shown acceptable progress

I – improvement/practice is needed

N/A – not applicable

Students conduct codes in all grades will be:

E = Excellent

S = Satisfactory

U = Unsatisfactory

G = Good

N = Needs Improvement

**Report Cards and Progress Reports** Report cards are issued four times a year at the end of the nine-week grading period. Progress reports are sent home at midpoint of each grading period.

A parent/teacher conference is required for a student earning a grade of 70 or lower on a quarter report card or progress report. No student with a grade of 70 or lower may be admitted to class after 3 school days following a report card or progress report until a conference has been scheduled.

**Promotion and Retention** ***Diocesan Policy #5240***

Promotion of a student in elementary school will be based on the satisfactory completion of the present grade curriculum and the ability to do the next grade's work.

5K A student must have at least a satisfactory final average in reading and mathematics in order to advance to the next grade level. Promotion is made on the ability to do the next grade level's work.

1 – 5 A student must have at least a 70% in religion, language arts (including a 70% in reading), and mathematics, and an overall 70% average.

6 – 8 A student must have a "70" in all core subjects – religion, English and/or reading/literature, mathematics, science, and social studies. A student who fails a major subject is not promoted. For each major subject below "70" a student must make up the work in summer school. If summer school is not available, work will be assigned, and the student will be tested prior to advancement to the next grade level.

Students in the elementary grades should not be retained more than once while enrolled in the diocesan school system.

**If all avenues have been explored and the school cannot meet the needs of the student, or the parent(s) have not acted on the school's recommendations regarding diagnostic evaluation, or recommendations regarding academic growth, the principal has the right to request withdrawal of the child (if currently enrolled) or refuse admittance.**

**Standardized and Benchmark Testing** Standardized testing is one of several means of assessing pupil performance and readiness. The Texas Primary Reading Inventory (TPRI) is administered to kindergarten, first, second, and third graders to identify strengths and weaknesses in early reading skills. This assessment is provided at the beginning, middle, and end of each school year. The Iowa Assessment is administered to students in grades 4-7 during a designated week published on the yearly school calendar. The Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) may be administered to students in grades 4 and 7. Additionally, the students are assessed at the beginning, middle, and end of year for growth in reading comprehension and math skills. Students in 8<sup>th</sup> grade will be assessed by the Classical Learning Test.

Each student's test results are available for parents. Iowa Assessment Results are recorded on the permanent record card.

**8<sup>th</sup> Grade Promotion** ***Diocesan Policy #5270***

Promotion from 8<sup>th</sup> grade may be marked by a modest exercise which gives recognition to the unique value of the phase of Christian education just completed. Saint Rita Catholic School 8<sup>th</sup> grade promotion activities are coordinated by the eighth grade homeroom teacher and the principal of Saint Rita Catholic School.

## Student Awards and Recognition

### Honor Roll:

The intent of the honor roll is to recognize student success each quarter. Honor roll awards are determined per below:

- “Honors” is earned by students who have earned a numerical average of 85 to 89.999 with all grades being at least 76 and no “incompletes” as of the last day of the quarter.
- “High Honors” is earned by students with a numerical average of 90 to 95.999 with all grades being at least 76 and no “incompletes” as of the last day of the quarter.
- “Highest Honors” is earned by those students with a numerical average of 96 or above with all grades being at least 76 and no “incompletes” as of the last day of the quarter.

Honor Convocation: Students receive honor certificates each quarter for honor roll status.

**National Junior Honor Society:** Sponsored by the National Association of Secondary School Principals, National Junior Honor Society members are selected based on Scholarship, with a GPA after the 1<sup>st</sup> semester of a 90 or above, Leadership, Community Service, Citizenship, and Character. After induction to the Saint Rita Chapter of the National Junior Honor Society students must maintain a 90 average each quarter, with no quarter grade in any class below a C (76), and a conduct/citizenship quarter rating of Satisfactory or higher in all classes. Students are expected to perform community service projects. If a student does not comply with the above stated standard, the student and parent receive an official warning from the National Junior Honor Society moderator and the principal. If a quarter grade or citizenship/conduct grade falls below the standard a second time, the student’s name is removed from the National Junior Honor Society rolls permanently.

**Academic-Service Recognition:** Students who earn Honor Roll status all year, participate in academic meets, served as altar servers, music ministers, or other leadership/service roles at the school are recognized and given a pin. Students in each grade are recognized for outstanding academic performance, good citizenship, Saint Rita award, Spanish awards, and Music and Drama awards. Students who participate in athletics are recognized and special awards may be given to outstanding athletes.

## Extra-Curricular Activities

Saint Rita Catholic School strives to offer a wide range of extracurricular activities to enhance the curriculum, the social and physical development of each child. These activities may vary from year to year depending on many factors such as student interest, parent volunteers, number of students able to participate, etc.

*Fine Arts:* School Musicals  
Art  
Choir

*Academic Competitions:* Spelling Bee, grades 1-8  
PSIA Academic Competitions, grades 1-8  
Robotics, participation may begin in 5<sup>th</sup> grade (if sponsors are available)

## Attendance/Tardy Regulations

In compliance with the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops Education Department (TCCBED) and the State of Texas Family Code, schools of the Diocese of Fort Worth follow compulsory attendance laws. Students are required to be in attendance for at least 90% of the days that classes are in session in order to receive credit for the class/course. Absences in excess of **17 days** in the school year may affect student promotion, issuance of middle school credits, **tuition assistance**, and/or re-enrollment for the following year. Cases are reviewed on an individual basis.

Students must be in attendance at school for three and one-half hours to equal one-half day of school. Less than three and one-half hours counts as an absence. In order to participate in after school activities, a student must be at school at least one-half day.

**Present:** In school 6 to 7½ hours: arrive before 9:15 am; leave after 1:45 pm.

**Half-Day Absent:** In school 3½ to 6 hours: arrive before 11:15; leave after 11:45 am.  
(or absent more than 1½ hours during school day)

**Absent:** In school less than 3½ hours; arrive after 11:45 am; leave before 11:15 am.

School absence is categorized in the following manner:

Family Emergency – A family emergency may be a death in the immediate family, serious or prolonged illness of the student or a member of the immediate family. Each case is handled on an individual basis.

Absence Due to Illness – A student unable to come to school due to illness of 5 or more consecutive days requires a doctor's statement for readmission to class.

Absences for Other Reasons – When a student is absent from school for any reason other than doctor's appointment, illness or family emergency, the student may be permitted to make up the work that he/she missed depending on the circumstances. The school staff is not obligated to provide special services when a parent opts to schedule activities that warrant student absence on compulsory attendance days as indicated on the annual school calendar.

Family Trips – If a trip is required by a family, **it will be at the principal's discretion whether the absence will be excused or unexcused.** The following procedure must be followed: Send a letter or email to the principal **two weeks in advance** of the trip requesting absences from school. The letter must contain the date of the trip, reason for the trip, a request to all teachers for all assignments from all classes. All assignments, tests, projects will be due the day that the student returns to school. Failure to follow procedures may result in loss of credit for missed work.

Doctor/Dental Appointments – Arranging doctor and dental appointments during the school day is strongly discouraged. Please make a sincere effort to schedule all doctors' appointments after school. If this is impossible and a student must be dismissed early, a note is to be sent to the teacher in advance. Parents must report to the school office to sign students out before they will be released. Parents will need to sign a student back in at the school office before the child returns to class. Verification from the doctor or dentist is required upon return to school.

**Note: It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian of each student to call the school by 9 A.M. to explain the absence of the student and to request class work. If the school office is not called, the parent or student must bring a note explaining the absence on the first day the student returns to school.**

**Tardiness** A student is tardy if he/she arrives in the classroom after the 7:50 bell rings. If a student is dropped off in the carline after the 7:50 bell, he/she is considered tardy. A student who arrives to the school late must report to the office accompanied by the parent or guardian. Tardiness is recorded for each grading period and is recorded in a student's permanent record. **Excessive tardiness will affect the amount of tuition assistance awarded to a family.**

Habitual tardiness affects a student's school performance, delays staff in completing assigned duties, and disrupts the class that tardy students are entering.

To support student success and develop the habit of punctuality, the following procedures will be used to address tardiness:

- Three (3) Tardies in one quarter: Phone call and/or email to parent notifying of the tardies
- Six (6) Tardies in one semester: Conference with parent(s) and students to discuss an arrival improvement plan
- Seven (7) Tardies or more in one semester: \$5.00 charged to FACTS per student per tardy

## Communication

In order to maintain a positive school-parent relationship, teachers and staff regularly communicate with parents and guardians. It is expected that guardians will regularly review all school communication and respond as required. Teachers are expected to respond to parent/guardian emails within 24 hours.

### *Forms of Communication:*

#### **Email:**

- Teachers email parents weekly to provide updates on curriculum goals, upcoming events, and student needs. Some teachers may opt to send home a printed note in the homework folder.
- **RITA Pack** (RITA-Relevant Information to All) Each week, a parent pack will be e-mailed to parents via FACTS. This “pack” will contain digital copies of important school information. Please read all of the information; some will require feedback. If a form needs to be filled out and returned, please print a copy or request one from the school office.
- The principal’s newsletter is used monthly or bi-monthly with important information about social, academic, or fundraising events.

**Parent Alert:** text messages will be used to communicate high priority information from the office of the principal. Messages sent via Parent Alert will originate from 31706. Please add this short code to your saved contacts so that you can be sure to receive any Parent Alerts sent from the school.

#### **Conferences:**

- Formal conferences will be held twice a year: after the first quarter for all students and after the third quarter for special concerns identified by teachers or for parents who request a spring conference.
- Informal conferences – discussions about your child’s progress are welcome throughout the school year. Contact the school office to leave a message for the teacher, send an email to the teacher, or send a note with your child. The teacher will contact you as soon as possible.

**Parent Communication with the school:** If a parent wishes to speak with teacher/staff or principal, the parent must send a written note to the school office, make a personal phone call, or send an e-mail message. Keeping open communication is a priority. All faculty/staff will return phone calls and e-mail messages during planning time.

**Parent Concerns:** All parent questions and concerns regarding class, grades, projects, conduct, class procedures, etc. should be directed to the teacher. If necessary, subsequent communication or meetings may be scheduled with the principal, parent and teacher.

**Non-Custodial Parent:** Parental rights extend to either parent unless the school has been provided with evidence that there is a court order, statute, or legally binding document relating to matters such as divorce, separation, or custody that specifically revokes these rights. A copy of such document must be in the school file. In case of joint custody both parents should be equally informed of their child’s progress. It is the parents’ responsibility to inform the school if special accommodations need to be made.

**Parental and Student Rights:** Saint Rita Catholic School shall respect parental and students’ rights to information and to confidentiality. The school shall:

1. provide parents and students access to records directly related to the students (e.g. duplicate report card, permanent record card, health records)
2. obtain written consent of parents before releasing personally identifiable information from student’s records

**Emergency School Closing:** In case of inclement weather, such as flooding, storms, or icy streets, Saint Rita School will post information regarding closing of school or delayed opening on NBC DFW or <https://www.nbcdfw.com/>. Parent Alert will also be used to communicate school closings.

## Discipline Policy

Saint Rita Catholic School's ultimate goal in discipline is to help its students become self-disciplined. This can be observed in students whose behavior is consistent with good moral principles and Christian virtues. We strive for a positive, non-disruptive environment in which all persons, their rights and their belongings are respected. An important key for building responsibility in children is allowing them to experience logical and natural consequences as a response to choices and actions made.

Saint Rita Catholic School has high expectations of appropriate behavior for its students. We believe that discipline can be taught, therefore, we will concentrate on teaching students' appropriate behaviors and social skills.

Discipline requires a partnership between every student, parent, and educator, since it is both a cooperative and an individual effort. The ideal for which we strive is that discipline is best achieved through love and good example. However, when disciplinary actions are necessary, they will be carried out in a firm, fair, caring and consistent format. The following outlines the strategies to support positive student behavior:

1. classroom interventions with parent-teacher communication via FACTS/RenWeb and email
2. principal referral
3. parent/teacher/principal conference
4. behavior plan
5. student contract

Within each teacher's classroom, there is a discipline plan in place. Each teacher will communicate the discipline plan to parents and students.

*Expectations for all students include the following:*

- Show respect/courtesy to all people and their property
- Treat school property with respect; including keeping textbooks covered at all times
- Develop a basic attitude of thoughtfulness and consideration
- Remember manners, courtesy, and good language are ways of showing consideration for others
- Be on time for class
- Bring paper, pencils, and all other materials necessary for class
- Complete homework assignments and turn them in on time
- Be in the correct and complete uniform each day
- Walk in the classrooms, hallways, and cafeteria at all times
- Accept responsibility for his/her own actions
- Know, understand, and comply willingly with rules and regulations

*Types of inappropriate behavior include, but are not limited to:*

- Disrespectful conduct to adults and other students
- Abusive language and/or use of profanity
- Running and/or horseplay in the classroom or hallways
- Chewing gum or eating candy
- Damaging school property
- Violation of dress code
- Poor grooming – hair, nails, cleanliness, facial hair, etc.
- Failure to do classwork or homework
- Pushing or shoving
- Abuse of playground equipment or classroom/school furnishings
- Any behavior that the school/principal deems disruptive to the educational process and moral environment of the school

- Possession of electronic toys or devices. These include cell phones, smart watches, pagers, radios, lap top computers, game boys, laser pointers, or any other games or devices which could be considered a distraction from the education and learning process or environment.
- If a parent deems a cell phone or other electronics necessary for their child to have after school, the parent must complete the electronics agreement form. This will allow the student to bring the device to school. Phones and devices must be turned off during the day and stored in the student's backpack. From 7:30 to 3:35, if electronics are found in the classroom or in the possession of a student, they will be confiscated. Cell phones that are confiscated by school personnel will be held in the principal's office. On the first offense, a parent must pick up the phone and **a fine of \$15 will be billed to the FACTS account**. On the second offense, phones will be kept in the office until a conference is held with the parent and student to determine a plan for success and **a fine of \$25 will be billed to the FACTS account**.
- The school assumes no responsibility for any stolen, damaged or lost property.

*Major offenses include, but are not limited to:*

- Habitual misconduct (3 or more repeated offenses) which is disruptive to the teaching/learning process or safety of students or school
- Race-based hate or discriminatory speech
- Refusal to obey reasonable directives, orders, rules, regulations or policies of the school, which are set forth for the well-being of the student body, the staff, or the institution
- Possessing, using, selling, or distributing harmful or illegal substances, including alcohol
- Smoking or using any tobacco product
- Having possession of a weapon, real or play
- Verbal abuse or threats of bodily injury or harm to a student/school personnel
- Assaulting a student or any school personnel
- Vandalizing school property or the property of others
- Having possession of pornography
- Participating in disruptive activities by a group such as a gang
- Verbal or written mention of the use of firearms or weapons against an individual or group
- Engagement in social media may result in disciplinary actions if the content created or posted by a student includes defamatory comments regarding the school, the parish, the diocese, faculty, or other students.
- ***Bullying and Cyber bullying:*** Saint Rita Catholic School seeks to provide a safe environment for all individuals. Verbal or written threats made against the physical or emotional well-being of any individual are taken very seriously. Students making such threats (**seriously, in jest, or online**) face detention, suspension, and/or expulsion.
- Intimidation, bullying, or harassment
- Sexual harassment (relative to students in a school environment) is defined as conduct, containing sexual matter or suggestions, which would be offensive to a reasonable person. Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, the following behaviors:
  - Verbal conduct such as epithets, derogatory jokes or comments, slurs or unwanted sexual advances, imitations, or comments
  - Graphic content such as derogatory and/or sexually oriented posters, photography, cartoons, drawings, or gestures
  - Physical contact such as assault, unwanted touching, blocking normal movements, or interfering with work, study, or play because of sex
  - Threats or demands to submit to sexual requests as a condition of continued employment or grades or other benefits or to avoid some other loss or offers of benefits in return for sexual favors
  - Retaliation for having reported or threatened to report sexual harassment
  - Internet harassment



### Reporting Sexual Harassment:

All allegations will be taken seriously and promptly investigated. Confidentiality will be stressed. Concern will be expressed for both the alleged victim and the alleged perpetrator. All suspected cases must be reported to the principal immediately.

### Consequences:

If a student does not respond to efforts made to encourage appropriate behavior, the parent and principal will meet to discuss appropriate actions or consequences for the student's behavior. The consequences for lesser offenses may include:

- Lunch/recess/after-school or morning detention as assigned
- Restitution
- A loss of privileges
- Going home for the day to calm down after an outburst or physical altercation (This may or may not be considered suspension depending on circumstances.)

If a student commits a major offense, the student's consequences may include:

- In-school suspension – **a fee of \$96 per day may be billed to the student's FACTS account as needed to hire a substitute teacher to monitor the student.**
- Out of school suspension
- Expulsion

### Suspensions and Expulsions

**Suspension** is defined as the temporary exclusion of a student from the classroom for disciplinary reasons. The principal will notify the student and the student's parents/guardians of the reason for the suspension, the duration of the suspension, and the requirements for reinstatement. A suspension may be in-school or at-home as determined by the principal. Students may be suspended by the principal for various reasons. A teacher may not suspend a student. A teacher may be an interim principal in the principal's absence. An interim principal may suspend a student for a severe offense. The pastor is to be informed of the suspension and the reason for it. A suspended student may make up any missed work as outlined by the principal.

**Expulsion** is defined as the permanent dismissal of a student from school without the agreement of the parents or guardians. In the case of expulsion, the principal will:

1. confer with the student, the teacher(s), the parents/guardian, and the pastor regarding the problem
2. advise parents of their options and/or Diocesan Policy #5220 and its implementation
3. inform the superintendent of the expulsion decision and submit to the Diocesan School Office a copy of these conferences, a description of the problem, and a summary of the student's history in school

### Diocesan Appeal 5220:

If the parent or the guardian wishes to appeal the principal's expulsion decision, a written appeal must be mailed to the Superintendent of Schools within five (5) days from the date the parent or guardian is notified of the principal's expulsion decision. The Superintendent's decision will be conveyed to the parent or guardian by either the electronic email on file with the school, the home address on file with the school, or by meeting in person, electronically, or telephonically. The decision of the Superintendent is final and is not subject to any other appeal, grievance, mediation, or conciliation process of the Diocese.

**If all avenues have been explored and students cannot follow the rules and guidelines of Saint Rita Catholic School, the principal has the right to request withdrawal of the child or refuse re-admittance. Additionally, the actions of the parent or guardian of a student may be grounds for the student to lose the privilege of attending school at Saint Rita Catholic School. The parents of students are expected to conduct themselves so as not to be a disruptive influence on the school or staff. A parent who becomes a disruptive influence shall be requested to withdraw his/her student from the school.**

## Extended Care Program

Extended Care is an important part of the additional services we offer to our students. The vision of Saint Rita Catholic Extended Care is to give parents the security knowing that their children are in a safe and enjoyable Christian environment after school. We strive to provide the students with activities including indoor and outdoor play, homework time, arts & crafts, creativity centers, and projects.

NOTE: In the event that extended care census is too low to cover the salaries of extended care staff, the program will be canceled with two weeks written notice to parents.

**Admission:** Students enrolled at St. Rita Catholic School are eligible for our Extended Care Program. This program is available for students in PK 3 – 8th grade. Extended Care is provided for use by parents whose working hours do not permit them to pick-up their children at dismissal time. Since teachers and staff are not available after 3:30, children still at school will be taken to Extended Care. The families will be billed for this service. All participants must complete the Extended Care Registration Form.

**Hours:** This program begins at **3:35 on regular school days and ends at 5:30**. Drop-ins are welcome based on space available, with notice.

**Noon Dismissal: On noon dismissal days, extended care will NOT be available.**

**Snacks:** Students may bring their own snack to extended care. Snacks may also be purchased and billed to the student's FACTS account.

**Homework:** Students are required to do homework after school. Time and space will be available for this activity. Homework will be supervised, and students will be assisted if necessary.

**Fees:** Tuition for Extended Care will be included in your monthly statement from FACTS. For students who attend extended care daily, the monthly rate is \$200.00 per month beginning in August for the first child, and \$175/month for each additional child. The weekly rate is \$50/week for the first child; \$45/week for each additional child. Daily drop-ins will be charged \$15.00 per day for the first child and \$12.00 for additional children. On noon dismissal days, there will be **NO** extended care. If drop-ins are picked up by 4:15, families will be charged 50% the stated price. Students not picked up by 5:30 pm will be charged \$5.00/child for each minute after 5:30 pm. A \$25 late fee is assessed for late payments. Once a child is enrolled monthly in the Extended Care Program, no changes can be made.

**Payments:** Payments for Saint Rita Catholic School are only accepted through FACTS. A \$35.00 NSF fee is charged **by** FACTS for all payments returned because of insufficient funds. Statements are available on FACTS to track attendance. Statements for income tax purposes are also available on FACTS. Extended Care will be temporarily suspended if an outstanding balance carries past one month. Students will not be allowed to return to Extended Care until the balance and late fees are paid in full. **All FACTS accounts MUST be linked to a bank account for automatic payment plans and incidental fees.**

**Late Pick-up:** Students not picked up by 5:30 PM will be assessed a late fee of \$5.00 per minute. Payment for late fees must be paid the next day in the school office.

If a child is not picked up at closing and we have not received word from the parent, the following steps will be taken:

1. The staff will try to contact the parent.
2. The staff will try to contact the adults on the emergency form authorized to pick up the child.
3. The authorities will be notified if child is not picked up.

**Sign-in/Sign-out Procedures:** Students are signed into Extended Care by Extended Care workers each afternoon. Upon pick-up, the extended care worker will sign out the student. This procedure ensures accurate accounting of students and billing.

**Pick-up Policy:** Parents should ring the doorbell at the side entrance (by Pre-K3) to pick up their children. No adult other than those listed on the Extended Care form or Emergency Card will be allowed to pick up your child from the program. If there is a change in the person picking up your child, the office must be notified **before 3:00**. We request in writing any information concerning alternative pick up arrangements. Any adult picking up a child, other than parents, will be asked to show a Texas Driver's license or valid ID. Parents or person picking up your child are required to "sign-out" your child and record the time they were picked up each day.

Any enrolled Extended Care student who attends sports practice, guitar lessons, etc. may be brought to Extended care provided a note is on file stating the day(s) and time of the activity and its dismissal.

**Extended Care Rules:** All Saint Rita Catholic School rules and policies apply during Extended Care. Respect for one another and the Extended Care personnel is required to receive the service.

**Discipline:** Students are responsible for their conduct and are expected to follow rules established by Saint Rita Catholic School. Procedures for problems are as follows:

- Consultation with child
- Conference with parent/principal
- Removal from Extended Care. Removal can be permanent if disrespectful and disruptive behavior continues.

**Holidays:** Extended Care realizes that it needs to remain open for the convenience of parents as much as possible. Extended Care will close for all student holiday and breaks. Extended Care however will remain open for most noon dismissal days for teacher in-service. The program will be closed the day before Christmas holiday, and the last day of school.

**Student Health Concerns:** All health policies of the Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth and Saint Rita Catholic School apply during Extended Care.

**Inclement Weather:** During bad weather watch NBC Channel 5 for early class dismissal or school closings at Saint Rita Catholic School. Closing or early closures will also be communicated through Parent Alert. This is independent of FWISD policies and may not always follow what they advise. Extended Care follows Saint Rita Catholic School closings.

**Tentative Extended Care Schedule:**

3:35-3:45	Check-in and storage of backpacks
3:45-4:30	Homework and Center Time
4:30-4:45	Snack Time
4:45-5:15	Clean up
5:15-5:30	Story Time until all are gone

\*All Extended Care rules and fees apply to students not registered at Extended Care and are frequently picked up late after school dismissal.

## Financial Policies

**Tuition** A schedule of tuition and fees can be obtained from the business office. Yearly tuition and fees are set in February of each year. There is a yearly registration fee, which is non-refundable.

Saint Rita tuition can be paid in monthly installments starting in July and ending by May. There is also the option of paying annually or semi-annually. All families are required to enroll in the FACTS tuition management program to have their tuition drafted from their bank account or charged to a credit card. Incidentals will also be paid through the FACTS account (extended care, lunch, etc.). **A child will be suspended if delinquency occurs for thirty days. All FACTS accounts MUST be linked to a bank account for automatic payment plans and incidental fees.**

### **Extended care and lunches will be billed weekly or monthly for annual plans.**

Families with payments delinquent through December may not be readmitted in January. Families with payments delinquent through April will not be readmitted for the next school year, unless prior written arrangements are made with the school principal. Students' transcripts, report cards, and diplomas will be held until the balances of all fees are paid.

**Returned Checks:** There will be a \$25.00 fee collected for a returned check. If a family has accumulated two returned checks, they will be required to pay all future financial transactions in cash, cashier's check or money order.

**Lost or damaged textbook and library book fees:** Families will have ten days to locate lost items or replace missing or damaged books or equipment. After ten days, the cost of replacement will be billed to the student's FACTS account.

**Fines for damages to facilities, equipment or furnishings:** Student accounts may be charged for accidental or intentional damages made to the facilities, equipment or furnishings by the student. The fine will be based on replacement or repair costs to the facility, equipment or furnishings.

**Spirit wear and Used Uniform purchases:** Exchanges of spirit wear and used uniforms must be made within 30 days of purchase. No refunds or exchanges can be made after the end of the school year. Sales tax will be charged on all spirit wear items in accordance with tax laws.

**Tuition Assistance:** A tuition assistance program is available for families on the basis of need. Families in this program are required to complete a financial aid application and supply the necessary information for consideration. All financial information is held in strictest confidence. Below are additional requirements for receiving financial aid.

1. The amount of your tuition assistance is confidential. Discussing it with anyone – even family members – will put you at risk of losing financial aid.
2. The amount you receive for any year is not guaranteed for the following year.
3. Volunteer hours are not optional.
4. **Excessive absences and tardiness will affect tuition assistance awards.**
5. **Students that fail to adhere to the school's code of conduct may jeopardize their eligibility for tuition assistance.**

6. Providing a Catholic education for our students requires a sacrifice on the part of families. Our parents should prayerfully consider their financial priorities when applying for financial aid.

Report cards, records and FACTS access are withheld as well as transfer of records to new schools when financial responsibilities to the school have not been met. These include tuition, extended care payments, lunch charges, library fines, payments for lost or damaged books, and all other incidental charges.

**Tuition Refund Policy:** Students who are withdrawn prior to July 15 will be entitled to a refund of their school tuition for the coming year. Students who withdraw after July 15 and before October 15 are entitled to a refund of 50% tuition. Students who withdraw after October 15 will not be entitled to a refund. Students will be considered withdrawn as of the date of written notification is received by the principal.

## Sports

Students may participate in the Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth Sports Program. The program includes flag football (K through 6th), tackle football (7th & 8th), volleyball, soccer, basketball, track, baseball and softball (5<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup>).

All necessary forms (4) must be completed and turned in to the school by the deadline date given on the school calendar for each sport in order to participate in that sport. before a student is eligible to attend practice. All students must have a complete physical (Diocesan Health Report) each year before participating in sports program.

Saint Rita School sports program depends on student interest and volunteer coaches. If either of these are absent for a sport, Saint Rita School will not offer it that year.

Accident coverage is offered to all students who participate in the sports program. Participation in the insurance program is at the parents' discretion but highly recommended by the school.

We welcome and encourage parents and siblings to attend athletic events. Diocese policy requires all spectators (adults and children) to remain in the gym during all basketball and volleyball games. Children are to be supervised by parents at all times. Parents are not to confront referees/coaches at any time. As the primary educator, parents are expected to demonstrate good sportsman-like behavior.

**Volunteer Coaches:** All volunteer coaches must work with at least one other volunteer coach at all times. All volunteers, including volunteer coaches, must complete a Diocesan volunteer form and will be required to complete a Criminal Records Review, VIRTUS training, and 'Play Like a Champion'- PLAC training every two years.

If parents are late picking up their child(ren) three times, the student will have to sit out the following game. The coaches need to be able to leave when the practice is over. They have families and jobs which require their time. Please respect their time.

**Sports Eligibility:** If an athlete is absent or has not been in attendance for one-half day (3.75 hours) of school, he/she is not permitted to participate in practice or games that day.

Academics are a PRIORITY at Saint Rita Catholic School. Students must maintain a passing status (70 or above) in all subjects in order to participate in Diocesan Interscholastic Games. If a student is failing one class, the student is suspended from participating in games. If a student is failing two or more classes, they are also suspended from practices. All failing athletes should be attending before or after school tutoring. Failing grades may be checked weekly. Once a student is passing, they may return to practice and games. However, we do encourage participants to attend the games and cheer on their teammates.

A student may also become ineligible for unsportsmanlike conduct. Only the athletic directors or principal may impose sports eligibility and sports ineligibility.

**Note:** The principal may declare a player ineligible for serious disciplinary reasons.

## Student Health Policies

**Forms:** A health form complete with Immunization record showing dates and kinds of immunization received must be on file for each student. All students must meet all State and Diocese required immunizations before starting or entering St. Rita Catholic School.

All families will fill out an Emergency Card at the start of each school year. All phone numbers and emergency contacts must be kept up to date. Whether a child is not feeling well or a serious accident occurs, parents or authorized persons must be able to be reached at all times. Please inform the school office of any changes in this information throughout the school year.

**Shots:**

DPT	5 doses required with one on or after 4 <sup>th</sup> birthday; with a Tdap booster for entry into 7 <sup>th</sup> grade, if at least 5 years has passed since the last dose of a tetanus containing vaccine
POLIO	(OPV or IPV) 4 doses required with one on or after 4 <sup>th</sup> birthday
MMR	(Mumps, Measles, Rubella) Two doses with the 1 <sup>st</sup> dose received on or after the first birthday, second dose for entry into Kindergarten
HEPATITIS A	2 doses for Pre-K3 through 8 <sup>th</sup> grade students with the 1 <sup>st</sup> dose received on or after the first birthday, and six months apart.
HEPATITIS B	3 doses of Hepatitis B vaccine required
HibCV	1 dose required on or after 15 months unless a primary series and a booster was completed prior to or at 15 months. Proof of HibCV is not required for children 5 years or older.
PNEUMOCOCCAL	3 doses with one dose on or after 12 months of age. Proof of PCV is not required for children 5 years or older.
VARICELLA	Two doses of varicella vaccine, with the 1 <sup>st</sup> dose received on or after the first birthday, second dose for entry into Kindergarten (validation of disease accepted on separate form)
MENINGOCOCCAL	One dose for entry into 7 <sup>th</sup> grade, proof of dose for 8th grade.

**Immunization Policy**

Every student enrolled in a Catholic School in the State of Texas shall be immunized against vaccine preventable diseases caused by infectious agents in accordance with the immunization schedule adopted by the Texas Department of State Health Services. A student who fails to present the required evidence shall not be accepted for enrollment. The only exception to the foregoing requirement is a medical exemption signed by a licensed physician (M.D. or D.O.) authorized to practice in the State of Texas, including the physicians license number.

Immunizations are not in conflict with the Catholic faith. Conscientious objections or waivers, which may be permissible for attendance in public schools, do not qualify as an exemption in Catholic Schools in Texas. (Atty. Gen. Op. GA-0420)

This policy was adopted by Texas Catholic Conference Education Department, December 2008 and voted on April 3, 2017 to keep as written with no changes by the Bishops of Texas.

**Sickness:** The school cannot care for sick children. For the protection of all the students, the following guidelines have been created. A child having one or more of the following symptoms will be sent home.

In order to prevent the spread of disease, we ask that you do not send your child to school if he/she is exhibiting any symptoms of illness or running a fever. If he/she has been ill, it is required that he/she be free of fever without fever reducing medication for 24 hours prior to returning to school.

With respect to the current COVID-19 pandemic, it is imperative that parents/guardians follow this protocol at all times. Should a child become ill on campus and require a parent/guardian to take them home, this parent/guardian must arrive to retrieve the student within 30 minutes of the initial phone call.

Exclusion Guidelines	Return to School Guidelines
Oral temperature of 100 degrees or above	Fever free for 24 hours, without medication
Vomiting, nausea or severe abdominal pain	Symptom free for 24 hours
Marked drowsiness or malaise	Symptom free
Sore throat, acute cold, or persistent cough	Symptom free
Red, inflamed, or discharging eyes	Written physician release
Acute skin rashes or eruptions	Written physician release
Swollen glands around jaws, ears, and neck	Written physician release
Suspected scabies or impetigo	Written physician release
Any skin lesion in the weeping stage	Covered and physician diagnosed as non-infectious
Earache	Symptom free
Pediculosis (head lice)	Nit free
Other symptoms suggestive of acute illness	Written physician release

**Communicable Disease Control Measures:** If your child has any type of infectious disease or rash notify the school immediately. After such disease, parents must take the child to the school office before re-entering the classroom. Students will need a permit from their physician for re-admission to school. (Examples: measles, pink eye, lice, ring worm, hepatitis, mononucleosis, etc.)

**Medications:** Your child may have an illness which requires medication for relief or cure that does not prevent his/her attendance at school. When possible, such medication should be taken at home. However, according to Texas State Legislature a medication may be dispensed to a student by school personnel if the following requirements are met by the parent or legal guardian requesting this service.

- Parents are encouraged to schedule the administration of student medicine in such a manner that medication brought to school will be kept to a minimum. (For example, the physician may be able to prescribe the medication before school, after school, and at bedtime.)
- Medication (Prescription and Non-Prescription) may be administered to students only upon written request by the parent/guardian and physician. A “Permission to Administer Medicine” form must be completed, with the parent/guardian signature and physician signature, and on file in the school clinic BEFORE medication can be administered. Please ensure that time and dosage is specific. You may request a form from the school office.
- All medication, prescription and non-prescription, must be in its original container and be properly labeled in English. A properly labeled prescription is one with a pharmacy label stating the student’s name, the name of the medication and date prescription was filled. Non-prescription medication must be in original container indicating directions for use and labeled with student’s name. School representative and parent will count medications delivered to the school. Medications sent in baggies or unlabeled containers will not be given.
- It is the responsibility of the student to report to the clinic to take his/her medication.
- At the end of the school year, all medication must be picked up from the clinic or it will be destroyed.
- Experimental medication/dosages will not be given. Herbal medication, dietary supplements, and other nutritional aids not approved as medications by the FDA, will not be administered at school.

- Antibiotics will not be given at school by school personnel. If the parent feels the antibiotic must be given during the school day, the parent may come to the school office and administer it.
- Only the parent may perform nebulizer treatments in school. Non-medical school personnel are not permitted to administer this treatment.
- Diocesan policy will be followed regarding administering medications or treatments necessary for medical reasons. **Students are not permitted to keep any medication, cough drops or drugs in their pockets, locker, backpack, or lunch kit. All medications must be kept in the school office.**

In the event of visiting a physician without a school form handy, the physician may write and sign instructions. This may be attached to the school form that is completed and signed by the parents.

**Corrective Lenses:** In order to better serve all children, we ask that parents notify the school office and teachers about the need of corrective lenses. Students are expected to wear corrective lenses during all classes.

**Allergies:** If a child has an allergy, please write a note to the teacher and the school office regarding the allergy, and any treatments or medications the student is taking for relief of allergy.

**Annual Student Screenings:** Student screening for vision and hearing problems are state regulation pursuant to the Special Senses Communications and Disorders Act of 1983. Student screening for spinal curvature is state regulation according to TAC, Section 37.141-37.152.

Texas Required Screenings	Who
Vision and Hearing	First time entrants in grades 2, 4, 6, 8 Grades P-K4, K, 1, 3, 5, 7
Spinal - Scoliosis	Girls: Grades 5 & 7; Boys: Grade 8
Ancanthosis (AN)	Grades 1, 3, 5, 7

**Child Abuse and Neglect:** Provisions of the Texas Family Code require reporting of all suspected child abuse or neglect under penalty of fine or jail sentence or both, for failure to timely report.



## Internet

The Internet is a valuable resource. However, Saint Rita Catholic School has taken necessary precautions to install software that limits access to inappropriate material. **While student's use of the Internet will be supervised by staff, students are expected to refrain from accessing any inappropriate material.** We encourage all parents to have a discussion with children about the family's values and expectation of how these values should guide the child's activities while he/she is on the Internet.

Students may not access "chat" sites unless directed to do so by classroom teacher. Students are expected to use E-mail during the school day only under the direction of the teacher.

### **Computer Technology Acceptable Use Procedure:**

Students will demonstrate the ability to use computer resources as powerful and diversified tools in school, the workplace, and society at large. These resources will include current application software as well as Internet usage. Students will develop an understanding for the responsible and the ethical use of computer technology.

Students will be expected to comply with the following procedures:

- Use equipment appropriately; respect all technology, equipment, and furniture; students and parents will be held liable for damage.
- Use school facilities and equipment only for school related educational activities.
- Refrain from bringing food or drink into computer lab or technology areas (library, etc.)
- Use only software materials provided by the computer teacher or classroom teacher.
- Follow Internet etiquette.
- Adhere to copyright guidelines and refrain from plagiarism.
- Behave in a Christian and respectful manner and follow all school procedures.

### **Unacceptable behaviors include:**

- Sending, displaying, or downloading offensive messages or pictures;
- Using obscene language;
- Harassing, insulting, or threatening others;
- Damaging of computer systems or computer networks;
- Violating copyright laws;
- Submitting documents from the Internet as a student's personal work;
- Using another person's sign-on and/or password;
- Trespassing in someone else's folder, work or files;
- Intentionally wasting limited resources;
- Using the network for commercial purposes;
- Revealing a personal phone number, name or address of one's self or another.

Students who do not comply with usage rules will forfeit their usage privileges.

**Failure to comply with the above Computer Technology Acceptable Use Procedure may result in suspension from the computer lab or use of computer technology.**

## Lunch

Saint Rita Lunch Program:

- **All students may order hot lunch.**
- Each morning your child will order lunch through his homeroom teacher. Milk is included with the meal or may be purchased separately. Lunch fees will be billed weekly through FACTS for occasional lunch orders. Daily orders for the entire year will be billed monthly.
- **In order to promote healthy eating habits:**
  - Food may not be shared without permission from a teacher or lunch staff member.
  - Sodas are not to be consumed at or brought for lunch.
  - Avoid fast food since most fast food does not meet the USDA nutritional value guidelines.
  - Any food brought in to share for a birthday must be coordinated with the teacher.
- To purchase hot lunch for the entire year, the lunch form must be completed and returned to the office by the first day of school. No late registrations will be accepted. Students enrolled in the program will remain enrolled all year long. There are no cancellations or refunds.
- Parents may eat lunch with students. If you would like to eat lunch with your child, please contact the school one day in advance so we can verify compliance with VIRTUS training.
- If your child forgot to bring a lunch, the school will provide lunch for your child, and the student's account will be billed accordingly. Lunches should not be delivered to the school after the child arrives. If a parent chooses to deliver a lunch to school, it must be delivered before 10 am. The parent will sign in as a visitor and wait for security or available staff to escort the parent to the child and hand deliver the lunch.

## **Library**

The Saint Rita School Library is available for check out of books and materials, for research, and for taking Accelerated Reader tests.

Saint Rita Catholic School maintains a holding of over 6,000 books in the library which is coordinated by a library manager. These materials may be used only in the library unless permission is granted otherwise. Some reference material and library books are kept in the classroom for everyday use. A collection of audio books is available for checkout in classrooms only.

The Accelerated Reading (AR) Program is an integral part of the Library Media Program. Students may take AR tests after reading a text to check for reading comprehension. This program allows students to monitor their own reading goals and success.

Each class visits the library every week, and students have the option to visit as frequently as needed. Students are allowed to check out a specified number of books. Parents are urged to encourage reading, research, and proper care of borrowed materials. Students will be expected to reimburse the school for the cost of damaged or lost books. Additional books cannot be checked out and report cards will be held until all fines are paid. See additional information in Financial Policies.

Saint Rita School holds a Summer Reading Program. The library is open various dates throughout the summer for students to check out books and take AR tests.

## Parental Involvement

**School Advisory Council:** The Saint Rita School Advisory Council is an advisory group that consults with the pastor and principal in developing policies, budgets, and financing. There are working committees for finance, academic/student life, development/marketing, facilities, technology, cultures/diversity, and Saint Rita parish liaison.

The Advisory Council is comprised of the pastor, the principal, and nine members. Meetings are held bi-monthly.

**Home and School Association:** The Saint Rita Home and School Association is a network of parents who are actively involved in supporting the school by providing volunteers for fund-raisers, facilities maintenance and improvement, and special events at school. The purpose of this organization is:

- To promote communication and a spirit of friendship and cooperation among the administration, teachers, school board, and parents
- To raise and distribute funds to support Saint Rita School
- To organize volunteers for all events throughout the school year

**Volunteers:** Our volunteer program welcomes all parents and friends of the school to get involved in activities both in and out of the classroom. Volunteers not only enhance your child's education, but also make you a part of it. The faculty and staff are greatly appreciative of the support of our volunteers' contributions. All volunteers are required to attend VIRTUS training course offered throughout the Diocese of Fort Worth. Parents have an opportunity to sign up for various volunteer positions at the beginning of the school year. All families must participate by performing 30 hours of volunteer service to the school or pay \$15 per hour not served. If a family chooses to pay rather than perform service hours, the total charge will be \$450 per year per family. If a family falls short of 30 hours, they will be billed for the remaining hours. (Ten hours of the 30 must include assisting with fund raising activities.) By contributing time and resources to the educational process, parents provide valuable role models of service and dedication to children, and a sense of belonging to the caring Saint Rita School community is established.

Please use the correct process for recording your hours. Parents are to log their service hours in Family Portal. Families should complete and log 15 hours by December 15 of the fall semester. A statement of missing hours will be issued at that time. All 30 hours with a minimum of 10 hours spent on fundraising activities must be logged into Family Portal **no later than April 30 of the school year**. Families will be charged \$15/hour for any hours not completed. (Service hours completed in May, June and July will be credited to the next school year.) If a family fails to complete 30 hours of service and fails to pay the remaining balance as noted on the May statement, the child(ren) will be viewed as not registered for the next school year. If a student is leaving the school, the student's records will not be transferred to the new school. Until the final balance is paid, students will not receive final grades, report cards, school records, etc. from the administrative offices. **Completing service hours is a requirement for financial aid.**

Please note: Service hours may be credited by parents, relatives, and children in grades 9 or above. Saint Rita students may not fulfill educational support hours as they are expected to perform community service as a religious curriculum requirement.

## School Uniform and Dress Code

Uniforms at Saint Rita Catholic School contribute to our sense of community and belonging. Students should understand that their appearance affects not only how they are perceived by others, but also the pride they have in themselves. Whenever they are in uniform, students represent themselves, their family and the Saint Rita Community. Students who abide by and adhere to the intent of the uniform policy learn that following the rules and showing respect for your community are important values. All students must follow the uniform policy.

Uniforms may **only** be purchased through  
**FlynnO'Hara Uniforms**  
363 Carroll St,  
Fort Worth, TX 76107  
(817) 292-5437  
flynnohara.com

### Required Dress (Mass) Uniform

#### Girls Pre-K3-Eighth Grade

- White long or short sleeve button-up oxford or blouse, tucked in
- White  $\frac{3}{4}$  sleeve fitted over blouse (5th-8th grade only)
- Plaid jumper (PK-4th grade) or pleated skirt (5th-8th grade) with cartwheel shorts
- Red acrylic v-neck cardigan
- Red continental snap bowtie
- Solid white knee socks or white tights, worn with skirt or jumper
- Black or brown leather, closed toe & heel, flat dress shoes

#### Boys Pre-K3– Eighth Grade

- White long or short sleeve button-up oxford or blouse, tucked in
- Navy pull-on pants (PK-K)
- Navy pleated, twill pants (K-8th grade) with solid or braided black, navy, or brown belt\*, without decorative buckles
- Red acrylic v-neck cardigan
- Red adjustable tie (PK-5th grade), or standard tie (6th-8th grade)
- Solid navy or black crew socks, at least 1" above the ankle, worn with pants
- Black or brown leather, closed toe & heel, flat dress shoes

\*Both pull-on pants and pants with belt loops are permitted in kindergarten. Belts must be worn when belt loops are present.

### **\*\*Mass Dress Code Policy**

At Saint Rita Catholic School, we uphold a standard of respect and reverence during Mass by requiring students to wear dress shoes. To ensure comfort and safety for the rest of the school day, students are permitted to change into appropriate tennis shoes after Mass under the following conditions:

1. **Dress Shoes for Mass:** All students must wear dress shoes during Mass. This is non-negotiable and part of our commitment to reverence and respect during religious services.
2. **Changing into Tennis Shoes:**
  - After Mass, students are allowed to change into appropriate tennis shoes for the remainder of the school day.
  - Tennis shoes must be kept in the student's locker or designated area until after Mass.
3. **Violation of Privilege:**
  - If a student is found wearing tennis shoes during Mass, they will lose the privilege to bring and change into tennis shoes for the remainder of the school year.
  - Subsequent violations will result in the student being in violation of the dress code and subject to disciplinary action.

#### 4. **Compliance:**

- Students must adhere to this policy to maintain a respectful environment during Mass and ensure comfort for daily activities.
- Parents/guardians will be notified of any violations and the resulting consequences.

We appreciate the cooperation of students and parents/guardians in upholding this policy and maintaining the standards of our school community.

#### **Girls and Boys                      Pre-K3– Eighth Grade**

- Hunter green short or long sleeve pique polo with school logo
- White short or long sleeve oxfords or blouses with plain collars and sleeves
- White  $\frac{3}{4}$  sleeve fitted over blouse (5th-8th grade only)
- Plaid jumper (PK-4th grade) or pleated skirt (5th-8th grade)
- Navy pull-on shorts, skorts, or pants (PK-K)
- Navy pleated, twill walking shorts or pants (K-8th grade) or navy skort (PK-4)
- Khaki pleated, twill walking shorts or pants (6th-8th grade)
- Solid or braided black, navy, or brown belt\*, without decorative buckles
- Hunter green Saint Rita sweatshirt (not permitted with dress uniform)
- Red acrylic v-neck cardigan
- Solid white, navy, or black socks that must be visible above shoe
- Athletic shoes that are at least 75% solid color in white, navy, black or gray; NO neon-colored laces, lights, characters, etc. Velcro or slip-on shoes should be worn until a student can independently tie their own shoelaces.

\*Both pull-on pants and pants with belt loops are permitted in kindergarten. Belts must be worn when belt loops are present.

#### **General Uniform Information**

- Student names must be present on all garments with permanent ink or sewn-in nametags.
- Students must enter and leave the school grounds in proper uniform.
- All students in kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade must tuck in shirts while on campus.
- All clothing must fit properly. Apparel may not be too tight or too big.
- Clothing neat, fitting properly, and in good repair without holes, tears, or extreme fading and discoloration.
- Ties neatly knotted at the neck and top shirt buttons buttoned.
- Pants worn at the natural waist and of the proper length, reaching the back of the shoe, not dragging on the floor or bunching around the foot.
- Shorts, skirts, and jumpers touch the top of the knee.
- Sweaters and jackets are not to be tied around the waist.
- No excessive belt length extending below the waist.
- Any undergarment worn beneath the uniform not visible, regardless of the activity or position a student is taking; cartwheel shorts worn, and long sleeve undershirts only worn under long sleeve shirts.
- Only Saint Rita sweaters, sweatshirts, or jackets worn in the classroom; additional outerwear can be worn outside.

#### **Hair**

- Natural hair color and style that does not interfere or distract learning; natural hair color is defined as a student's God-given color.
- Hair secured away from the face and out of the eyes.
- Boys must be clean-shaven, and sideburns should not be longer than mid-ear
- Any questions about the appropriateness of hairstyle will be evaluated by the principal.

## **Jewelry and Cosmetics**

- Students should limit jewelry to one watch, one simple necklace, one low-profile ring, and one pair of small stud earrings worn only on the ear lobe.
- Cosmetics should not be worn\* or brought to school. (See below for 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> grade girls exception)
- Nails should be limited to clear polish on a student's real nails (no acrylics or tips).
- Body piercing and temporary or permanent tattoos are not permitted.

### **\*Cosmetics Policy for Girls in Grades 7 and 8**

With parent permission, girls in grades 7 and 8 are allowed to use brown or black mascara, tinted sunscreen, and clear lip gloss under the following conditions:

1. **Parental Permission:** Students must have written permission from a parent or guardian to wear cosmetics.
2. **Permitted Products:** Only brown or black mascara, tinted sunscreen, and clear lip gloss are allowed. No other cosmetics products are permitted.
3. **No Cosmetics Tools:** Students are not allowed to bring cosmetics tools, hair brushes, or mirrors to school.
4. **Application:** Cosmetics must be applied at home before coming to school. No cosmetics application is permitted on school grounds.

#### **Violations:**

- If a student violates this policy, she will be required to wash her face at school.
- The student will lose the privilege of wearing cosmetics for the remainder of the school year.

This policy is designed to maintain a focused and respectful learning environment while allowing a limited and controlled use of cosmetics for students with parental consent.

## **Spirit Dress**

Most Thursdays are Spirit Dress Days. Students may wear Saint Rita spirit t-shirts. Occasionally, other approved spirit shirts may be worn (as communicated by the school). Spirit shirts should be tucked in, fit properly, be in good repair, and not faded. Uniform shorts, pants, or skirts are still required.

Students are required to follow Saint Rita Catholic School's Uniform Policy and Dress Code. If there is a question concerning whether an item of clothing is acceptable or reflects the intent of the dress code, the item should not be worn. The administration reserves the right to send home any student dressed improperly. In all cases, interpretation remains with the administration.

Saint Rita School has a supply of second-hand uniforms for sale. Families are encouraged to donate their uniforms in good condition to the uniform closet.

### **School Uniform Policy Violation**

At Saint Rita Catholic School, we believe that adherence to the school uniform policy is essential for maintaining a respectful and cohesive learning environment. To ensure compliance, the following consequences will be enforced for violations of the required school uniform:

1. **First Infraction:**
  - The student will receive a warning and a reminder of the uniform policy.
  - The student's parents/guardians will be notified.
2. **Subsequent Infractions:**
  - **Loss of Free Dress Privileges:** The student will lose free dress privileges for a period of one month.
  - **Monetary Fine:** A fine of up to \$25 will be imposed for each infraction. This fine will be charged to the FACTS account.
3. **Chronic Violations:**

- If a student continues to violate the uniform policy after three infractions, a meeting with the parents/guardians will be required to discuss further consequences, which may include additional fines or other disciplinary actions.

**Payment of Fines:**

- Fines will be charged to the FACTS account.
- Failure to pay fines within the specified time frame may result in further disciplinary actions and may affect tuition assistance.

We appreciate the cooperation of students and parents/guardians in upholding the school uniform policy and maintaining the standards of our school community.



## Important Notes

**Articles Forgotten at Home:** We ask that you do not bring students' forgotten items from home. An important part of building responsibility in children is allowing them to experience logical and natural consequences. Students will not be allowed telephone use to call for forgotten items. Your cooperation in this matter is appreciated. Lunches cannot be brought to the school after the tardy bell rings. Students without lunches will be provided with a hot lunch and the student's FACTS account will be billed.

**Appeals Process:** Although the Diocese endeavors to establish a harmonious Christian atmosphere within its schools, it recognizes that misunderstandings or differences of opinion sometimes occur. Any parent having a complaint concerning a teacher's and/or principal's action in connection with a student, other than an expulsion, must first speak with the principal and/or the teacher. If the grievance is not resolved, the Grievant presents the grievance in writing to the principal of the school within ten (10) days following the event which forms the basis of the grievance. The grievance must follow the requirements of Diocesan policy #5221, the details of which can be provided upon request.

**Change of Address/Emergency Card Information:** Please contact the school office, preferably in writing, as soon as your family has any address or phone number changes. All Emergency Card information must be kept up to date. Whether a child is not feeling well or a serious accident occurs, parents or authorized persons must be able to be contacted at all times. If you update your information on FACTS, this does not update the information on your child's Emergency Card; you must still let the office know of any changes.

**Field Trips:** Field trips serve the instructional program by utilizing educational resources of the community to supplement classroom work. Parents must sign a field trip permission form allowing their child to participate – no exceptions. If a parent does not want his/her child to participate, the school must be notified in writing. Students not participating in the field trip will be expected to attend school that day and participate in an alternative activity.

- Field trips are privileges and students can be denied participation if they fail to meet academic or behavioral requirements.
- Full dress uniform, including red sweater, must be worn to school for the student to participate in a field trip unless an alternate dress code is communicated on the permission slip form.
- Any parent who chaperones or provides transportation for school field trips is required to be current in VIRTUS safe environment training.
- To ensure the safety of our students, field trip drivers/chaperones must not bring younger children on the field trip.

The Diocese has guidelines for adults driving on field trips which may change at the discretion of the Diocese or the Administration.

- The driver must be 21 years of age.
- The driver must have a copy of a valid and current driver's license on file in the school office.
- The driver must be current in VIRTUS training.
- The vehicle must have a valid and current registration and a copy on file in the school office.
- The vehicle must have valid and current license plates and a sufficient number of seatbelts for its passengers.
- The vehicle must be insured for the following minimum limits: \$100,000 per person/ \$300,000 per occurrence (A copy of the current proof of insurance must be on file in the school office.)

**Lockers:** Students in the junior high wing will have lockers assigned to them. They will have specific times to go to their lockers. It is their responsibility to keep their lockers neat and orderly. This will help prepare them for high school and foster responsibility and preparedness. Lockers will be lock free as Saint Rita School will follow the Honor Code:

Students will be expected to comply with the following procedures:

- Lockers may be used before school, between classes and after school only.
- Students may not use a lock on their lockers.
- Students may decorate locker interiors with magnets; no tape is to be used.
- Students must be ready on Friday at any time for a locker organization check.
- Personal items of value are not to be stored in the lockers.
- **No open drink or food containers are allowed in lockers.**

The following items may be kept in lockers:

- Textbooks, workbooks, spirals, folders, binders, library books and other necessary supplies
- P.E./sports clothing and shoes
- Coats, jackets, gloves, dry umbrellas
- Lunch
- Non-adhesive and non-marking mirrors or storage items

It is the student's responsibility to immediately report any damage to his or her locker. A reparation fee will be assessed if a locker is not in acceptable condition at the end of the school year.

### **Locker Care Policy**

At Saint Rita Catholic School, we expect all students to take proper care of their assigned lockers to maintain an organized and respectful school environment. The following procedures must be adhered to when using school lockers:

**1. Locker Care Procedures:**

- Lockers must be kept clean and free of damage.
- No prohibited items (such as food, drinks, or unauthorized materials) should be stored in lockers.
- Lockers should not be defaced or decorated with non-removable items.

**2. Violation of Procedures:**

- If a student is found in violation of the locker care procedures, the following consequences will be enforced:
  - The student will lose locker privileges for a minimum of two weeks.
  - During this period, the student must carry their belongings and will not have access to a locker.
  - Parents/guardians will be notified of the violation and the resulting consequences.

**3. Restoration of Locker Privileges:**

- After the two-week period, locker privileges may be restored if the student demonstrates an understanding of the locker care procedures and agrees to comply with them.
- A meeting with the student, parents/guardians, and a school administrator may be required before privileges are reinstated.

**4. Chronic Violations:**

- Repeated violations of the locker care procedures will result in a longer suspension of locker privileges and may lead to additional disciplinary actions.

We appreciate the cooperation of students and parents/guardians in maintaining the integrity of our school environment by adhering to these locker care procedures.

**Lost and Found:** Please label all articles of clothing, lunch boxes, and backpacks with your child's first and last name. Any items found will be kept in a box in the school office. The school is not responsible for any lost or stolen property. Any unclaimed items will be donated to Eastside Ministries at the end of each school year.

**Parent Visits:** Due to reasons of safety for our children and staff, parents/visitors are not to go directly to a classroom to speak with a teacher or child during the school day or during dismissal. All parents and visitors are to report to the school office. If a student is leaving early, the parent is to sign the student check-out book in the school office.

**All visitors to the school are required to provide a photo ID and sign in and sign out at the school office. All visitors will be issued a visitor's badge that must be worn while on school grounds to ensure the safety of our students and staff.**

**Party Policy:** Saint Rita Catholic School classrooms are allowed two parties each year. Classroom coordinators can work with the teacher to determine dates and times.

**Birthdays:** **Invitations to private parties/birthday parties may be distributed at school only if each class member receives an invitation.** The student must consult with the teacher before distributing invitations. Invitations sent to school that do not comply with the above rule will be sent home for distribution by mail. Birthday celebrations at school require coordination with the homeroom teacher and must be limited to a simple celebration with cupcakes or other individual snack. Parents should consider the needs of students with food allergies.

**School Pictures:** Saint Rita Catholic School uses a local company to take school pictures. The individual photos of students in their school uniforms will be published in the school yearbook. Dates of picture taking are announced in the monthly calendar.

**Use of Student Information/Pictures:** The school reserves the right to use student pictures in publications and on the school's web site. parent who does not wish his/her child's picture used must communicate this in the registration process.

## Student Arrival and Dismissal

**Student Arrival:** Supervision is provided for all students beginning at 7:30 each morning in the gym. Students PK -3 to grade 8 should proceed to the gym between 7:30 – 7:45 A.M. where they will be supervised by teachers.

**Walk-Ins:** Walk-ins for the drop-off of late arrivals is at the front entrance to the school, facing Weiler Boulevard. and pick up will not be allowed. This is to ensure the health safety of all Saint Rita families and staff.

**Drop-Off:** Parents must drop off children in the car line, must enter the northwest parking lot off of Dallas Avenue. **Only east-bound traffic is allowed to enter the parking lot by turning right.** The queue will follow the path to the gym where drop-off occurs. School staff will be there to help your child disembark. Cars will proceed to the exit next to the parish offices.

No drop-offs or walk-ins are allowed on Weiler Blvd. at any time.

No vehicles are permitted on the paved concrete area between the school and gym during the school day: 7:30 A.M. – 6:00 P.M.

**Student Pick-Up:** Supervision is provided for all children until dismissal each afternoon. Students PK -3 to grade 8 will remain in the gym until called for Car Line. Parents may either wait in the parking lot to pick up children at the Extended Care door, or by driving through the pick-up line off of Dallas Avenue. **Only east-bound traffic is allowed to enter the parking lot by turning right.**

**Walk-Ins:** For the safety of all students and staff, there are no walk-ins for pick-up unless communicated by the school for special occasions.

**Car Line Pick-Up:** Parents are asked to please pull up in line and move forward. We ask parents to not cut in line as accidents can occur.

- A caller will announce each parent's arrival, and the child will be called for pick-up.
- After picking up your child, proceed through the parking lot following the arrows to the Dallas Avenue "exit only" location.
- If a child is not ready, the parent may be asked to park in the main school lot until the child is ready to leave.
- If a child needs to return to the school for a forgotten item, parents will need to pull into the parking lot and walk in with the student.

All parents are to proceed slowly through the parking lot for safety of all children.

***The State of Texas law prohibits cell phone use, including hands-free technology - in carpool lines, even if the car is not moving.***

## Drop-Off and Pick-Up Procedures

### Drop-Off and Pick-Up Procedures

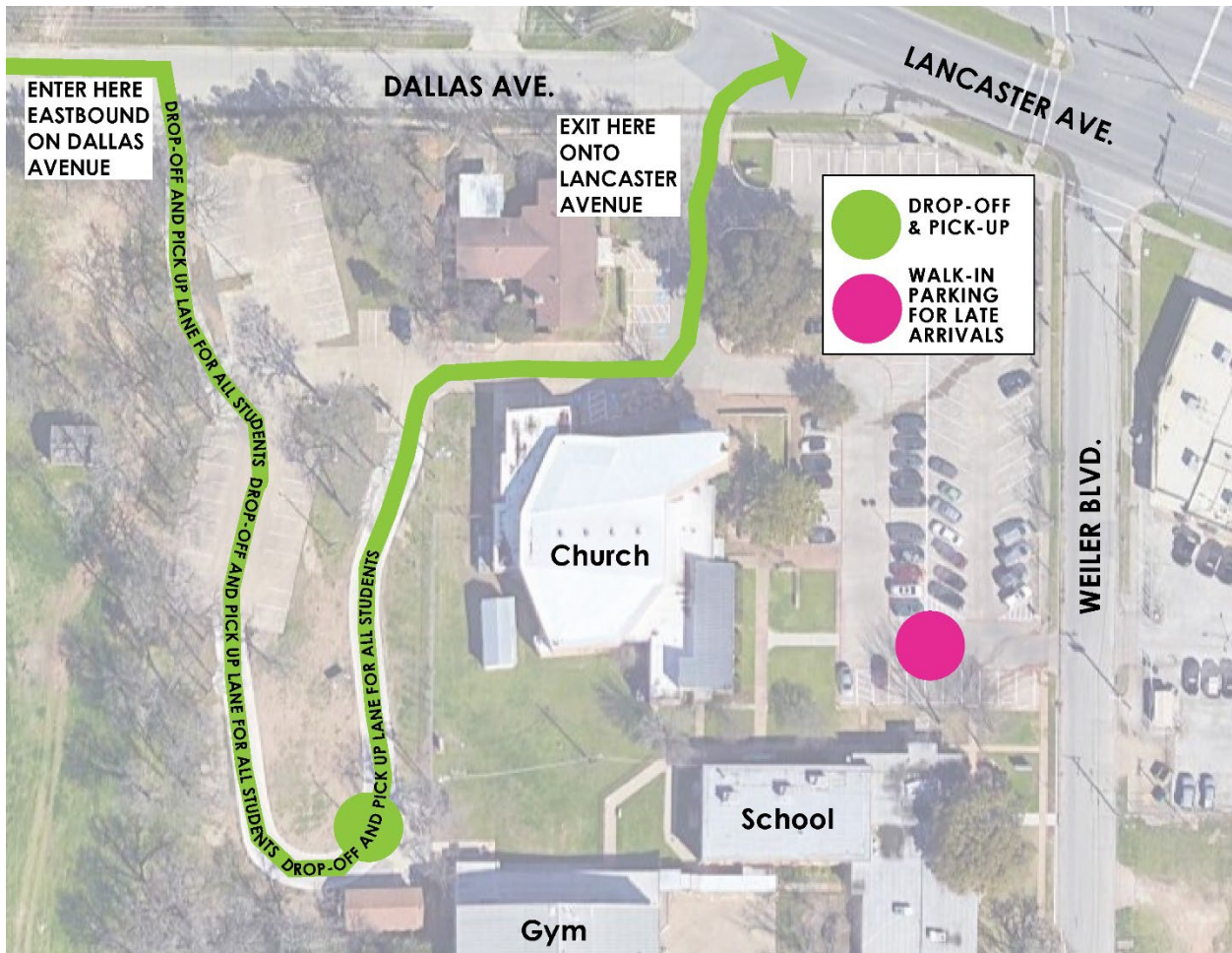
Drop-off will occur at the northwest corner of the gym from Dallas Avenue only. In the event of a late arrival, parents must walk students to the front doors **and check them in at the front office**. **No student will be admitted without a parent or guardian**. Drivers with mobility challenges must call the office and wait for an authorized employee to escort the children from the parking lot into the school.

Cars **MUST NOT** block access to driveways or streets on Dallas Avenue.

Pick-up after school will also occur at the northwest corner of the gym.

Pick-up from extended care will be from the Door "I" on the north side of the school facing the parking lot. See "Extended Care" for additional information.

There will be no parking or drop-offs on Weiler Blvd.



## Diocesan Policies

### 3240 INTERNAL INFORMATION

The School is part of the Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth. As such, when appropriate, any student/parent record or information possessed by the School, including academic, developmental, behavioral, disciplinary, financial, or contact/identifying information, may be shared internally within the Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth (including its departments, schools, parishes, priests or the Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth Advancement Foundation).

Academic testing information and results may be shared with other schools of the Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth for academic, enrollment, or placement purposes.

Additionally, any information submitted in or with any financial aid application (including FACTS) may be shared with the Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth, the Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth Advancement Foundation, their affiliates, any tuition assistance board of the diocese, parish, or school, or the Stephen Breen Memorial Foundation to consider in awarding financial aid or developing additional tuition assistance programs.”

### 5000 ADMISSION OF STUDENTS

It is a privilege and a grace to be educated in a Catholic school. The schools and the Diocese retain the right to disallow a student to attend, continue attending, or to re enroll in a school. Any enrollment prior to the first day of school, including but not limited to advanced enrollment, pre-enrollment, or continuing enrollment of a student, is a conditional enrollment subject to review and termination by the school at any time. Prior to the first day of school, the school does not have to state the reasons, or have grounds, for revoking or denying a conditional enrollment of a student. The school does not have to state the reasons for denying enrollment of a student at any point during the year. The conduct of a student or a parent/guardian of the student (including any lifestyle, other conduct, or advocacy of a matter that is contrary to the Catholic faith or that may cause scandal, disruption, or confusion within the school community) may be grounds for the school revoking or denying the enrollment of a student at any time. All decisions of admission, including revocation of admission, are guided by the Catholic faith and are necessarily ecclesiastical in nature.

Students should not be denied admission to a Catholic school because of a disability unless the disability seriously impairs the student’s ability to successfully complete the school’s academic program or unless the school cannot provide sufficient care or provide reasonable accommodation for the student. The determination as to whether the school may provide reasonable accommodations for the student or applicant is made on a case-by-case basis. Under some circumstances, medically justifiable limitations may be placed on the admission/retention of students with infectious diseases and/or life-threatening illnesses.

International Students may be admitted in accordance with the requirements of the United States Department of Justice and the Department of Immigration and Naturalization. Students seeking admission under F-1 status must request an I 20 form from the Catholic Schools Office.

The enrollment or registration and attendance of a student at a Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth school constitutes an expressed agreement on the part of the student, as well as the student’s parents/guardians, to comply with the school’s policies and procedures and demonstrate commitment to the school’s mission. Failure to read the material contained in the handbook does not excuse the student or the student’s parents/guardians from responsibility for knowing and following the policies, procedures, and regulations in the handbook.



Students applying for admission must present a copy of the current report card and standardized test results. These will be reviewed to determine whether the program the school will meet the educational needs of the students. An interview with the student is part of the admission process. Testing in certain academic areas may be held for new, incoming students.

All new students will be given a probationary period of one semester. If during this probationary period there are any concerns, a student may be asked to withdraw from the school. The recommendation and decision of the school is final.

#### MISSION POLICY IN RELATION TO ADMISSIONS

Parents of students enrolling their children in a Catholic school must understand, affirm, and support the school's role and primary mission as guided by the teachings of the Catholic Church. Parents must acknowledge that they have read and understand, affirm, and support the expectations and the mission of the school as guided by the teachings of the Catholic Church. Parents or students who the school determines are not able to meet these expectations or support the mission of the school and teachings of the Catholic Church may not be admitted to the school. Students who are experiencing confusion regarding their sexual identity may be admitted as long as they are open to being accompanied and guided according to the Gospel as upheld in the teachings of the Catholic Church and will follow the mission and policies of the school. Any student whose gender has been legally changed from their biological sex, or who has chemically or surgically altered their God-given biology, may not be eligible for enrollment.

#### WITHDRAWAL

If at any time before or after admission the school believes that a student or parent/guardian of a student cannot accept the guidance and direction that is offered, is unwilling or unable to meet the expectations of admission, or is unwilling or unable to follow the Gospel as upheld in the teachings of the Catholic Church or the mission or policies of the school, then denial of enrollment, withdrawal, exclusion, or expulsion may be necessary. If a student or parent/guardian acts to legally change the student's gender or takes steps to chemically or surgically alter the student's God-given biological sex, then the student will be dismissed from the school, after the parent/guardian is first given the opportunity to withdraw the student from the school.

#### IMPLEMENTATION

##### PRIVILEGE

Being educated in a Catholic school is a grace and a privilege, not a right of the student. The conduct of a student or a parent/guardian of the student (including any lifestyle, other conduct, or advocacy of a matter that is contrary to the Catholic faith or that may cause scandal, disruption, or confusion within the school community) may cause the student to lose the privilege of attending a Catholic school.

##### PARISHIONERS – NON-PARISHIONERS

A parish school's admission policy should give preference to parishioners. Students from other parishes are to be admitted, if possible. Students of other religious beliefs may be admitted, if space permits.

##### AGE

Policies regarding age of entry are determined by the TCCBED policy, and the State of Texas. All dates refer to the year of the student's entry into a specific grade level.

- 3K: A child must attain the age of 3 on or before September 1st.
- 4K: A child must attain the age of 4 on or before September 1st.
- Kindergarten – A child shall have attained the age of five (5) years on or before September 1st. This includes children who have been enrolled in pre-school programs, i.e. 3K and 4K. Participation in a school's 4K program does not ensure acceptance into Kindergarten.
- First Grade: A child shall have attained the age of six (6) years on or before September 1st.

The child's birth certificate shall be required for verification of age before he/she is enrolled. An exception may be made by the principal if children (1) have been enrolled in the first grade in another state prior to transferring to a school in Texas or (2) have attended a full school term in a Kindergarten program in another state that admits children who are under five years of age into the Kindergarten program.

The ability of a new student to achieve at a specific grade level, particularly when he/she is entering from a non-accredited school, shall be determined by conference with the parents and with the former teacher (if possible) and/or by the results of a standardized achievement test/evaluation which the receiving school administers.

#### 5050 NON-PARENT/NON-LEGAL GUARDIAN ENROLLMENT & DECISION MAKING

If a non-parent/non-custodial guardian wishes to enroll a child in a school of the Diocese, or make decisions on behalf of the child, they must provide valid Authorization Agreement for Voluntary Adult Caregiver that conforms with chapter 34 of the Texas Family Code authorizing them to enroll the child or make certain other decisions on behalf of the child. If the child is 18 or will be 18 during the school year, the non-parent/non-custodial guardian must contact the principal / president. Their enrollment will be considered on a case-by-case basis. This includes any decisions being made during the school year.

An Authorization Agreement for Voluntary Adult Caregiver is the proper "minor power of attorney" promulgated by the State of Texas. The Authorization Agreement for Voluntary Adult Caregiver can be found at [https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/site\\_map/forms.asp](https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/site_map/forms.asp)

#### Diocese Appeal 5220

If the parent or the guardian wishes to appeal the principal's expulsion decision, a written appeal must be mailed to the Superintendent of Schools within five (5) days from the date the parent or guardian is notified of the principal's expulsion decision. The Superintendent's decision will be conveyed to the parent or guardian by either the electronic email on file with the school, the home address on file with the school, or by meeting in person, electronically, or telephonically. The decision of the Superintendent is final and is not subject to any other appeal, grievance, mediation, or conciliation process of the Diocese.

#### 5230 WITHDRAWAL AND TRANSFER

WITHDRAWAL is the voluntary termination of a student's enrollment by the parents or guardian without provision for enrollment in another school. Students should be encouraged to complete their education if at all possible.

TRANSFER is the voluntary termination of a student's enrollment by the parents or guardian with provision for the student to be enrolled in another school. A parent or guardian may decide to transfer a student at any time and for any reason or the principal and parents may mutually agree that the needs of a student will best be served in another school setting.

It should be noted that Withdrawal and Transfer are considered to be voluntary on the part of the parents or guardian.

The records of a student who has had the privilege of attending a Catholic school and was withdrawn because of the disruptive influence caused by the student's parent shall show that the student withdrew or transferred, unless the parent refuses to remove the student from the school after having been notified that the student is to transfer to another school. In this case, the student will be expelled and their records will reflect the expulsion.



## IMPLEMENTATION

When a student withdraws or transfers, a notation of the fact is made, as required, on all necessary records and correspondence.

In some cases, a student's academic, emotional, or social needs might be better served in an alternate academic setting. The principal or counselor should advise the parents of the availability of such alternatives. A mutual agreement to transfer, reached out of sincere concern for the student, is preferable to utilization of suspension or expulsion procedures. A school may require a student either to transfer or to withdraw when the conduct of the parent of the student is disruptive to the school, or to a teacher in the school.

In the case of a transfer, the principal shall complete an Exit Report and give it to the parents or guardian together with the student's report card and health card. In the case of a transfer between Catholic schools, the principal must call the principal of the previous school BEFORE interviewing, testing, or registering the student. Communication between Catholic school administrators is necessary regarding expulsion, transfers, and withdrawals among Diocesan schools. The Catholic Schools Office must be contacted. If the family has an outstanding balance at the previous school, then that must be cleared before the student may be accepted at another school in the system.

Should the receiving school request it, additional information is to be provided and/or a copy of the permanent record may be sent directly to the receiving school by the previous school.

### 5235 REIMBURSEMENT FOR SCHOOL COSTS AND ATTORNEYS' FEES

The School recognizes the financial sacrifice many of its families make to participate in the school community. Out of respect for this sacrifice and in recognition of the School's responsibility to wisely steward financial resources for the benefit of all members of the school community, the School has implemented the following policy:

From time to time, the School is required to retain outside legal counsel to respond to parent requests or demands, attorney requests or demands on behalf of a parent or student, requests or subpoenas for testimony or documents in legal proceedings to which the School is not a party, or to address other issues affecting or involving only one or a few students or families. In such situations, the School is typically required to expend finite financial resources to address an issue which otherwise affects only a very small portion of the school community. To ensure that the school community at large is not adversely impacted in such situations, the School will, when the chief administrator of the School in his or her sole discretion deems it appropriate, require the family or families involved to reimburse the School for attorney's fees, costs of court, and other expenses incurred.

Accordingly, each person who acknowledges his or her agreements to the contents of this Handbook, either by written or electronic signature or by enrolling a student in the School, agrees that, in the School's absolute and sole discretion, he or she shall indemnify and reimburse the School and its officers, employees, agents, and representative ("Indemnitees") on demand from and for any and all attorneys' fees and related costs, including without limitation the cost of responding to parent or attorney requests or demands, requests for documents or other records or information arising from, in connection with, or related to 1) a violation of any provision of this Handbook, 2) any request or demand made upon the School which pertains to a legal proceeding or dispute to which the School is not a party, 3) threatening or harassing communications directed to any Indemnitee, or 4) threatened or actual litigation against any Indemnitee which does not result in a final and appealable judgement adverse to the Indemnitee.

Reasons for a Policy on Human Sexuality

As the Congregation for Catholic Education noted in its 2019 instruction entitled “Male and Female He Created Them” Towards a Path of Dialogue on the Question of Gender Theory in Education, “It is becoming increasingly clear that we are now facing with what might accurately be called an educational crisis, especially in the field of affectivity and sexuality” (Male and Female, #1). It expounded upon the scope of the crisis stemming from an emerging radical view of human sexuality, noting:

The context in which the mission of education is carried out is characterized by challenges emerging from varying forms of an ideology that is given the general name ‘gender theory’, which “denies the difference and reciprocity in nature of a man and a woman and envisages a society without sexual differences, thereby eliminating the anthropological basis of the family. This ideology leads to educational programmes and legislative enactments that promote a personal identity and emotional intimacy radically separated from the biological difference between male and female. Consequently, human identity becomes the choice of the individual, one which can also change over time.” (Male and Female, #2) (internal citation omitted)

Our dignity and creation in the image and likeness of God, Christian anthropology, a proper understanding of human sexuality, and the essential importance of our sexuality and sexual identity as assigned by God are authoritatively and definitively revealed in Sacred Scripture and the teachings of the Catholic Church. (see Genesis 1:27; see Male and Female; see Catechism of the Catholic Church (“CCC”), #355-373, 2331-2372). As all entities of the Catholic Church are for the purpose of furthering the saving mission of Jesus Christ, they must operate in accord with the truth revealed by God in both natural law and divine revelation. In particular, our Catholic schools must remain in the fullness of the truth and charity in order to carry out their proper mission:

Since true education must strive for complete formation of the human person that looks to his or her final end as well as to the common good of societies, children and youth are to be nurtured in such a way that they are able to develop their physical, moral, and intellectual talents harmoniously, acquire a more perfect sense of responsibility and right use of freedom, and are formed to participate actively in social life. (Code of Canon Law, c. 795)

These truths extend into every facet of our lives, including – and perhaps especially – our sexuality.

Regarding sexuality and sexual identity, the Catechism of the Catholic Church states: “By creating the human being man and woman, God gives personal dignity equally to the one and the other. Each of them, man and woman, should acknowledge and accept his sexual identity.” (CCC, #2393). By its very nature, sexuality is ordered to the conjugal love of a man and woman within the bond of marriage (c. 1055). And marriage, which is a partnership of the whole of life, is always ordered by its very nature to both the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of children (Ibid.). All persons are called to chastity, to be lived out according to one’s state in life (CCC, #2337-2359).

These teachings of the Church are not mere antiquated notions. In fact, Pope Francis has repeatedly stressed the importance of a proper understanding of our sexuality, warning of the challenge posed by “the various forms of an ideology of gender that denies the difference and reciprocity in nature of a man and a woman and envisages a society without sexual differences (Amoris Laetitia (“AL”), #56). Pope Francis further notes that “biological sex and the sociocultural role of sex (gender) can be distinguished but not separated,” and that although we must always be “understanding of human weakness and the complexities of life,” that does not require us to “accept ideologies that attempt to sunder what are inseparable aspects of reality” (Ibid.). Ultimately, “[w]e are creatures, and not omnipotent,” and we must accept and respect our humanity “as it was created” (Ibid.; see also Gen. 1:27, Matthew 19:4, and Mark 10:6). Pope Francis then stresses that “the young need to be helped to accept their own body as it was created,” so that “we can joyfully accept the specific gifts of another man or woman, the work of God the Creator” (AL, #285).

As Pope Francis notes, we must always respect the sacred dignity of each individual person, which means that the Church cannot and must not accept the confused notions of gender ideology. We must not demean or deny the sincerity and struggle of those who experience same-sex attraction or who feel their true gender identity is different from their biological sex. Rather, we seek to accompany and to lead them on their journey of life, offering them the light of the Gospel as they try to find their way forward. These truths are not merely faith-based; rather, such realities are also knowable through the use of properly functioning senses and right reason (Pope St. John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, #22). We do not serve anyone's greater good by denying or falsifying the truth, for it is only the truth that frees us for the full life that God offers to each of us. Thus, when a person experiences either same-sex attraction or some form of gender dysphoria, such struggles do not change the biological fact of how God immutably created that person, and it would be untruthful for the Catholic Church or our Catholic schools to pretend otherwise. To pretend otherwise would contradict sound scientific evidence, reason, the nature of the human person, and key tenets of the Catholic faith (see National Catholic Bioethics Center, Brief Statement on Transgenderism). Therefore, the policies of our Catholic schools must respectfully uphold these fundamental truths.

#### 5281 BULLYING/HARASSMENT/VIOLENCE AND HUMAN SEXUALITY

All persons have inherent human dignity and are thus deserving of innate respect and love as a person. Bullying, harassment, or threats or acts of violence against any student based on that student's perceived sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity will not be tolerated (see above, sections 5290).

#### 5282 CHASTITY

All persons are called to chastity in accordance with their state in life. For purposes of the school environment, chastity also encompasses modesty in language, appearance, dress, and behavior. Accordingly, romantic or sexual displays of affection are in principle not permitted at school.

#### 5283 SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND SAME-SEX ATTRACTION

Students may not advocate, celebrate, or express same-sex attraction in such a way that is contrary to the authentic teachings of the Catholic faith, or that causes confusion, disruption, or distraction in the context of Catholic school classes, activities, or events. When discussing homosexuality or homosexual inclinations, the use of the term "same-sex attraction" is preferred, as it is a more appropriate description in accordance with the truths of Catholic faith and morals.

#### 5284 GENDER DYSPHORIA (TRANSGENDERISM)

Everyone, man and woman, should acknowledge and accept his sexual identity. (CCC, #2333)

By creating the human being man and woman, God gives personal dignity equally to the one and the other. Each of them, man and woman, should acknowledge and accept his sexual identity. (CCC, #2393)

All students are expected to conduct themselves at school, at all school functions, and while representing the school at outside functions in a manner consistent with their biological sex as given to them by God. All students are to avoid behaviors associated with the attempt to redefine their God-given sex. Schools shall consider the gender of all students as being consistent with their God-given biological sex for all purposes, including, but not limited to, the following: eligibility for and participation in school athletics and single-sex curricular and extracurricular activities; school-sponsored dances; dress and uniform policies; the use of changing facilities, showers, locker rooms, and bathrooms; titles, names, and pronouns; and official school documents. If a student's expression of gender, sexual identity, or sexuality should be in conflict with the teachings of the Catholic faith, cause confusion or disruption at the school, mislead others, cause scandal, or have the potential for causing scandal, then the matter will first be discussed with the student and a parent or guardian of the student. If the issue is not resolved to the satisfaction of the school, whose primary goal must always be to uphold and to teach Catholic truths, principles, and

doctrine, then the student may be dismissed from the school, after the parent/guardian is first given the opportunity to withdraw the student from the school. If a student is dismissed from the school under this policy, then the school will refund the unused portion of prepaid tuition on a pro rata basis.

#### 5285 ATHLETICS & OTHER EXTRA CURRICULARS

Eligibility for athletics and single-sex curricular/extracurricular activities is based upon the God-given biological sex of the student.

#### 5286 FACILITIES USE

Utilization by faculty, staff, students, or any visitors of school facilities, including but not limited to locker rooms, showers, restrooms, and overnight accommodations, will align with the person's God-given biological sex. School facilities are dedicated to the mission of Catholic education and may not be used by any member of the school community or any external organization or individual for any purpose or cause that is contrary to Catholic teaching or otherwise opposed to the Catholic Church.

#### 5287 FORMAL TITLES AND NAMES

School personnel will address students by the name listed on the official school registration (or its common derivative) and the pronouns correlating to their God-given biological sex.

#### 5288 MISSION INTEGRITY

Schools are to exercise their responsibility to teach Catholic faith and morals in the fullness of truth and charity, especially as expressed in the Catechism of the Catholic Church. As such, pastors, catechists, and other ministers of the faith (i.e., teachers, counselors, coaches, and school administrators) are called to meet people where they are to accompany and guide them to the Truth of the Catholic Faith.

Parents/guardians and non-Catholics whose religious practices or beliefs run counter to Catholic teaching might experience possible conflicts as mission integrity is maintained. Sincere questioning of the practices or teachings of the Catholic faith in order to more deeply understand them are acceptable and welcomed if done respectfully; however, hostile, disrespectful, or defiant challenge of Catholic practice or teaching, or the living of a lifestyle, engaging in other conduct, or advocacy of a matter that is contrary to Catholic practice or teaching, are signs that a student, parent, staff, or faculty member may not be a fit for the school's primary evangelical mission and may be denied admission or dismissed therefor.

#### 5289 OFFICIAL SCHOOL DOCUMENTS

Diplomas, transcripts, school records, and any other official documents of the school ("official school documents") shall be issued in conformity with the student's God-given biological sex. Official school documents are also historical documents and, as such, must accurately reflect the name and identity of the alumnus/alumna during the time in which he/she was enrolled at and graduated from the school. If after graduation an alumnus/alumna legally changes his/her name, for whatever reason, and requests new versions of his/her official school documents, the official school documents may be issued in the following format: "Original Name, n/k/a. New Legal Name."

#### 5290 DRESS

Students must dress appropriately in accordance with their God-given biological sex while on campus, at all school functions, and while representing the school at outside functions.

As a Catholic school, our faith calls us to treasure our dignity as human beings. We are also a family community and our concern for the health, safety, and welfare of our students and families is paramount. It is important that our students' welfare be continuously protected -- including after the school day ends, on weekends, and throughout the year. The use of illegal substances by students damages their spiritual well-being, performance, and development. Rooted in our concern for the welfare of our students and families, this substance abuse policy supports our mission of seeking truth, developing personal responsibility, and encouraging the full use of the gifts God gives to each developing young person.

Students are expected to avoid the use of tobacco products, consumption of alcohol, and use of drugs. The use of tobacco, alcohol, and other illegal substances negatively affects the growth of young people, subjects students and parents to potential criminal and legal jeopardy, harms student health, disrupts the educational process, endangers others, and negatively affects the reputation of the school community. To be successful, this policy requires the support of the entire school community, which includes students, parents, faculty, staff, and administration sharing in a spirit of cooperation, honesty, accountability, and responsibility.

#### IMPLEMENTATION

A student who possesses, uses, distributes, or exercises custody or control over alcohol, drugs (including controlled substances), or drug paraphernalia, whether on or off campus, may face disciplinary action, including but not limited to losing the privilege of participating in extracurricular activities or athletic programs, probation, suspension, or expulsion from school. In addition, the student may be required to submit to a random drug test (or ongoing random drug testing) or undergo a drug/alcohol screening and assessment at an agency approved by the School, at the expense of the student or the student's parent/guardian. Parents/guardians must sign a release of information consent form so that results of the assessment can be shared with the School. School administration must receive the assessment and recommendations from the agency. If requested by the School, the student must agree to follow a treatment plan.

A student suspected of being under the influence of drugs or alcohol, including while at school or at a school-related event, may be required to submit to a school-approved drug test or breathalyzer test. If the test returns a positive result, disciplinary action will be taken. A student who refuses to submit to a drug test or breathalyzer test when requested by the School will be deemed to have given a positive test result or be under the influence, and disciplinary action will be taken.

Students do not have an expectation of privacy in any property or items brought onto School premises or to school-related events. The School reserves the right to search lockers, coats, bags, automobiles, and other personal belongings of students at the School or at school-related events. Students who do not cooperate with the search or search request will be subject to disciplinary action.

The refusal of the student, or a parent/guardian of the student, to comply with this policy or submit to the School's requirements or requests will result in disciplinary action, which may include losing the privilege of participating in extracurricular activities or athletic programs, probation, suspension, or expulsion from school.

#### ATHLETICS & OTHER EXTRA CURRICULARS

Eligibility for athletics and single-sex curricular/extracurricular activities is based upon the God-given biological sex of the student.

## **Catholic Diocese of Ft. Worth Threat Assessment Policy**

The National Threat Assessment Center (NTAC) has provided guidelines for threat assessment in various environments, including schools. Implementing these guidelines can help ensure the safety and well-being of both students and staff.

### **1. Purpose:**

To provide a clear process for identifying, assessing, and managing individuals who may pose a threat to themselves or others within the school environment, ensuring the safety of all students, staff, and visitors.

### **2. Scope:**

This policy applies to all individuals within the school community, including students, staff, visitors, and contractors.

### **3. Definitions:**

- Threat: An expression of intent to harm someone, which may be spoken, written, or symbolic.
- Target: Any individual who might be the focus of a threatening behavior.

### **4. Policy Principles:**

- a) All threats, explicit or implied, should be taken seriously.
- b) The focus of threat assessment is prevention, not prediction.
- c) Early intervention can defuse many situations.
- d) The assessment process is based on observed or reported behaviors, not profiling or stereotypes.
- e) A collaborative approach involving multiple disciplines is essential.

### **5. Procedures:**

#### **a) Threat Reporting:**

- All members of the school community are encouraged to report any threat or threatening behavior they witness or are aware of.
- Reports can be made anonymously if desired.
- The school will ensure there are clear reporting pathways, which might include designated staff members, helplines, and online reporting tools.

#### **b) Initial Assessment:**

- Designated staff members will conduct a preliminary evaluation to determine the immediate risk level.
- If there's an immediate danger, appropriate safety measures, including notifying law enforcement, will be taken.

#### **c) Full Threat Assessment:**

- A multidisciplinary team (which might include school counselors, administrators, and resource officers) will assess the threat's nature, context, and the individual's ability and intent to carry it out.
- The team will gather information about the individual's communication, behaviors, emotional state, and other relevant factors.
- The team will also assess the circumstances that might increase the risk of violence.

**d) Management and Intervention:**

- Based on the assessment's outcome, the team will develop an intervention and management plan tailored to the individual's needs and circumstances.
- The plan might include counseling, academic support, parental involvement, conflict resolution, disciplinary action, or referrals to community resources.
- A mental health evaluation will be required before to student returns indicating that they are not a threat to themselves or others.
- Continuous monitoring of the individual will be carried out as deemed necessary by the team.

**e) Training:**

- All staff members will receive training on recognizing the warning signs of potential threats, the principles of threat assessment, and the school's reporting procedures.
- The training will be conducted regularly to ensure new staff are informed and existing staff are refreshed.

**6. Review and Update:**

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary to ensure it remains relevant and effective.

**7. Confidentiality:**

All information related to threat assessment will be handled as confidentially as possible and feasible, respecting applicable privacy laws and regulations.